



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

## Media Release

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1 July 2008

### **COMMENCING ALLOCATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR NSW MURRAY VALLEY AND LOWER DARLING WATER USERS**

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

The NSW Department of Water and Energy, today announced commencing allocations for NSW water users in the Murray and Lower Darling valleys for the 2008-2009 water year.

With little inflow to water storages in the valleys during the past months water availability remains critically low.

In the NSW Murray Valley there is sufficient water available to;

- meet the critical domestic needs of town water supply for the whole of 2008-2009;
- deliver all carryover.

There is currently not enough water to make an available water determination for general or high security users.

All licence holders have immediate access to all water carried over in 2007-2008.

All water in accounts is tradable under the same rules used in the 2007-2008 water year.

While resources in the Murray Valley are better than at this time last year, the drought is far from over and drought contingency measures continue.

Many creek systems and wetlands have become disconnected from the Murray river and the lowering of specific weir pools has allowed for reduced evaporation and will provide mid system storage should the drought break.

Stock and domestic licence holders will commence on 50 per cent of entitlement. There is only a minimum amount of conveyance water available and only users on the main Murray River are expected to have continuous uninterrupted supply for the season.

Town water supply authorities will commence on 50 per cent licensed entitlement and are advised to remain extremely conservative with water use. If water availability remains low it can be expected that severe water restrictions will need to be implemented in the coming year.

In the Lower Darling, there is sufficient water to secure Broken Hill's town water supply for 21 months. However, there is insufficient water to make an allocation for general security users at this stage.

High security licence holders in the Lower Darling will commence on 100 per cent of entitlement, and all licence holders have immediate access to carryover from 2007-2008.

All water in accounts is tradable.

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An immediate embargo has also been placed on the conversion of general security entitlements to high security or vice versa. This will remain until the Department has reviewed the conversion rates in consideration of long term forecasts of reduced water availability.

Releases from the Menindee Lakes have been reduced to conserve as much water as possible. Water from the Menindee Lakes will be used to underpin the delivery of carryover and stock and domestic water in the Murray if it continues to stay dry.

The next announcement relating to the Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Water Source will be made on the 15th of August and then on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month via the Critical Water Communiqués. These are available from the Department's website at [www.dwe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au) via the 'What's New' tab on the homepage.

Additional information is also available on the Department's website. Alternatively, licence holders can phone their local DWE office for more information.

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