

Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

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CURRENT WATER AVAILABILITY

Rainfall across the catchment has been patchy again with Thredbo Village receiving 104.8 millimetres (mm); 60 per cent of average August rainfall, Gundagai received 43.2 mm; 70 per cent of average August rainfall, Griffith 19.6 mm; 50 per cent of average August rainfall and Hay 7.5 mm; 20 per cent of average August rainfall respectively.

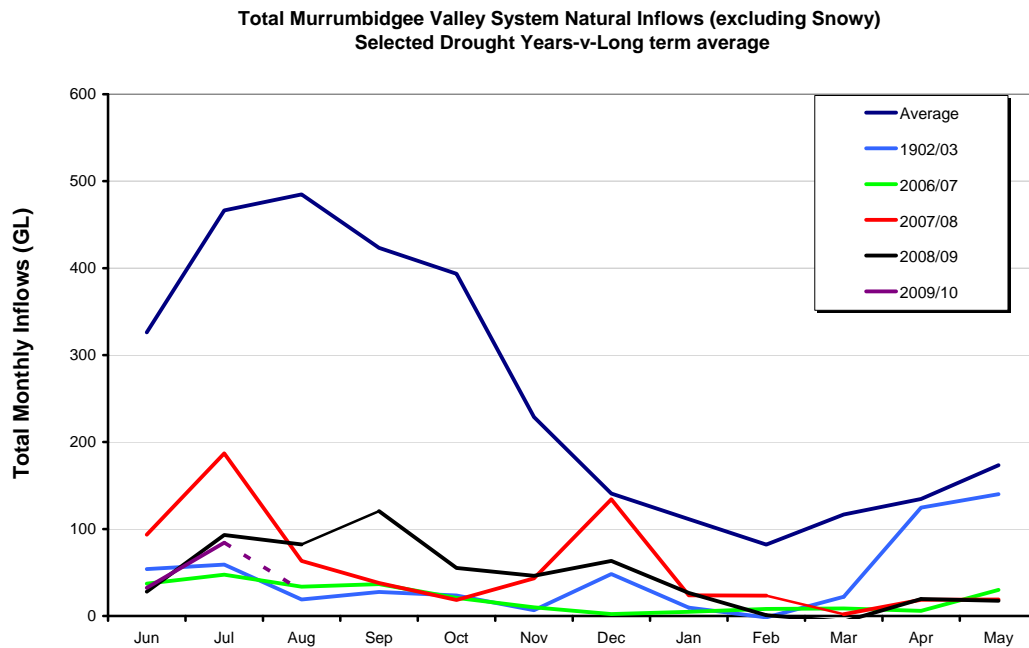
This rainfall has been welcome across the rangeland country but has generated only limited run-off. Soil moisture levels are only superficial and good soaking rain is needed to increase sub-soil moisture.

The following table shows Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 13 August 2009.

Storage @ 13 August 2009	Volume (GL)	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 13 July to 13 August 2009 (GL)	Volume at this time last year.
Burrinjuck Dam	394	38	+2	456
Blowering Dam	668	40	+78	734
Total	1062		+80	1190

Much of the water held in both dams is private carryover (that is water held-over by licensed users from 2008/09 to use in 2009/10) and advance releases for Snowy Hydro Limited. There is a very small proportion of water in either storage that can be made available for allocation.

INFLOW GRAPH



WHAT THIS MEANS

The combination of minor improvements in water availability in the Snowy River system, which will be diverted into the Murrumbidgee River during the year and some inflow has provided a small increase in water availability. There has been a significant reduction in the actual volume of carryover water from 2008/09 compared to the original estimate. This has enabled high security allocations to be increased from 5 per cent to 20 per cent of entitlement. Stock and domestic and town water supply allocations will remain on 50 per cent of entitlement.

TRADE

An interim moratorium on the temporary trade of water from the Murrumbidgee Valley to the Murray Valley, including interstate trades, was announced on 30 June 2009. This moratorium was announced because of potentially excessively high transmission losses that would occur if the volumes of trades into the Murray Valley via the Murrumbidgee were to continue throughout the year. The NSW Office of Water is currently developing strategies to enable the moratorium to be relaxed as soon as possible.

TOWN WATER SUPPLY

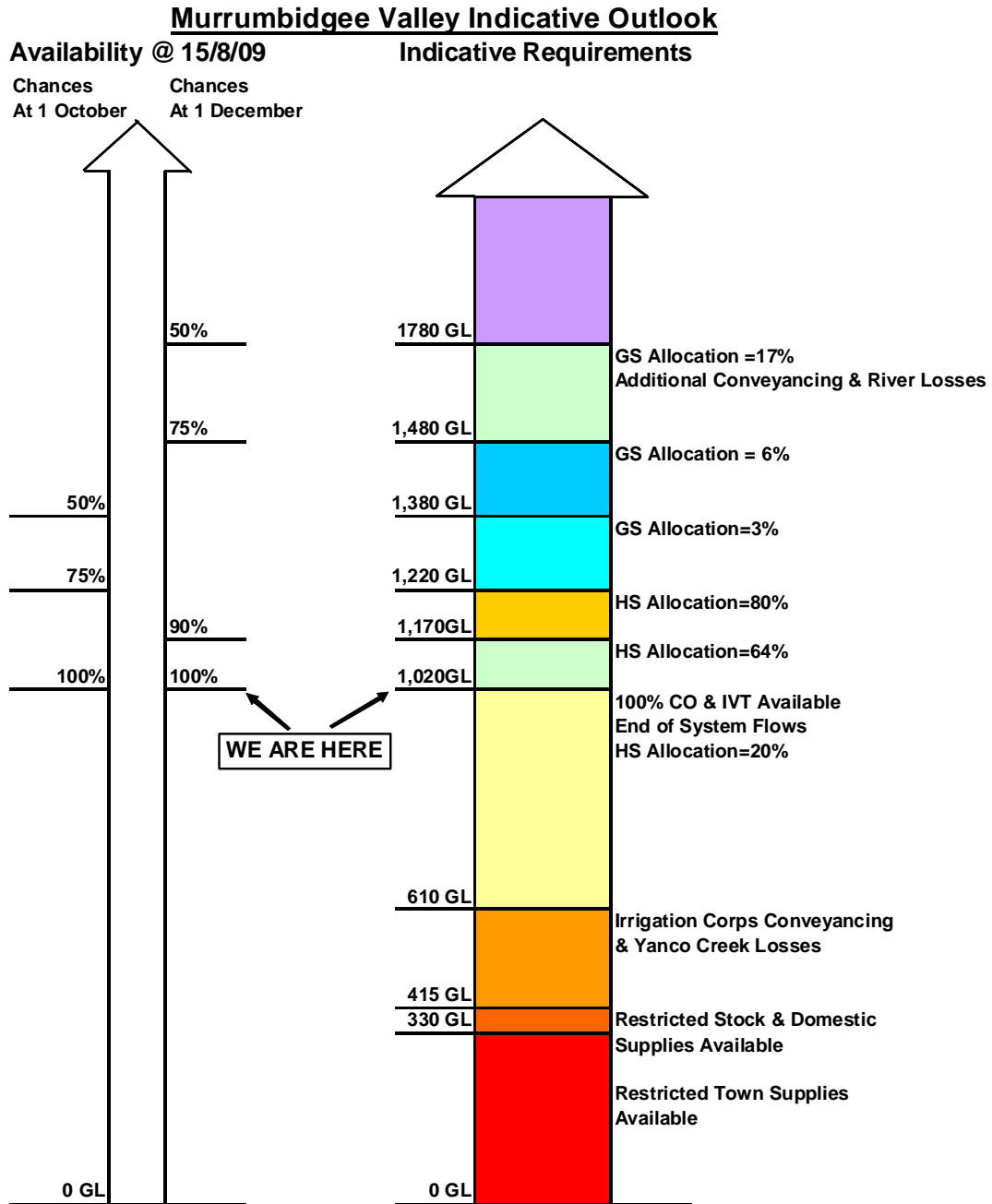
In accordance with the Murray and Murrumbidgee valleys water restrictions policy, town water supply authorities may now move to level 3a water restrictions; a maximum of 4 hours of outside water use per week.

COMPLIANCE

The NSW Office of Water'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 Office's Compliance Unit via phone 1800 633 362 or by email to 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.



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