

## JOINT EFFORT TO COMBAT DROUGHT IN LACHLAN

28 July 2009

Water authorities and local communities in the Lachlan valley will consolidate efforts to ensure essential drinking water supplies continue to be provided.

With Wyangala Dam at 6% and only sporadic winter rain in the valley, a series of information sessions were held to advise communities on severe drought management measures that will be implemented.

State Water, the Department of Water and Energy, Lachlan Valley Water and the Lachlan Customer Service Committee held meetings in Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo, Hillston and Corrong last week, which attracted more than 160 local community members.

State Water's Water Delivery Manager Sri Sritharan said that with only 77,000 ML in Wyangala, unless there is further rain and inflows it is likely the Lachlan River would be progressively stopped at Lake Cargelligo or Condobolin by end of September to ensure essential drinking water is available for communities.

"If Wyangala reaches 15% by 1 November 2009, that would allow increases to town water, stock and domestic and high security allocations and some access to general security carryover," Mr Sritharan said.

"It will also provide enough resources to maintain supplies to the full length of the river and some reserves at the end of the year to manage essential supplies in 2010/11."

Landholders have been advised to refill on-farm storages while river water is currently available to meet stock and domestic needs over summer.

As inflows increase, the first priority will be to extend the running of the river to its full length for the full year, Mr Sritharan said.

Lachlan Valley Water Executive Officer Mary Ewing said the meetings were very worthwhile.

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"Of course there were some very tough questions asked, but the meetings were extremely worthwhile, firstly to provide the communities with as complete a picture as possible of current water resources, required inflows and planned river operations, and to reassure residents that essential water supplies will be protected," Ms Ewing said.

"Unless there is a dramatic turn around in weather in coming months, the situation in the Lachlan will inevitably bring more hardship, especially to landholders, but those who attended the meeting were well aware of the situation and that every effort is being made to extend the delivery of supplies to the entire river for as long as possible with the existing water resources."

**-ENDS-**

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