



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

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Current water availability

From 12 January to 12 February 2009 rainfall across the Murrumbidgee Valley was insignificant and all streamflows are now receding to low levels.

Temperatures during the period have been extreme, with most centres in the Valley experiencing temperatures well above the average for this time of year.

The average maximum January temperature in Griffith was 36 degrees, compared to the long-term average of 32.4 degrees, with thirteen days straight of temperatures above 40 degrees. Likewise, Hay and Gundagai have experienced temperatures well above their long-term averages, with both centres experiencing near record periods of 40 degree days.

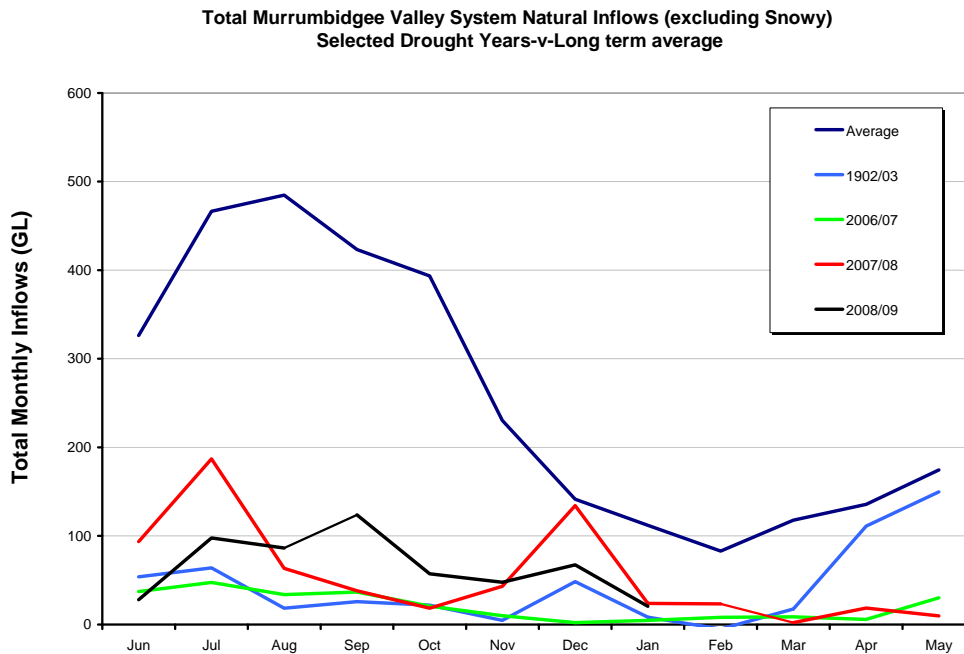
The recent heatwave has resulted in higher river transmission losses and increased evaporation that have off-set increases in inflows to the Murrumbidgee from the Snow Scheme.

Rainfall over the period has been low, with Gundagai receiving 7.2 millimetres (mm) Griffith 2.8 mm and Hay 0.2 mm respectively.

The following table shows Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 11 February 2009.

Storage @ 11 February 2009	Volume (GL)	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 1 December to 12 January 2009 (GL)	Volume at this time last year.
Burrinjuck Dam	521	51	-1	430
Blowering Dam	598	35	+24	413
Total	1119			843

Inflow graph



This graph shows the long-term average system inflows comparing 2007/08 to recent drought years. The 'black line' indicates inflows so far this water year.

Inflows into the Murrumbidgee Valley's storages are now similar to the same time last year; however, resources remain well below average.

What this means

The record heatwave conditions have dried the catchment significantly, with inflows now receding to very low levels in all streams and rivers in the Valley.

While there have been some inflows in the Snowy Scheme, these have been offset by the high transmission losses caused by the high temperatures over the last month. The volume in Blowering Dam has increased because of the releases from Snowy Hydro.

There is no increase in water available for consumptive use and as a result, the general security water allocation in the Murrumbidgee Valley will remain on 21 per cent of entitlement. All other allocations remain unchanged.

Currently there is only sufficient water to provide for critical human needs for 2009/10. Without a significant autumn break there will be limited water available for consumptive use at the beginning of 2009/10, including high security licence holders.

Unregulated Systems in the Murrumbidgee

Flows in many of the unregulated streams in the Murrumbidgee Valley are also at very low levels, meaning that they have reached *Cease to Pump* (CTP) or *Ceased to Flow* (CTF) levels. Licence holders in these areas are reminded to check and adhere to the conditions on their license.

Currently the Tarcutta Creek, the Hillas Creek system, including Yaven Yaven and Nacki Nacki creeks, and the Yass River are at CTF levels. The Bombowlee Creek is also at a CTF level and is subject to a section 324 order under the *Water Management Act 2000*, which means that water from this stream can only be used within a domestic home.

The Adelong Creek is now very close to a CTF level, Gilmore Creek is at a CTP level and the upper Murrumbidgee River at all control points (Mittagang Crossing, Billilingra and Mt McDonald) is now below a CTP level.

Carryover rules

While the Murrumbidgee Water Sharing Plan remains suspended, high and general security licences will be permitted to carryover a maximum of 30 per cent of entitlement. In 2009/10 accounts will be limited to 95 per cent (including carryover + allocation) of entitlement for high security entitlement holders, until the general security allocation exceeds 95 per cent. When the Water Sharing Plan is recommenced, then the rules in the Plan will apply, however the plan will only recommence when there is significant improvement in water availability.

Trade

All water in accounts is tradeable. All trades must be received by State Water by close of business 31 May 2009.

- **Stock and domestic water is not tradeable.**
- **There are restrictions on the trade of town water supply.**

Town water supply in 2008/09

Town water allocations remain at 95 per cent of entitlement and water to meet critical human needs for 2009/10 has been reserved. Councils and Town water supply authorities are now responsible for managing water restrictions within their licensed entitlement.

The drought is far from over and **everyone** should remain conservative with all water use. Without significant improvement in water availability, water supply will be severely reduced in 2009/10 and water supply authorities should be prepared to commence the new water year at level 4 water restrictions (no outside water use).

Compliance

The Department of Water and Energy's Drought Contingency Planning Program will only work if everyone adheres to the restrictions and is careful with **all** water use. To ensure that the system is run fairly, the community should report any suspected breaches to the Department's Compliance Unit via phone 1800 633 362 or by email to watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au. All reports are confidential.

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