

MEDIA RELEASE

Phil Costa
Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development



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THE FIRST GENERAL SECURITY ALLOCATION IN THE SOUTHERN MURRAY DARLING BASIN

NSW Water Minister, Phillip Costa, today welcomed the increase in water availability in the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling River valleys including the first general security allocation in the southern Murray Darling Basin for the 2009/10 water year.

“This provides a real morale boost for drought affected irrigators in some southern Murray-Darling valleys where general security water allocations have been very low or non existent for the last 3 years,” said Mr Costa.

“Today’s allocation of 25 per cent for general security licence holders in the Lower Darling will allow irrigators to finish off winter cropping ventures and support those growers who have permanent plantings developed on general security entitlements.

“This is the first general security allocation in the southern basin this water year and only the second in the Murray-Darling Basin, with 80 per cent being announced in the Peel Valley on 1 July.”

“The southern Murray Darling basin has been in the grip of severe drought since 2006.

“While inflows during August 2009 have been the best seen for the last four years, they are still less than 25 percent of the overall average for this time of year,” Mr Costa said.

Mr Costa said that even with low flows, NSW has been able to increase high security allocations in the Murrumbidgee and Murray valleys to 60 and 50 per cent of entitlement, respectively.

“NSW water management policy mean we use less water in dry years – this is a result of good commonsense policy that supports rural communities and jobs,” Mr Costa said.

“Our two tiered water allocation system means that high security water required to support permanent plantings and high employment water use industry is made available as a priority.

“In times of drought, this means that NSW can ensure that its water resource is directed to protecting industries that require water in all years.”

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