



## OFFICE OF WATER

Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

# **Media Release**

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## **SMALL INCREASE FOR SOUTHERN BASIN IRRIGATORS**

NSW Water Commissioner, David Harriss, today announced increases in water availability for both the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys.

“The recent rain across the southern valleys has enabled high security allocations in the Murray Valley to increase to 8 per cent of entitlement, an increase of 5 per cent, while in the Murrumbidgee Valley water resources have improved enough to allow 100 per cent access to carryover for all licensed users and an initial high security allocation of 5 per cent of entitlement to be made,” said Mr Harriss.

Mr Harriss said that while the rain has been most welcome and has wet up the catchment, the limited amount of available water in the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys remains very concerning, with inflow levels similar to this time last year.

“While we have sufficient water available in both valleys to ensure that critical human needs and carryover can be met for the year, we are running on empty and need substantial inflows to secure the most basic resources for both valleys,” he said.

Mr Harriss explained that critical human needs means enough water to meet core human consumption requirements in urban and rural areas as well as those non human consumption requirements that a failure to meet, would cause prohibitively high social, economic or national security costs.

“This does not include water to meet the needs of any extras, such as private gardens or washing cars or hosing driveways,” he said.

“We have requested all Councils and Town Water Suppliers that draw their supply from the regulated Murray or Murrumbidgee Rivers and their associated alluvial aquifers, to implement level 4 water restrictions,

“Councils and Town Water Supply Authorities can ease these restrictions to level 3a when high security allocations reach 20 per cent of entitlement, or by the monthly purchase of water on the temporary market,” he said.

Mr Harriss also reminded all water users in both the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys that their Shire water restrictions apply to water taken under basic landholder rights or from private bores for private domestic use.

“This means that if you take water in this manner, you are restricted to the Shire water restrictions too,” he said.

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Mr Harriss said that there is no change to the allocations in the Lower Darling where there is enough water to secure Broken Hill's supply for 21 months, provide 100 per cent of entitlement for high security and domestic and stock, and full delivery of carryover.

While Lake Wetherell is now close to full, it is only 14 per cent of the total capacity of the Menindee Lakes. This is 282 gigalitres less than at this time last year.

A full assessment will be carried out mid-month with details available in the Murray and Murrumbidgee **Critical Water Planning communiqués**, available on the 15 August from the Department's website: [www.dwe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au).

**Ends**