



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Basin wide water storage remains critically low**

Water held in public storages across the Murray-Darling Basin is estimated to be at only 21 per cent of total capacity. Water in private storages is also at low levels.

That's the main finding of a Basin wide preliminary collection of public and private storage carried out by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission over the past week.

Acting Chief Executive Mr Les Roberts said figures supplied by all basin partner governments estimated that, at the end of July, total public active storage held was about 4800 GL. The capacity is 22,609 GL. (Active storage is water which can be released using only gravity).

"Most of this water is already earmarked for critical human needs and a small amount is held as carry over or announced allocations," Mr Roberts said.

Carry over water is already "owned" by users who chose to carry over part of the water available to them last year for use this year.

"The amount of water currently available for use as a carry over or already allocated is about 1400 GL or only 6 per cent of capacity.

"Some areas of the Basin are still in deficit meaning they do not have enough water to cover the delivery of even water for critical human, stock and domestic needs and will be relying on further inflows to their dams to make up the shortfall," Mr Roberts said.

"Estimates from partner governments show that private storages in the north of the Basin are estimated to be holding about 810 GL - which is less than estimates being reported in the media. In the southern Basin, private storage is spread across many smaller farm dams."

Mr Roberts said the MDBC had also released a fact sheet today showing the water needs at the Lower Lakes.

"Given the current level of storage it's not feasible to refill the lakes by transferring water from other parts of the Basin without any further significant rain.

"As little as 20 per cent of any water released in the north of the Basin would reach the Lower Lakes in South Australia, meaning that four or five times the water needed at the lakes would need to be released from that far upstream.

"Management of many issues in the Basin are now heavily reliant on inflows over late winter and spring and governments will need to maintain flexibility to manage the situation based on real time information," Mr Roberts said.

A copy of the fact sheet on Lower Lakes is available at [www.mdbc.gov.au](http://www.mdbc.gov.au)

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