



MEDIA RELEASE

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LEVEL OF LAKE MULWALA TO BE LOWERED

Murray-Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) Chief Executive Dr Wendy Craik AM advises that the management of the water level in Lake Mulwala will be central to Murray operations over the coming months.

“The level of the Lake will be gradually lowered below its current level of 124.2 m (AHD) later this week and under a dry scenario is expected to be about 123.8 m AHD (1.1m below the Full Supply Level) by mid May with the water released being used to supply this year’s remaining irrigation demands”.

The lower lake level will enable future high inflows from the Ovens and Kiewa Rivers to be re-regulated within the lake, so that releases from the Lake can be maintained as far as possible at rates within the river’s channel capacity downstream. This will minimise overbank flow during small flushes and thus reduce evaporation losses in the Barmah-Millewa Forest.

“The lowering to 123.8m AHD will not by itself lead to any significant weed control. However, MDBC has been exploring options to further lower the lake level over winter to help control weed growth and for periodic maintenance of the weir. A decision on whether further lowering will occur will not be made until after diversions into the Yarrawonga Main Canal cease on about 15 May,” Dr Craik said.

“The initial lowering over the coming weeks will mean that any decision to further lower the lake level can be implemented quite quickly. However we need to be clear that such a decision must balance irrigation needs and environmental implications along the entire Murray Valley”, Dr Craik said.

MDBC hope to lower the lake as much as possible to allow frost to kill the weed. Unfortunately, given the scarcity of water it is not possible to guarantee that the further lowering will happen or that the lake will be held low for a long enough period.

To enable irrigation diversion at the commencement of the next irrigation season, the level of Lake Mulwala will need to be returned to the lower bounds of its operating range by late July.

“MDBC will continue to review Murray operations as the season develops and will provide regular updates over the coming weeks and months on likely water levels in Lake Mulwala,” Dr Craik said.

Boat operators, stock owners, river pumpers and other lake users are advised to take these changed water levels into account and make any necessary adjustments to their activities.

For media inquiries contact: Sam Leone, phone 0407 006 332

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