

News release



NSW Government

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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NO CHANGE TO WATER ALLOCATIONS FOR THE MURRUMBIDGEE VALLEY

The NSW Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced no change to allocations for water users in the Murrumbidgee Valley.

DNR's Executive Director Water Manager, David Harriss, said high security allocations will remain at 90% and general security at 10%, following the re-crediting of 5% to high security accounts.

"There have been no significant rainfall in the catchments and inflows remained at minimal levels, but we are hoping for an improvement in conditions in the coming months," he said.

"Even though there has been little rain, the Bureau of Meteorology reports that the El Niño phase is over and the chance of a La Niña developing in 2007 is thought to be higher than the long-term average (which is about one in five or 20%).

"The BOM also reports that the El Niño has decayed somewhat earlier than normal, giving time for a rain-bringing La Niña to begin developing during the critical March to June period."

Burrinjuck and Blowering Dams are currently holding 273,000 megalitres (26.4% capacity) and 157,000 megalitres (8.3% capacity) respectively, Mr Harriss said.

"Snowy Hydro has released more water into Blowering Dam than it was required to in 2006/07, but with the continuing dry conditions this is water that would have been released in 2007/08, so it cannot be used this year," he said.

"However it does mean that there will be more water in the storages in June and July, and ensures continuity of releases in winter and early spring, even without further rain.

"Despite this the situation remains extremely grim and without rain the water supply situation in the basin is critical."

Mr Harriss said that while carryover for both high and general security licences will be allowed as announced last week, the timing of delivery may be subject to restrictions if current dry conditions persist.

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