

News Release

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Hon Paul Caica

Minister for Sustainability, Environment
and Conservation
Minister for Water and the River
Murray
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
and Reconciliation

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SA RIVER MURRAY ALLOCATIONS 100 PERCENT FROM JULY

Minister for Water and the River Murray Paul Caica today announced that South Australian irrigators will begin the 2012-13 water year with 100 per cent allocation.

Mr Caica said the early announcement gives irrigators and other water users the certainty they need to make important business decisions for the coming year and is a welcome contrast to the recent drought when allocations opened at as low as 2 per cent.

“Over the past four months, there has been a sequence of substantial rainfall events across the Murray-Darling Basin,” he said.

“This 100 per cent opening allocation is due to the high volume of water in upstream storages and confirmation by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority that South Australia will receive its full 1,850 gigalitre entitlement flow during 2012-13. It is the second successive year that our irrigators have started the water year on a full allocation.”

Mr Caica said while the return of flows is welcome, we can't forget the devastating impacts of the drought which was exacerbated by the historic over allocation of the river's water by upstream states.

“The recent action by Victoria and New South Wales to suspend aspects of water trade has shown how fragile the system still is when it comes to securing water for South Australian users,” he said.

“It was only the prompt action taken by the State Government to suspend trade from New South Wales until March 31 that has ensured irrigators can have access to their full allocation from July.

“This further emphasises the importance of the State Government's preparedness to take all actions necessary to ensure we get a strong Basin Plan that is not only capable of restoring the Basin to a sustainable level of health, but which also underpins the security of all water entitlement holders.”

Mr Caica said the new carryover policy, developed in consultation with irrigators and other water users, is operational from 2012-13.

“Given the current conditions, South Australia is prevented from deferring and storing entitlement flow for carryover under the Murray Darling Basin Agreement, therefore there will be no ability to carryover water into the 2012-13 water year,” he said.

“However given irrigators will have a 100 per cent of their allocation, they should have enough water to meet their normal production without the need to use carryover.”

The State Government will continually review River Murray water availability, storage and flow conditions. Further information about the policy is available online at www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au.

