



MEDIA RELEASE

Phil Koperberg

NSW Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water

WATER IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN BASIN

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

EMBARGO 5.30am Friday 15 February, 2008

Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water Phil Koperberg today announced an increase in water availability for water licence holders in the Southern Murray-Darling Basin.

Minister Koperberg said the extra water was a result of recent rainfall and new water sharing arrangements.

“Thanks to recent rainfall and reduced losses through evaporation, water in the Murrumbidgee Valley has improved slightly,” he said.

“Flows into the Darling River and Menindee Lakes system from rainfall in the Border Rivers region is boosting supply for Lower Darling users, while the application of new water sharing arrangements between New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia has meant that water available to NSW Murray Valley users has improved immediately.”

Mr Koperberg said there was now enough water available to:

- **Increase the General Security allocation in Murrumbidgee Valley to 13 per cent of entitlement, an increase of 4 per cent;**
- **Increase the General Security allocation in the Lower Darling to 50 per cent of entitlement, an increase of 30 per cent;**
- **Make the final repayment of 10 per cent to NSW Murray irrigators who’s accounts were frozen in 2006/07 - this concludes the repayment of the 260 gicalitres (GL) suspended and fulfils the lemma Government’s commitment to repay this as soon as possible; and**
- **Secured the 75 GL needed to supply water for basic human needs in the NSW Murray Valley for 2008/09 and start a small reserve to ensure that carry over water be delivered.**

“While today’s announcement is good news, the Murray Darling Basin remains in the grip of drought,” he said.

“Storages in the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys are at lower levels now than at this time last year, however we are hopeful that things will start to improve.

“The Bureau of Meteorology has advised that La Nina is well established and the potential for an early autumn break is high.

“We’re not out of the woods yet and so we all must continue to use water wisely and plan ahead for dry times.”

Minister Koperberg said the Department of Water and Energy will continue its contingency planning program to ensure that water for all essential and critical needs can be delivered for the 2008/09 water year.

More information is detailed in the critical water planning communiqués for the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling valleys, available on the Department’s website: www.dwe.nsw.gov.au
