



MEDIA RELEASE

Phil Koperberg

NSW Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water

WATER MADE AVAILABLE TO MURRUMBIDGEE VALLEY

State Plan Priority E1: A secure and sustainable water supply for all users

Wednesday 8th August, 2007

Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water, Phil Koperberg today announced inflows into the Murrumbidgee Valley during July would allow the repayment of all water suspended in licencees' accounts in 2006 as well as water carried over from 2006-07.

Mr Koperberg made the announcement at a meeting in Young with local councils and also said water utilities that had implemented Level 4 town water restrictions would be able to relax those in the coming months.

The inflows in the Murrumbidgee Valley during the past two months have been better than average. As at 6 August 2007, Blowering Dam was at 27.4 per cent capacity whilst Burrinjuck Dam was at 41.3 per cent capacity.

"This means there is now sufficient water available to allow the repayment of all water suspended in 2006 and carry-over water from 2006/07," Mr Koperberg said.

"We're honouring the commitment made at the time the water was suspended.

"This volume also enables an Available Water Determination (AWD) for Murrumbidgee high security licence holders to be made – a 30 per cent allocation.

"This will take effect immediately and will enable the cancellation of the survival watering program for permanent plantings in the Murrumbidgee valley but allocation of critical needs for other industries will continue."

All water in accounts is tradeable consistent with normal trade rules.

However, as a consequence of the continuing drought and the need to make as much water available to users as possible, the requirement to submit an application to apply to trade high security entitlements prior to 1 September has been suspended until the water sharing plan is reinstated.

This means that applications for trade of Murrumbidgee high security water will be accepted past this date.

Mr Koperberg said despite the recent improvement, water availability in the Murrumbidgee remained low and improvement in availability for irrigation would depend upon further inflows as no was reserved for town water supply for 2008/09.

"Town water supply, and domestic and stock will remain restricted at 50 per cent of entitlement at this stage," he said.

“Local councils and water supply authorities in the Murrumbidgee Valley that were previously requested to voluntarily implement Level 4 restrictions may consider relaxing these restrictions in the coming months.

“This is great news for the local community but we all still need to conserve water and be water-wise,” he said.

More detailed information relating to the critical water situation in the Murrumbidgee Valley can be found in the Department of Water and Energy’s regular communiqués, issued on the 15th of each month or at www.naturalresources.nsw.gov.au.

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