

Monday, 15 June 2009

OPENING ALLOCATION AND CARRY-OVER ANNOUNCED FOR 2009-10

Irrigators will begin the 2009-10 water year on July 1 with a 2pc opening allocation and access to 60 percent of their approved carry-over water volume.

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald says while drought conditions across the Murray-Darling Basin remain extremely serious, South Australia has been able to secure enough water to make a small opening allocation possible.

“Inflow conditions since last December have continued at historically low levels, but improved slightly last month as a result of widespread rainfall in late April,” Minister Maywald said.

“The inflow for May 2009 was 90 gigalitres, which is 60 GL higher than the minimum of 30 GL used for planning purposes.

“Overall River Murray system inflows during 2008-09 were the third driest in 118 years of records.

“From June 1, 2008 to May 31, 2009, inflows to the River Murray system were only 1860 GL, compared with the long-term average for this period of 8830 GL.

“River Murray storages remain very low. The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 1475 GL (16pc capacity), compared with the long-term average of about 5500 GL (59pc capacity). At the same time last year, storages were at 1986 GL (21pc capacity).

“While rainfall in late April assisted in the initial wetting of catchments, further follow up rainfall is required to significantly increase River Murray system inflows. It is anticipated that recent rainfall will improve inflows in June 2009.

“However, the total rainfall during autumn was below average, and historical records indicate that after a dry autumn there is a high probability that inflows from the upper River Murray catchment will remain low for the following year.

“The Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation is completing projections on possible inflow scenarios during 2009-10. This information will be made available prior to the end of the month.”

For further information about water allocations or conditions in the River Murray visit:

www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html