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IMPROVED RIVER MURRAY WATER RESOURCE CONDITIONS

River Murray water resource conditions continue to improve after the highest inflows into the system in a decade.

Minister for the River Murray Paul Caica said 2,650 GL of inflow was received in September and it is expected there will be at least 1,350 GL of inflow during October.

“These inflows, which are the highest observed since 2000-01, have provided an opportunity to build water reserves for 2011-12 and are supplying a large volume of unregulated flow to South Australia,” he said.

“This unregulated flow has created the opportunity to release water from the Lower Lakes, thereby discharging hundreds of thousands of tonnes of salt from the River Murray.

“South Australia will receive its full Entitlement Flow of 1,850 GL during 2010-11 and any adjustments for trade of annual water allocations from interstate. All improvements above 1,850 GL are being directed towards reserves for 2011-12, in accordance with the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement.”

Mr Caica said with high volumes of water in the Upper Murray storages, the outlook for South Australia leading up to 2011-12 has improved.

“The Murray-Darling Basin Authority will be undertaking a preliminary water availability outlook assessment for 2011-12 during November 2010 and the information from this assessment will be critical for this Government and River Murray water users to commence planning for 2011-12.

Mr Caica said while the high inflows are extremely good news, the recent rainfall has not ended the long-term rainfall deficiencies affecting large parts of southern Australia.

“Overall recovery can take a number of years of above average rainfall,” he said.

“South Australia’s general allocations will remain at 67 per cent (422 GL). This, together with the 228 GL of carryover already allocated, takes us to our 650 GL allocation cap. Access to 100 percent of carryover has been in place from 1 July 2010.”

Mr Caica said a review of carry-over arrangements in South Australia was continuing, in consultation with key stakeholder groups. A decision on for 2011-12 is expected around mid December.

The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 7,461 GL (80 percent capacity) which is nearly equivalent to the long-term average for the end of October of approximately 7,500 GL.

For more information visit www.mdba.gov.au