

Monday, 15 November 2010

RIVER MURRAY RESOURCES UPDATE

River Murray water resource conditions continue to improve due to recent rainfall and high inflows into the system.

A total inflow of 1,480 GL was received during October, above the long-term average October inflow of about 1,400 GL.

Minister for the River Murray Paul Caica said River Murray system inflow from June 1 until the end of October was 6,810 GL, above the long-term average of 6,420 GL for the same period.

“Another high inflow is expected during November with a forecast minimum inflow of 920 GL, compared to the long term average for November of 780 GL,” he said.

“With further rainfall forecast across the Upper Murray catchment over the next week, this inflow is likely to improve.

“This is excellent news for the River Murray because for the first time since 2000-01, four consecutive months of above average inflow will be received.

“South Australia will receive its full entitlement flow of 1,850 GL during 2010-11, and improvements above 1,850 GL have been directed towards reserves for 2011-12.

“The recovery of inflow into the River Murray system and the increasing volumes in storage is continuing to build reserves for 2011-12, thereby providing all states with an improved starting position for next water year.”

Mr Caica said South Australia’s general allocations will remain at 67 percent (422 GL) during 2010-11.

“This, together with the 228 GL of carryover already allocated, takes us to our 650 GL allocation cap,” he said.

“Access to 100 percent of carryover has been in place from 1 July 2010.”

Mr Caica said a review of the drought carry-over arrangements in South Australia was continuing, in consultation with key stakeholder groups. A decision on the arrangements in 2011-12 is expected by mid December 2010.

The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 7,420 GL (80 percent capacity) compared to the long-term average for this time of year of approximately 7,400 GL

(79 percent). The current storage volumes include large volumes of water for 2011-12 reserves and environmental water entitlements.

The improved flow conditions in the River Murray have provided South Australia with more than 1,000 GL of unregulated flow since September 2010. This unregulated flow is expected to continue into December 2010. This has provided an opportunity to release water into the Coorong and has significantly improved salinity levels at a number of other locations.

Flow to South Australia is expected to remain about 30-35 GL/day for about the next 2-3 weeks, depending upon river operations, water use and weather conditions upstream of South Australia.

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