



## Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

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### CURRENT WATER AVAILABILITY

With the exception of some parts of the Snowy catchment, there has been little rainfall across the Murrumbidgee Valley and little run-off into the rivers and streams in the past month. The onset of cooler temperatures has reduced the evaporative and river losses.

The seasonal outlook is that the chance of median rainfall from now until the end of July 2009 is slightly below average.

The rainfall in the Snowy catchment will generate some improvement in water availability and the extent of this will be assessed later in May.

Rainfall across the Murrumbidgee Valley over the past month has been very light and patchy, with little inflow occurring because the catchment is so dry. Thredbo Village received 186 millimetres (mm) of rain, Gundagai received 56 mm, Griffith 20.4 mm and Hay 33 mm respectively.

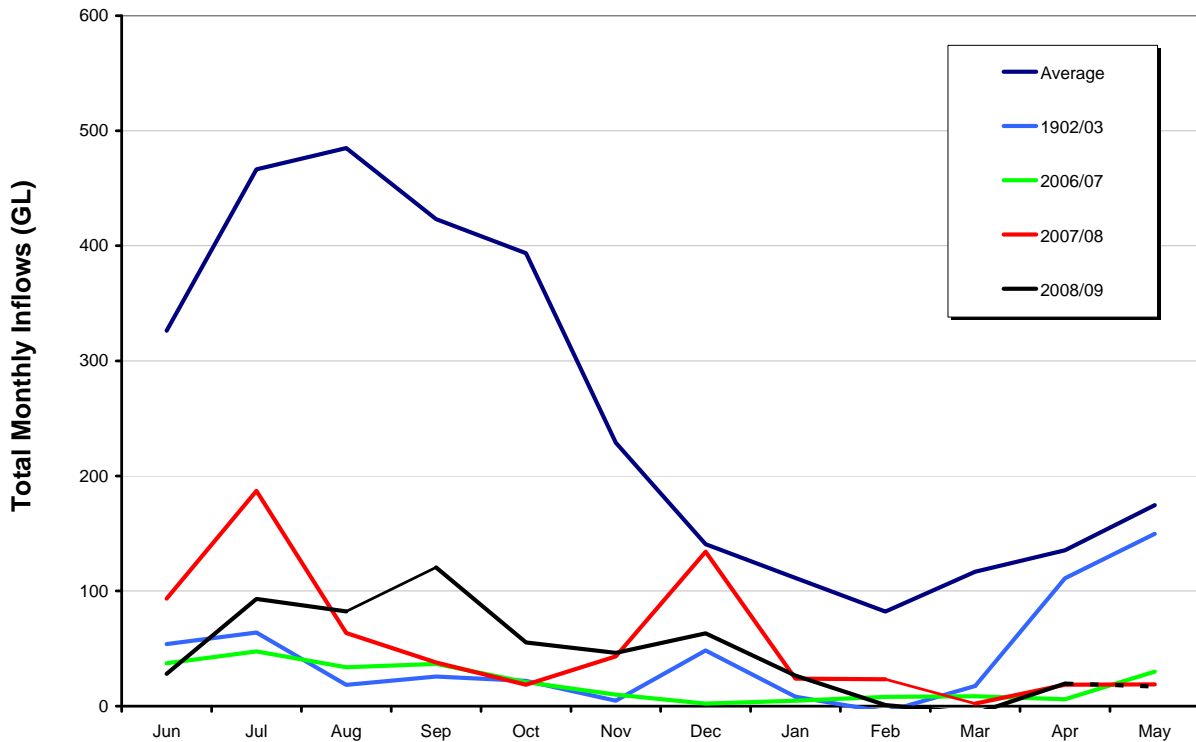
The following table shows Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 11 May 2009.

<b>Storage @ 11 May 2009</b>	<b>Volume (GL)</b>	<b>Percent of capacity</b>	<b>Change in Volume 11 March to May 15 2009 (GL)</b>	<b>Volume at this time last year.</b>
Burrinjuck Dam	398	39	-24	422
Blowering Dam	494	29	+13	468
<b>Total</b>	<b>892</b>			<b>890</b>

There is approximately the same volume in storage now as at this time last year.

## INFLOW GRAPH

Total Murrumbidgee Valley System Natural Inflows (excluding Snowy)  
Selected Drought Years-v-Long term average



Inflows into the Murrumbidgee Valley's storages are now similar to that seen in 2007/08

### WHAT THIS MEANS

There is sufficient water available, assuming minimum inflows, to assure the critical human and domestic and stock needs, including continuous flow in Yanco Creek, but not to provide 100 per cent of the conveyance water required to deliver this water throughout 2009/10.

If inflows remain low between now and 1 July 2009, any initial shortfall in conveyance water required for 2009/10 will be sourced from carry-over. This means that there may be insufficient water to guarantee the delivery of 100 per cent of carry-over on 1 July 2009. The first inflows in 2009/10 will then be reserved to repay carry-over.

Even if inflows remain low, it is expected that NSW Murrumbidgee irrigators will have access to a minimum of 50 per cent of carry-over on 1 July. This estimate is **preliminary** and is based on expected minimum inflows. There is still a very high probability that all carry-over will be deliverable early in the new water year.

## ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR 2009/10

The calculation of the water available in the Murrumbidgee Valley in 2009/10 includes;

- the water in storage
- the minimum inflows to the storages and tributaries ever recorded, in this case the inflows recorded in 2006/07
- the minimum volumes expected from Snowy Hydro (equivalent to the minimum recorded (2006-07))
- consideration of the maximum losses (evaporation and transmission) required to deliver all the available extractable water.

Water in excess of that required for critical human needs will be distributed in the following manner;

1. Deliver carry-over.
2. High Security allocation.
3. General Security allocation up until the end of February. Depending on the circumstances allocation of further General Security water will be balanced against the need to reserve water for 2010/11.

There is a considerable volume of water in the Murrumbidgee Environmental Water Allowance that was borrowed in 2006 and made available for consumptive use. This volume has not yet been repaid. A repayment schedule will be developed early in the new water year, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Critical Water Advisory Group.

## CARRY-OVER RULES

While the Murrumbidgee Water Sharing Plan remains suspended, both High and General Security licences will be permitted to carry-over a maximum of 30 per cent of entitlement.

Accounts will be limited to 95 per cent (including carry-over + allocation) of entitlement for High Security entitlement holders, until the General Security allocation exceeds 95 per cent, after which allocations for both High Security and General Security entitlements may be increased to 100 percent.

If water availability improves, any volume in accounts that would otherwise exceed 100 percent of entitlement will be forfeited.

**Water will be carried over automatically at the end of the water year; there is no need to complete any paperwork.** Account balance information can be obtained from State Water Customer Service Officers.

Town water supply and stock and domestic supply cannot be carried over.

All licence holders should be aware that if the Water Sharing Plan is recommenced, then the rules in the plan will apply.

## TRADE

All water in accounts is tradeable. All trades (including interstate trades) **must** be received by State Water by 31 May 2009.

## TOWN WATER SUPPLY

Councils and town water supply authorities are asked to continue to be conservative with all water use. Without significant improvement in water availability, councils and town water supply authorities should be prepared to commence Level 4 water restrictions (no outside water use) at 1 July 2009.

Water used for domestic purposes in rural areas will be restricted to the same level as the relevant Shire restrictions. This will apply to surface water and groundwater taken as basic landholder right or for stock and domestic purposes.

## 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](mailto:watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au). All reports are confidential.

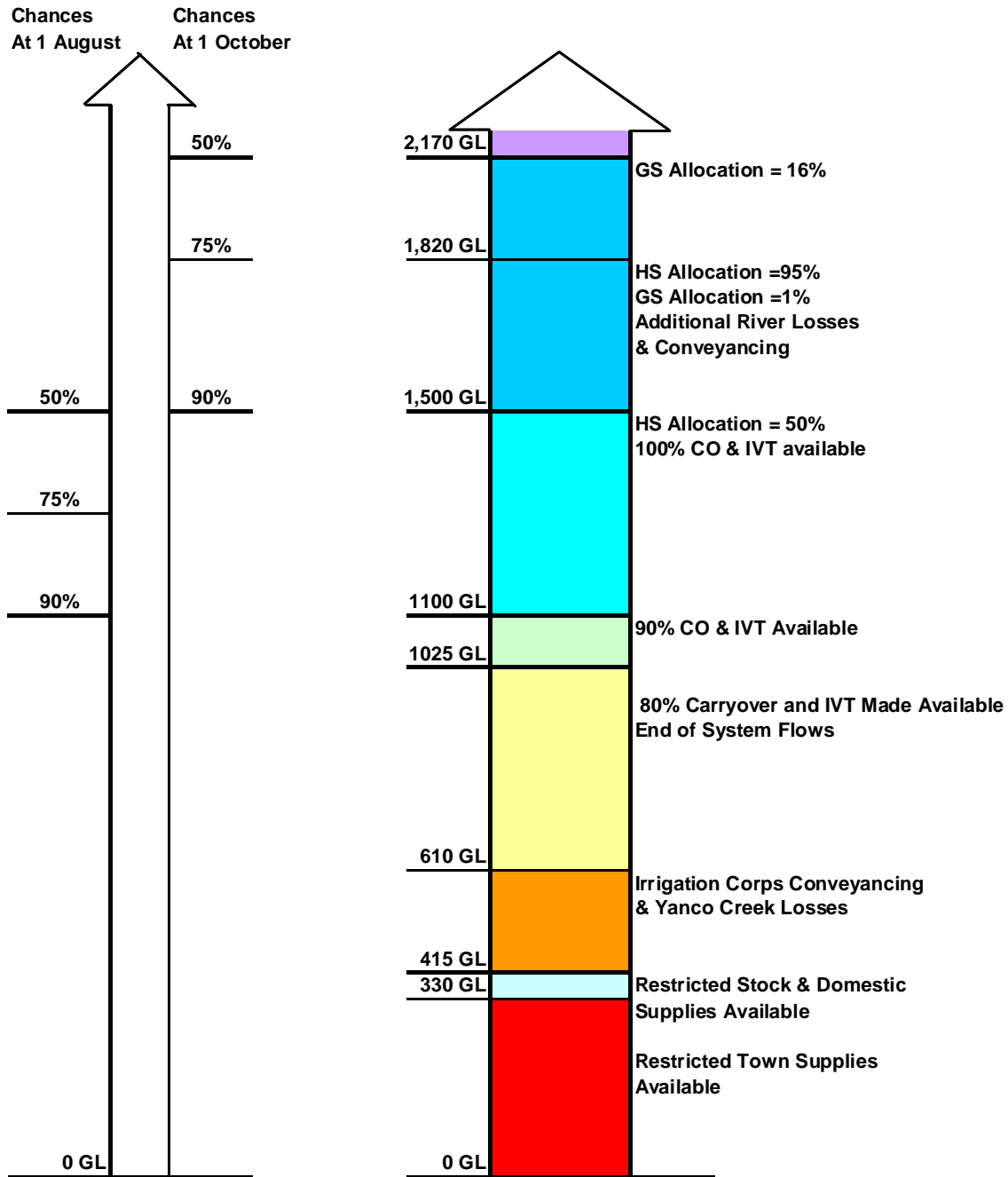
## WATER AVAILABILITY OUTLOOK

The figures that have been used to calculate this diagram are based on dry tercile and are very conservative. They refer to water availability in **2009/10**.

The volumes on the "rocket" are indicative only and may change dependant on the priority of access following stakeholder feedback.

## Murrumbidgee Valley Indicative Outlook

### Indicative Requirements



**NOTE:**The volumes indicated above are indicative only, they may change depending on when improvements occur and the prevailing downstream conditions.

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