



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

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Current water availability

From 11 September to 10 October, rainfall across the Murray Valley has been concentrated in the upper catchments. Corryong received 83.4 millimetres (mm), Albury 22.2 mm, Deniliquin 17.6 mm and Mildura 3.8 mm of rain in that period.

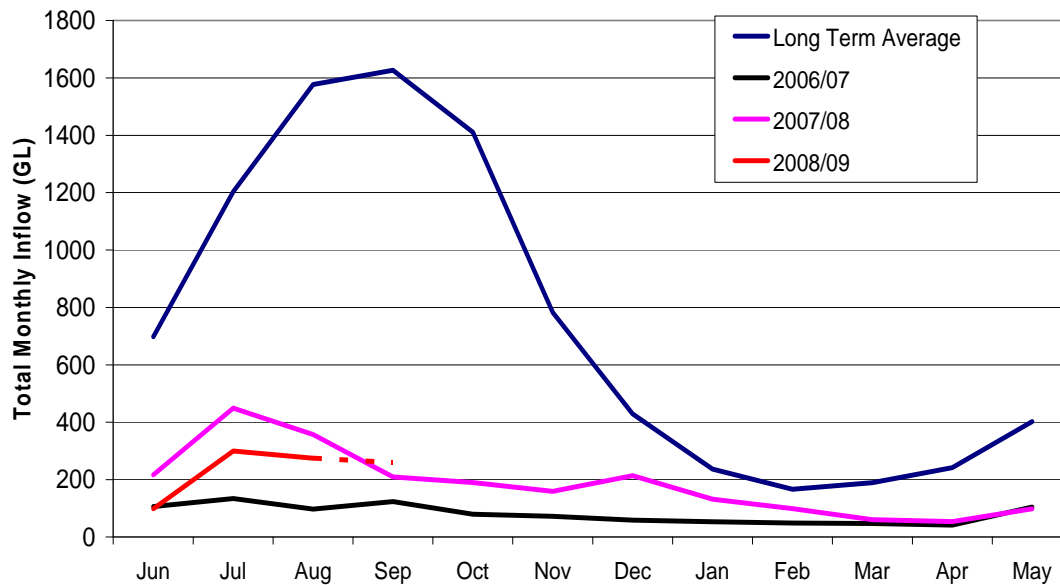
Most of the improvement to the Murray Valley has come from late September rainfall that improved the Snowy resource set. These flows into Hume and Dartmouth dams are now receding.

All October rainfall to date has been included in this assessment.

Storage @ 13 October 2008	Volume (GL)	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 11 September to 13 October 2008 (GL)	Volume at this time last year
Hume Dam	1067	35	+ 201	866
Dartmouth Dam	856	22	+ 166	690
Lake Victoria	269	40	- 225	494
Menindee Lakes Storage	430	25	+ 373	57
Total volume	2622			2107

While there is more water in storage now than at this time last year, much of this is in the Menindee Lakes storages. Water is currently being released from the Menindee Lakes at a rate of 4,000 megalitres per day (ML/d) as part of the NSW Government's strategy to transfer up to 170 gigalitres (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 inflows are above the rates at this time last year, they remain extremely low in statistical terms. Inflows since 1 June this year could be expected to be exceeded in 92 years in every 100.

What this means

There is enough water to increase the allocation for high security licences by 15 per cent to 95 per cent of entitlement and to make an initial general security allocation of 2 per cent.

There will be no further increases to high security allocations for the remainder of this year. The majority of high security licences now have 100 per cent of entitlement available for use, with an average account for 2008/09 being 98 per cent of entitlement. Any further improvements in general security allocation will be linked to:

- the provision of sufficient conveyance water to ensure delivery, and
- reserving sufficient water to meet critical human needs in 2009/10.

The allocation for town water supply and stock and domestic will increase by 15 per cent to 95 per cent of entitlement, but users are reminded to be as conservative as possible with all water consumption as:

- reserves for next year's critical human needs have still not been set aside; and
- general security allocations are minimal.

Enough water is also being made available to provide for "minimum conveyance" within Murray Irrigation's area of operation.

Repayment of critical water

All accounts with water still owing from the survival water program in 2007 will be repaid as a result of today's allocation. Licence holders are advised to check their water account balances by contacting their local State Water customer service officer.

Management of the menindee lakes

Water releases are continuing from the Menindee Lakes at a rate of 4,000 ML/d to transfer approximately 170 GL to the Murray Valley to supplement the water available to NSW. Inflows to the Menindee Lakes have ceased, likewise the Darling River has not flowed at Wilcannia since late July.

Town water supply

Town water supply has been increased to 95 per cent of entitlement. However, all water supply authorities are asked to be as conservative as possible with all water use and remain on level 3 water restrictions.

Carryover rules

When the plan is suspended, the carryover rules remain the same as listed in the plan.

However to encourage water conservation, any water that remains in accounts at the end of the 2008/09 water year will be re-credited in the 2009/10 water year.

Water allocations in 2009/10 will be limited to a maximum of 100 percent of entitlement including water credited from 2008/09.

Trade

All water in accounts is tradable under the same rules applied in 2007/08. Currently all trades must be completed by the close of business on 30 April 2009. Town water supply cannot be traded while the Water Sharing Plan remains suspended

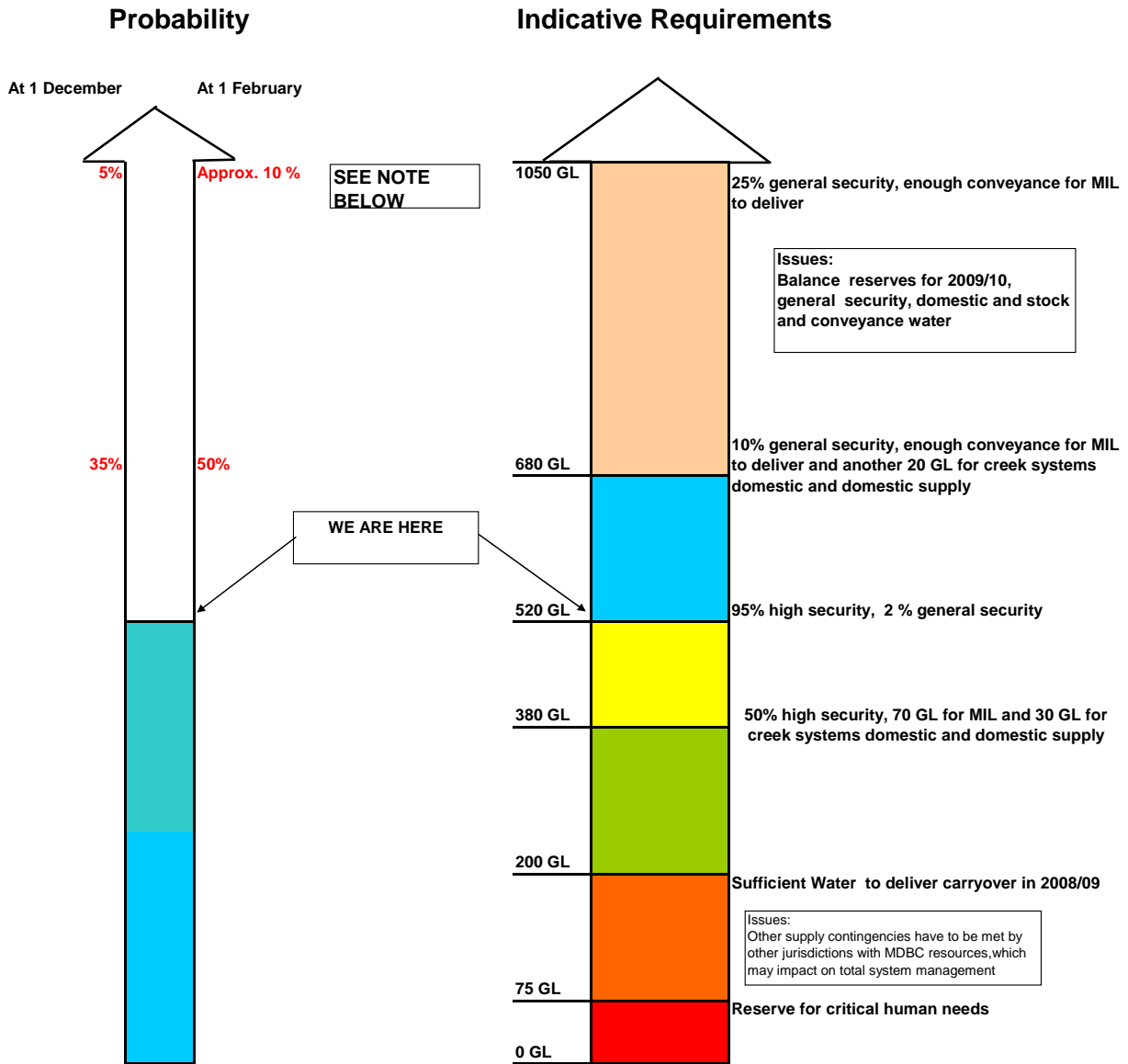
Compliance

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 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 September Assessment



NOTE: 1050 GL is the water to deliver 25 % General Security allocations. The corresponding probabilities to achieve this allocation take into account the need to reserve critical human needs for 2009/10

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