



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

## Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

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### Current water availability

From 1 December 2008 to 12 January 2009 rainfall across the Murray Valley has been confined mostly to the eastern parts of the catchment.

Significant rain fell from 10 - 18 December but there has been little rainfall since.

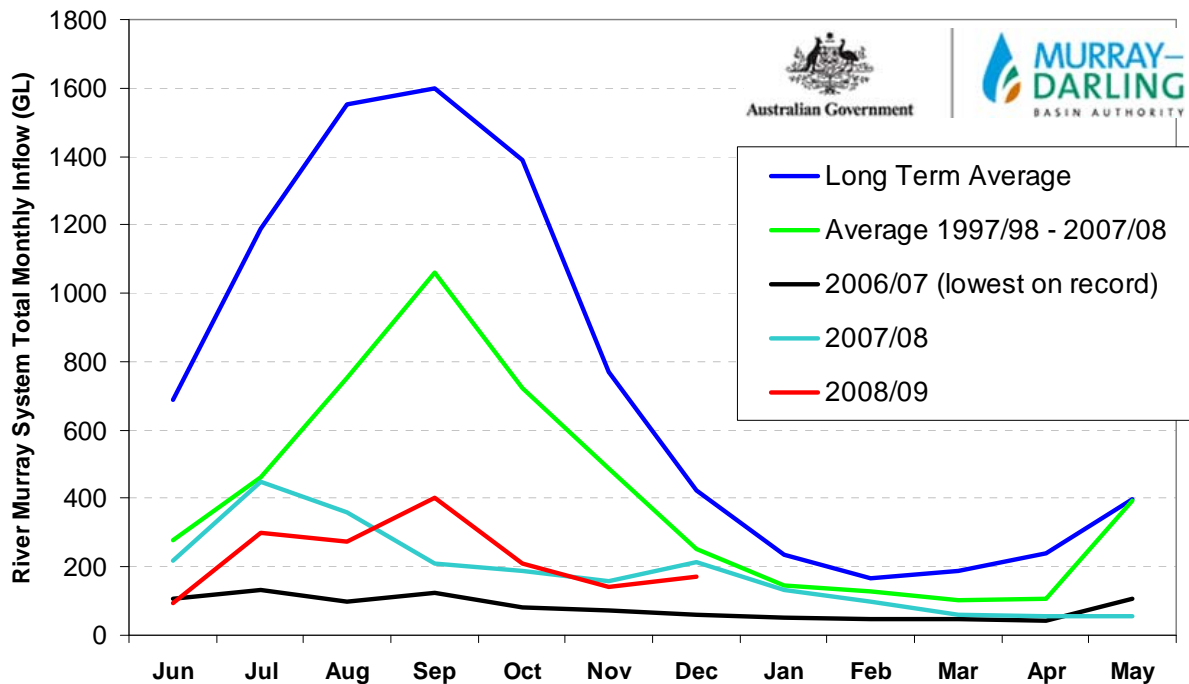
Thredbo received 140 millimetres (mm) prior to Christmas and 201.9 mm since December 1, likewise Albury received 50.2 mm, Deniliquin 68.6 mm and Mildura received 33.4 mm respectively.

The rainfall has generated significant inflow in both the Hume and Snowy catchments.

The following table shows Murray Valley storage levels as at 12 January 2009.

Storage @ 12 January 2009	Volume (GL)	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 1 December 2008 to 12 January 2009 (GL)	Volume at this time last year
Hume Dam	667	22	-220	645
Dartmouth Dam	884	23	+6	676
<b>Total volume</b>	<b>1551</b>			<b>1321</b>

## River Murray system monthly inflows



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 similar to 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 about 95 years in every 100.

### What this means

The significant rainfall across the catchment in December has enabled;

- an increase in allocations to general security licence holders of 5 per cent to 9 per cent of entitlement,
- full reservation of water to meet critical human needs for 2009/10,
- full reservation of water to provide a second stock and domestic replenishment in the mid Murray tributaries. The timing of this flush will be determined in consultation with the landholder advisory group.
- additional water has also been made available to enable delivery of all water required within Murray Irrigations area of operation.

There is sufficient water available to deliver all town water supply, stock and domestic requirements, and all water currently in licensed accounts.

High security, town water supply and stock and domestic remain on 95 per cent of entitlement.

General Security in the lower Darling River will remain at 50 per cent of entitlement.

## Management of the Menindee Lakes

The transfer of water from the Menindee lakes system to the Murray valley is now complete. Releases from the Menindee Lakes system will now be reduced to a level to meet Darling River requirements.

Flows in the upstream section of the Darling River are expected to reach Wilcannia in the coming weeks and a small volume is expected to enter the Menindee Lakes.

## Town water supply

Town Water allocations are at 95 per cent of entitlement and with water to meet critical human needs for 2009/10 reserved, Town Water Supply Authorities are now responsible for managing water restrictions within their licensed entitlement.

This is consistent with the agreement made with the Regional Organisation of Councils late last year.

Councils and Town Water supply authorities are reminded that the drought is far from over and that they should remain conservative with all water use.

## Carryover rules

While the Water Sharing Plan remains suspended, High and General security licences will be permitted to carryover unused allocation up to a maximum of 100 per cent of entitlements. If the Water Sharing Plan is recommenced, then High security licences will **not** be permitted to carryover, as there will be sufficient water to provide full High security allocations in 2009/10. All use in 2009/10 will be limited so that the sum of carryover and allocations cannot exceed 100 per cent.

## Trade

All water in accounts is tradable under the same rules applied in 2007/08. All intra valley trades must be completed by the close of business on **31 May 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](mailto:watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au). All reports are confidential.

## Water availability outlook

Probabilities for initial July 2009 allocations will be published in the next communiqué and refined each month as the water year comes to close.

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