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## Editorial...

David Dowling, Editor

**W**HEN reading the district reports towards the back of this magazine, you should remember that they were written before the full extent of the recent rain event became apparent. The hindsight of a few extra days displays a much rosier picture of the outlook of next season's cotton crop. In the Border Rivers for example, the combined storage level in the system (Glenlyon and Pindari Dams) has gone from just over 13 per cent to close to 40 per cent in less than a week – with plenty more still to come and over 100,000 megalitres a day flowing down the system with some surely destined for on-farm storages.

In Queensland, Emerald is still waiting for the rain to fall in the right place, but areas further south have copped a drenching and the Condamine/Ballone system is running strongly and hopefully filling some of those downstream storages.

On the Gwydir, Copeton has broken over 30 per cent and the excellent inflows will make this figure well and truly redundant in a week or so. For the first time in a long while, the BOM has been showing little red triangles (major flood level) on the Gwydir River.

Further south, both Keepit and Burrendong are nudging 50 per cent and will go well above that figure in the near future. And the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Murray systems are all in a strong position. Overall, it is the best the Murray Darling Basin water supply has looked for about four years, although that's not saying much of course.

So how does that factor in to the crystal ball for next year's crop? Even though that consideration is a bit premature with nary a picker in a field for the current crop so far.

Well, it's not hard to make a case that next season we could substantially increase or even double the size of this year's crop, currently estimated at about 2.5 million bales. Prices are good, subsoil moisture levels have received a huge boost and the water allocation outlook is looking much better than it has for a few years. Another rain event over the next few months like the one we have just had could set things up for a huge year.

But, of course, that is putting the cart before the horse. The current crop was already quite late after a delayed start in many areas. Plus a cool season and the effect of the recent rain has still to be quantified. Some crops will get wet feet with all the problems that can bring, so we can only hope for a decent spell of fine dry weather to minimise the losses.

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HEAD OFFICE - MOREE

39 Frome Street, PO Box 774, Moree NSW 2400 P (02) 6752 1021; F (02) 6752 5070

Paul Covell, Peter Taylor E: ptaylor@smk.com.au

www.smk.com.au