



# Nathan Rees MP

## Minister for Emergency Services

## Minister for Water Utilities

### NEWS RELEASE

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## INCREASED WATER ALLOCATIONS AND RELEASES IN REGIONAL NSW

State Plan Priority E1: A secure and sustainable water supply for all users

Rivers, creeks and wetlands that were once dry are being quenched with water for the first time in years thanks to heavy pre-Christmas rain.

Water Utilities Minister, Nathan Rees said good inflows have resulted in more increases in allocations and releases benefiting the environment, irrigators, graziers and town water supplies.

“The recent widespread rain has provided immediate benefits for landholders, businesses and communities still feeling the effects of the worst drought in recorded history,” Mr Rees said.

“Following assessments by the Department of Water and Energy, we’ve been able to top up water for the environment and for consumptive use thanks to significant improvement in flows in most of the inland river systems over the past two weeks.

“Irrigators in the **Barwon-Darling River** can now access up to 10 percent of water in their accounts.

“There will also be good flows passing the length of the Barwon-Darling to the Menindee Lakes. Releases into the Lower Darling River downstream of the Menindee Lakes will commence on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

“This will also allow an allocation of 100% of entitlement for high security users in the Lower Darling River for 2007-08.

“In the **Murray Valley**, the Stevens Weir pool on the Edward River will be refilled and increased flows in the coming fortnight will raise river levels upstream of the weir.

“Releases for stock and domestic supply have commenced into some of the rivers and creeks west of Deniliquin which have not had flows in recent months.

“In the **Murrumbidgee Valley**, up to 8 gigalitres will be diverted into selected wetlands in the lower reaches of the river to maintain local populations of threatened species. This water comes from tributary inflows downstream of Burrinjuck and Blowering dams.”

Minister Rees said water availability for irrigators in the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys will be reviewed over the coming fortnight and he expects positive announcements on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January.

“The Department will continue to assess water availability across all the State’s river systems and advise of any changes to flows,” he said.

“Its also important to note that while this rain has brought some very welcome news, without good follow up rain these improvements will be short-lived so it is vital everyone remains conservative with their water use.”

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**Information on available water determinations (AWD) is available at [www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au](http://www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au) click on the AWD register link under ‘What’s New’ on the homepage.**