

Monday 24th January 2010

HIGH-FLOW UPDATE FOR MURRAY COUNCILS

The State Emergency Management Council met this afternoon with Mayors of the Riverland Councils to discuss potential risk of inundation in their areas and preparations should that occur.

Minister for Families and Communities Jennifer Rankine said she welcomed the opportunity to discuss issues with the mayors and looked forward to working co-operatively as this situation develops.

River Murray flow rates into South Australia are now predicted to reach and remain in the range of 80,000 megalitres a day to 90,000 megalitres a day crossing the South Australia-Victoria border for the next few weeks, subject to additional rainfall and changes in River operations.

“The current level of flow is already causing localised inundation in low-lying areas near the River Murray,” Ms Rankine said.

“It is expected that the flow will slowly increase to the peak in late January or early February 2011, and then slowly decrease during March 2011.

“I am advised that a flow of 90,000 megalitres a day is not a threat to towns and this flow is well within the normal historical flow range for the River Murray in South Australia.

“It is nothing like the 350,000 megalitres that we experienced during the floods of the 1950s.

“We are monitoring the situation closely and we are expecting to see increased flows coming down the river system over the next few weeks.

“Areas which could be inundated include campsites, causeways, roads, floodplains and riverfront shacks. Low-lying caravan parks have been fore-warned and are moving cabins to higher ground.

“Our main priority is to minimise the effect on people and their properties, contain the inundated area and then work quickly on any recovery efforts.

“The SES has been working closely with local councils and Mayors in the regions which stand to be affected and today’s meeting was another chance to talk about how we can best prepare for any potential inundation.”

While the high flows continue, the Department for Water will issue weekly Flow Advice Updates as flow projections, levels and timings are reviewed and updated.

Flow Advice Updates and River Murray inundation maps are available at www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au

Emergency Services are working closely with other government agencies to monitor the situation and keep local communities informed.

The Minister said she looked forward to continue working co-operatively with the councils during this time.