

Water trading rules through Barmah Choke relaxed from 1 July

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority today announced that for the 2010/11 water season the trading rule controlling the trades of water allocations from upstream of the Barmah Choke to downstream will be relaxed.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority will undertake fortnightly reviews on the relaxation which may result in the need to lift the relaxation at anytime during the water season.

This will depend on water resource availability and the volume of net trades across the Choke during the course of the season.

Chief Executive Mr Rob Freeman said that while there has been an improvement in water resources in recent months, the decision was based on continued below long-term average system inflows, resulting in low water availability and having consideration of the volume of water available in Menindee Lakes.

“Based on current water resource availability for 2010/11 and net volumes traded in 2009/10, trade of allocations from above to below the Choke will be possible as long as channel capacity constraints are not encountered,” he said.

Any announcement to lift the relaxation will be made by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Allocation trades approved up until that time from above to below the Choke would be honoured.

If reviews of the relaxation indicate that it will remain in place, announcements to that effect will be made through the States together with water allocation announcements.

Mr Freeman said that the Choke constrains the volume of water that can be delivered to downstream users, particularly during summer when both demand and evaporation losses are high and in some circumstances, delivery of additional flows from trading water allocations from upstream to downstream cannot be guaranteed.

“However, because of the lower than normal regulated flows in this reach, transfers of allocations can be allowed,” he said.

Trade in entitlements from above to below the Choke will continue to be prohibited.

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