

Increased allocation - September 11, 2007

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): Can the Premier explain to the house whether the increase in the allocation to irrigators from 13 to 16 per cent has also been made possible as a result of rain in the Adelaide Hills, or is it a concession to the member for Chaffey now that the Premier has overturned her bucket law?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Minister for the Water Security): Obviously, the member did not listen to a previous answer. When we made the call on what irrigation allocations would be as at 1 September, we assessed the data from the third week of August, which predicted what the likely outcome would be at the end of August and, at that time, we believed we had about 102 gigalitres available to be allocated. Further analysis of the end of August figures has indicated, and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission has confirmed, that we have 120 gigalitres available for allocation for diversion. That is 18 gigalitres above what we anticipated, therefore we have now been able to provide to irrigators advice that as at 1 October allocation will be 16 per cent. That could be increased if we get significant flows into the system over the next couple of weeks, and we will be keeping irrigators informed.

Mr PEDERICK: I have a supplementary question.

My question is for the Premier. Does the increase in allocation mean that the state is getting 1 500 gigalitres across the border in River Murray inflows, as the minister has previously advised community groups?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: Again, the issue is not that there is 1 500 gigalitres coming into the state. The information that has been provided to public groups and through Powerpoint presentations does not reflect that at all. In fact, the advice we have provided to communities is that the next available water to South Australia for allocation will come following 1 500 gigalitres in total flowing into the Murray system, that is, the total supply.

What we have provided today is a reassessment of the August figures, given that the full calculation of the August figures now gives us 120 gigalitres rather than the 102 gigalitres we anticipated in the third week of August. In the third week of August, when we provided the resource information to the River Murray Advisory Committee, we had 102 gigalitres to allocate, and that resulted in 30 gigalitres for carryover water and also 13 per cent for allocation. We now have 120 gigalitres, which the Murray-Darling Basin Commission has confirmed is available to us for allocation, and that has enabled us to take the allocation up to 16 per cent.

As I said at the last announcement, and as I made quite clear in my press releases and to the public forums where I have been a presenter, any further announcement beyond that made in August would require 1 500 gigalitres in total to flow into the system, not into South Australia. In actual fact, even under average flows, we are unlikely to get 1 500 gigalitres into South Australia this year.