

Monday, 16 August 2010

GOOD WINTER RAIN ALLOWS INCREASED ALLOCATIONS

Minister for the River Murray Paul Caica today announced that irrigator allocations have increased to 34 per cent as a result of good winter rainfall over the Murray-Darling Basin.

Mr Caica said South Australia would receive a minimum of 1,679 GL during 2010-11 under a “worst case” scenario which has enabled allocations to increase by 3 per cent.

“Improved inflows mean that more water is available to South Australia for irrigation, critical human needs and the environment,” he said.

“We have already secured 192 GL of the 201 GL required for critical human needs in 2011-12. This is in addition to the 201 GL of water already secured for 2010-11 critical human needs.

“The 170 GL committed to the 2010-11 Lower Lakes Environmental Reserve has also been secured.

“Another 45 GL has been assigned to other environmental reserves for purposes such as providing more water to Lake Albert to mitigate the risk of acidification.”

The improvement in allocations comes despite a higher than anticipated requirement for carryover.

“Initially it was estimated that 138 GL would be required for carryover,” Mr Caica said.

“But final meter reads now show that about 170 GL will be required. The increased volume of carryover is primarily a result of the allocation increase to 62 per cent in March 2010. The recent rainfall and improved inflows mean that we can meet this extra 32 GL of carryover, and still increase allocations to 34 per cent.”

Mr Caica said River Murray storages remained low in comparison to the long-term average, however the seasonal outlook for water availability is the best in three years.

The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 4,504 GL (48 per cent capacity).

Although this is higher than at the same time last year (1,980 GL, 21 per cent) it is well below the long-term average for this time of year (7,130 GL, 76 per cent).

For more information about conditions in the River Murray or wider Murray-Darling Basin visit www.mdba.gov.au

