



Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

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Current water availability

Little rainfall has occurred across the Murray Valley over the past month, with the only good falls occurring in the alpine regions of the upper catchment.

The most significant fall was 97 millimetres (mm) at Falls Creek which will contribute to Victorian tributary inflows.

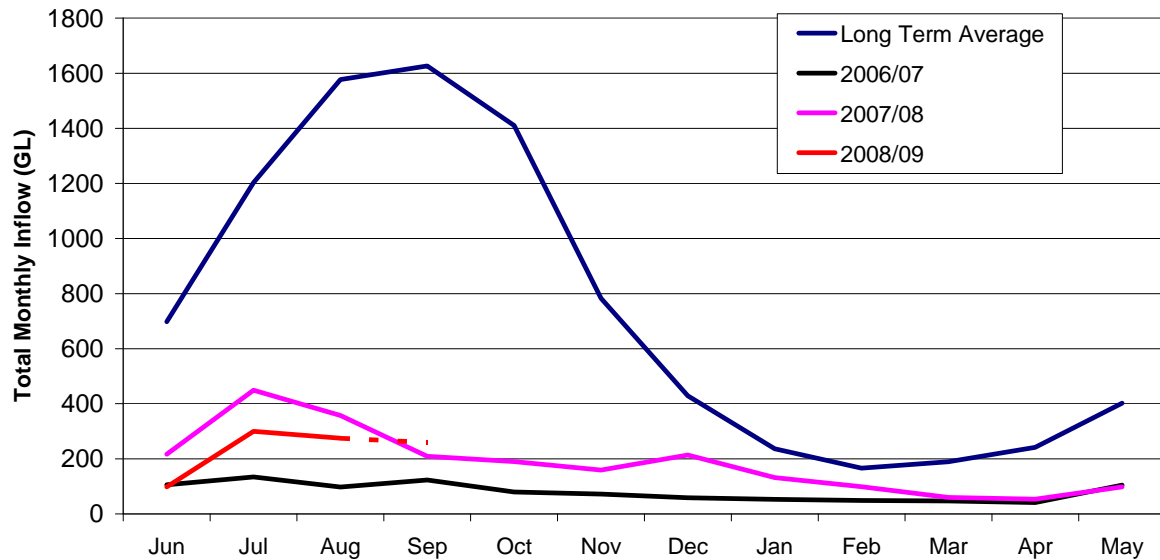
In NSW, Corryong received 35.8 (mm), Albury 17.6 (mm), Deniliquin 15.4 (mm) and Mildura/Buronga 17.6 (mm) over August which is equivalent to about 25 per cent of the long term average.

There has been only minimal improvement in Snowy resources, but there have been some good inflows to the Upper Hume catchment and smaller inflows from the Kiewa River which provided water to all three states.

| Storage @ 11 September 2008 | Volume (GL) | Percent of capacity | Change in Volume 13 August 2008 to 11 September 2008 (GL) | Volume at this time last year |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Hume Dam | 909 | 30 | +194 | 813 (27%) |
| Dartmouth Dam | 782 | 20 | +35 | 650 (17%) |
| Lake Victoria | 320 | 47 | +13 | 556 (82%) |
| Menindee Lakes Storage | 504 | 30 | -20 | 67 (4%) |
| Total volume | 2515 | | +222 | 2086 |

While there is more water in storage now than at this time last year, much of this is in the Menindee storages. Releases have commenced from Menindee to transfer up to 170 GL into the Murray River.

Inflows to the River Murray (excluding Menindee and Snowy) Long Term Average and Selected Water Years



This graph shows the long term average inflows into the Murray River. The 'red line' indicates our current position in the 2008/09.

While cumulative inflows so far this year are more than the record low levels of 2006, they are still less than at this time last year.

What this means

There is enough water available to increase the high security allocation from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of entitlement.

As announced on 1 September, there is 30 gigalitres (GL) of water available to provide a stock and domestic replenishment flow into the Wakool, Merran and Colligen -Neimur systems. Delivery plans are currently being developed with landholder groups with flows expected to commence this week.

There has also been enough water reserved to provide a flush into the group irrigation schemes late in the season if needed. All water required for basic stock and domestic supply for Murray Irrigation Limited has been reserved and will be delivered as required.

Consideration will need to be given to reserving water to meet critical human needs in 2009/10 during the coming months.

Repayment of critical water

There are still some licences with unreconciled accounts as a result of the critical water allocations made in 2007.

Now that 50 per cent high security has been announced, repayment of these outstanding accounts will be triggered by the next increase. The terms of repayment will be advised in the next announcement following advice from the Critical Water Advisory Group.

For industrial users, repayment of contingency water allocations for 2007/08 will commence at 80 per cent. This means that these licences will receive normal allocation credits until these allocation levels are reached.

Management of the Menindee Lakes

Water is currently being released from the Menindee Lakes at 200 megalitres per day ML/day and will increase to 4000 ML/day by early October to underwrite resources in the NSW Murray Valley.

Initially releases will be made from Lake Pamamaroo.

Town water supply

Town water supply will remain at 50 per cent of entitlement. All town water supply authorities are asked to be as conservative as possible with water use.

Trade

All water in accounts is tradable under the same rules that we applied in 2007/08. Currently all trades must be completed by the close of business on 30 April 2009.

Temporary Trades out of the Lower Darling are permitted during 2008/09. Approved trades will be honoured in 2008/09. Trades are permitted both into and out of the Lower Darling.

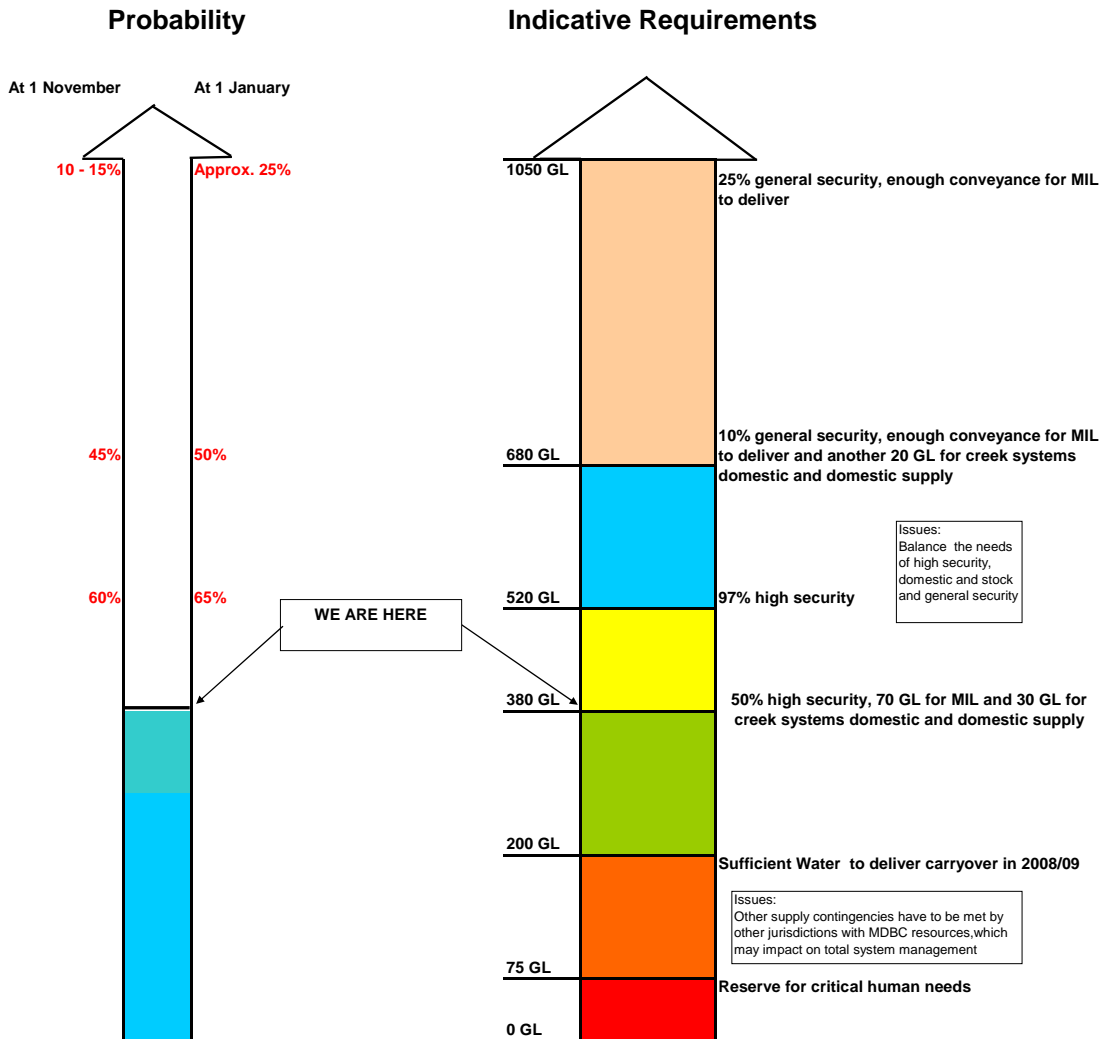
Compliance

The 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 of Water and Energy's Compliance Unit on 1800 633 362 or by email to watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au. All reports are confidential.

Water availability outlook

NSW Murray Valley Outlook

Based on end of August Assessment plus recent rain



Note: this advice only provides an indication of potential improvements and any planning decisions should also recognise the current conditions and meteorological predictions. These probabilities do not take into account water that will need to be reserved to meet critical human needs in 2009/10.

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