



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

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## **Media Release**

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### **Higher town water restrictions requested for Southern Valleys**

The NSW Department of Water and Energy has requested all Murray and Murrumbidgee Councils and water supply authorities adopt level 4 restrictions at the commencement of 2009/10 water year.

Level 4 restrictions prohibit outside watering from both town water or from private pumps.

Under the proposed restrictions, Councils can still water sporting fields, parks and community assets such as lawn cemeteries. Commercial activities, such as nurseries, which are supplied from town water will also not be affected by the restrictions.

Deputy Director-General, David Harriss, said the restrictions were important to conserve what little water is available.

“While sufficient water has been reserved in both valleys to meet critical human needs, there is currently not enough water available to deliver this throughout the year,” Mr Harriss said.

To deliver water in the Murray Valley downstream of Hume Dam to the sea requires about 1,400,000 megalitres of water, and about 400,000 megalitres is required in the Murrumbidgee Valley downstream of Burrinjuck and Blowering Dams to the junction of the Murray River.

“There is no point having water stored in the dams for any purpose if there is not enough water to deliver it to where it is needed.”

NSW, Victoria and South Australia have all agreed to re-allocate a proportion of the unused water that has been carried over by industry and irrigators from 2008/09 at the start of the year to deliver water for critical human needs.

“Some of this water has been purchased at significant cost by these users to ensure there supply in 2009-10 so it is not appropriate for that water to be used on private gardens.”

Councils are still able to purchase water on the temporary trade market in order to relax water restrictions.

Mr Harriss said Murray and Murrumbidgee Councils have done a great job in saving water over the past two years.

“However, with the outlook for the 2009/10 water year not looking good, we must continue to be conservative with water use.”

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Towns in the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys that use bore water, and individuals with private domestic bores, are also subject to the restrictions.

This request is in line with the Water Restrictions Policy agreed by the Minister for Water under the advice of the Critical Water Advisory group. The policy links restriction levels to the availability of high security water.

For more information refer to the attached Fact Sheet.

## Fact Sheet

### Murray and Murray Valley Town Water Restrictions Policy

Town water restriction trigger points:

<b>High security water allocation</b> (as a percentage of the licensed entitlement)	<b>Level of town water restrictions</b>
Less than and up to 20 per cent	Level 4 – no outside watering
Greater than 20 per cent and up to 40 per cent	Level 3a – maximum of four hours watering per week
Greater than 40 per cent and up to 60 per cent	Level 3 – maximum of eight hours watering per week
Greater than 60 per cent and up to 80 per cent	Level 2a – maximum of eight hours watering per week, including restricted lawn watering
Greater than 80 per cent and all water for critical human needs for the next water year has been reserved	To be determined by council

In addition to the trigger points, the following rules will apply:

- Councils may purchase water on the temporary market to allow town water restrictions to be eased from Level 4 up to Level 3 restrictions. However, this does not apply to groundwater in towns where water is being diverted from emergency bores that have been funded by the NSW Government to provide for critical human needs.
- Councils will be able to water parks, school grounds and sports fields within their town water supply allocation.
- Private diverters and domestic bore owners will be required to observe the same restrictions as their local council area.
- Town water supplies from aquifers are subject to same restrictions as surface water.