

Thursday, 1 July 2010

RIVER MURRAY IRRIGATION ALLOCATIONS OPEN AT 21 PER CENT

Minister for the River Murray Paul Caica said South Australian River Murray irrigators will today begin the 2010-11 water year with a 21 per cent opening allocation and access to 100 per cent of their approved carry-over water volume.

Mr Caica said the opening allocation was based on South Australia receiving a minimum of 1,384 GL during 2010-11 under a “worst case” scenario.

“This 21 per cent opening allocation is considerably higher than in the past three years, when allocations have opened at 4 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent respectively,” he said.

“In addition to this opening allocation, South Australian irrigators will be able to access 100 per cent of their approved carryover from today.

“Having access to this higher opening allocation, and all of their carryover water, will enable irrigators to better plan their operations for the coming year.

“By the end of August, there is a 95 per cent chance that allocations will reach at least 25 per cent. This compares with an actual allocation of only 10 per cent at the end of August last year.”

Mr Caica said irrigators will be advised in writing of their approved carryover volume once information from the meter readings at the end of June is finalised.

Mr Caica said it was important to note that River Murray storages remain low in comparison to the long-term averages.

The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 3,957 GL (42 per cent capacity).

“Although this is higher than at the same time last year which was 1,513 GL, or 16 per cent, it is well below the long-term average for this time of year which stands at 6,180 GL or 66 per cent,” Mr Caica said.

Throughout 2010-11 resource updates will continue to be issued on the 1st and 15th of each month, or the first business day following that date.

For the latest information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.mdba.gov.au/ after 2-00pm today.