

Monday, 2 November 2009

MORE WATER AVAILABLE FOR SA IRRIGATORS

More River Murray water has become available to South Australia, allowing for increased allocations for South Australian irrigators, critical human needs and the environment.

Premier Mike Rann said that the State Government was working hard to balance the needs for water for irrigators and the environment.

“South Australian irrigators and the environment are being forced to bear the brunt of over allocation upstream,” Mr Rann says.

Minister for the River Murray Karlene Maywald says rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin during September and October has meant an extra 120 billion litres is now available for South Australia.

“We’re seeing real improvements in the River Murray system for the first time in three years,” Minister Maywald says.

“This has allowed us to increase irrigation allocations from 34 to 46 per cent, effective from today.

“This is good news for South Australian irrigators who have been doing it tough in the midst of one of the worst droughts on record.

Minister Maywald says South Australia is still a long way from where we want to be in terms of allocations.

“But this is a substantial improvement on where we finished the irrigation season in 2008-09, and we are hoping for further improvements,” she says.

“Water will be allocated each month to secure the remainder of South Australia’s critical human needs water for 2010-11 by the end of December this year (52 gigalitres).

Minister Maywald says River Murray storages remain low despite improvements in recent months.

“The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 2965 gigalitres or 32 per cent of capacity,” she says.

“This is well below the long-term average for the end of October of 7190 GL or 77 per cent capacity.”

Allocation updates will continue to be issued on the 1st and 15th of each month, or the first business day following that date if it falls on a weekend. For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/