

Media Release

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NO CHANGE TO ALLOCATIONS IN THE NSW SOUTHERN BASIN

The NSW Department of Water and Energy has today announced that there will be no change to water allocations in the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling River Valleys.

“There has been little rain across the Southern Basin in the last month and inflows are receding to conditions that are well below the long-term average. While inflows are better than at the same time in 06/07, the drought is far from over,” stated David Harriss, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Water and Energy.

“The Murray Valley continues to be the worst effected area and as a result high security allocations will remain at 25 per cent of entitlement. Town water supply allocations will remain at 50 per cent and stock and domestic supply at 75 per cent,” Mr Harris added.

Sufficient water has been reserved to meet basic human needs in the Murray Valley and water continues to be reserved to deliver carryover and conveyance in 08/09.

In the Murrumbidgee Valley water resources have plateaued due to little inflow in the past month, however sufficient water is available to meet basic human and critical industry needs and to deliver water (including carryover) for 08/09.

“Continuous supply for all sections of the regulated Murrumbidgee system cannot be guaranteed at this time and reserving sufficient water to ensure this supply is a high priority for the NSW Government,” said Mr Harriss.

Lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo in the Menindee Lakes system are approaching full capacity. Inflows from the upper Darling River have now peaked at Wilcannia while flows from the Upper Basin have dropped away.

“High security water users in the Lower Darling will remain on 100 per cent of entitlement and general security licence holders will remain on 50 per cent of entitlement,” Mr Harriss noted.

As a contingency, to be able to deliver town water and domestic needs in the Murray Valley, part of the water currently stored in the Menindee Lakes storages will be used to underwrite any possible shortfalls in the Murray River system in 2008/09.

“I cannot emphasis enough that all water users in the Southern Basin in NSW must be conservative with all water use. We have managed to get this far by working together to keep the valley’s industries and communities viable. Water theft both in urban and rural situations will not be tolerated,” said Mr Harriss.

The watering of private lawns in the Murray Valley with either surface or ground water remains prohibited as lawns are a luxury that cannot be maintained while many irrigators, particularly general security users, have had no allocation at all this year.

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“Watering of trees and shrubs in private gardens and lawns in public spaces can be done in line with local Council restrictions,” Mr Harriss observed.

More detailed information is available in the Department’s communiqués that are available on line at www.dwe.nsw.gov.au

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