



Media Release

Monday 2 March, 2009

No change to Southern Murray-Darling Basin water allocations

The NSW Department of Water and Energy today announced that there would be no change to water allocations in the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling river valleys.

The Department's Deputy Director-General, David Harriss said that conditions across the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys have remained hot and dry and high evaporation losses have largely off-set minor natural inflows.

"Rainfall in the North West of the State late last month has however provided some useful inflows into the Darling River," he said.

"Together with additional inflows from the Border Rivers and upper Barwon catchment, this is expected to increase inflows into the Menindee Lakes to approximately 200 gigalitres.

"This will increase the amount of water stored in the Menindee Lakes from seven per cent to about 18 per cent of capacity."

Mr Harriss said that this water will be used to secure town water supply for Broken Hill for at least 21 months, secure water for Lower Darling permanent plantings for 2009/10 and underwrite water for critical human needs in the Murray Valley. This includes the delivery of conveyance and carryover in 2009/10 if required.

Despite the Darling River flows, water availability in the Murray-Darling Basin remains seriously low.

"Without substantial autumn and winter rain, water availability, including the ability to deliver carryover at the start of 2009/10, will be limited," said Mr Harriss.

Licence holders are reminded that all trades, including interstate trades, need to be lodged with State Water by close of business on 31 May 2009.

While the Water Sharing Plans remain suspended in both valleys, the carryover rules that applied in 2008/09 will apply again in 2009/10.

A full assessment will be carried out mid month with details available in the Murray and Murrumbidgee critical water planning communiqués, available on the 16th of March from the Department's website: www.dwe.nsw.gov.au.