

Wednesday, 15 December 2010

RIVER MURRAY WATER RESOURCES UPDATE

River Murray water resource and storage conditions continue to improve due to recent heavy rainfall and good inflows across the Basin.

River Murray System inflow during November was 1,710 GL, almost 1,000 GL above the long-term November average of 780 GL. Recent heavy rainfall earlier this month has also improved the forecast minimum inflow for December to 1,100 GL and further improvements are likely.

Minister for the River Murray Paul Caica said River Murray system inflow from June 1 to the end of December is expected to be around 9,650 GL, also above the long-term average of 7,620 GL for the same period.

“For the first time since 2000-01, South Australia has received five consecutive months of above-average inflow and because catchments remain wet, further rainfall is likely to produce good runoff,” he said.

The improved flow conditions in the River Murray have provided South Australia with more than 3,920 GL so far in 2010-11.

This includes 410 GL of Additional Dilution Flow and 2,650 GL of Unregulated Flows.

“The current flow to South Australia is equivalent to the total flow to South Australia over the past three water years which represents a significant step towards recovery for the River Murray,” Mr Caica said.

“There has been a significant turnaround from dry, to average and now to above average inflow conditions in the last 12 months.

“These flows are providing many ecological benefits for the River Murray, Lower Lakes and parts of the floodplains.”

As previously announced, South Australia will receive its full entitlement flow of 1,850 GL in 2010-11, and improvements above that have been directed towards reserves for next year.

“Improved inflow in the Murray system and increasing volumes in storage will continue to build reserves to give South Australia, along with the other states, a good start to the 2011-12 water year,” Mr Caica said.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority has also provided a preliminary assessment of the potential water availability in 2011-12, which indicates there is a high probability South Australia will again receive its full 1,850 GL Entitlement Flow for 2011-12.

Mr Caica said South Australia's general allocations will remain at 67 per cent (422 GL) for the rest of 2010-11.

This amount, together with the 228 GL of carryover water already allocated, takes the state to its 650 GL allocation cap. Access to 100 per cent of carryover has been in place since July 1.

The current volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee Lakes and Lake Victoria is 7,560 GL (81 percent capacity) compared to the long-term average for the end of December of approximately 6,870 GL (74 percent).

The current storage volume includes a large volume of water for 2011-12 reserves and environmental water entitlements.

Flow to South Australia is expected to remain at about 60 to 68 GL a day for about the next week, depending on river operations, water use and weather conditions upstream of South Australia.

Mr Caica said recent heavy rainfall upstream may result in increased flows to South Australia by mid January 2011, but it is too early to predict the peak volumes and more information should be available in about two weeks.

The Department for Water is providing weekly River Murray Flow Advice updates on the Water for Good website (www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au) each Friday afternoon while high flow conditions persist.

All river users are reminded to exercise caution when entering fast flowing rivers.

1. Be aware that branches and other debris may be hidden below the surface.
2. Regularly monitor river levels in your area, and take care not to become isolated by rising water.
3. Do not drive, ride or walk through floodwater, flood affected causeways or roads.
4. Be aware that a flood warning may be issued by the Department for Water in future if upstream conditions and flow projections indicate a flood is likely.
5. Obey any instructions from the emergency services (SES, SA Police and CFS).
6. For flood-related assistance, contact the SES on 132 500
7. To report riverbank collapse, contact the Department for Water on 1800 751 970
8. For life-threatening emergencies, call 000

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