



## Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

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### CURRENT WATER AVAILABILITY

There has been very little rainfall across the catchment in the past month; however, welcome cooler temperatures have reduced the evaporative and river losses.

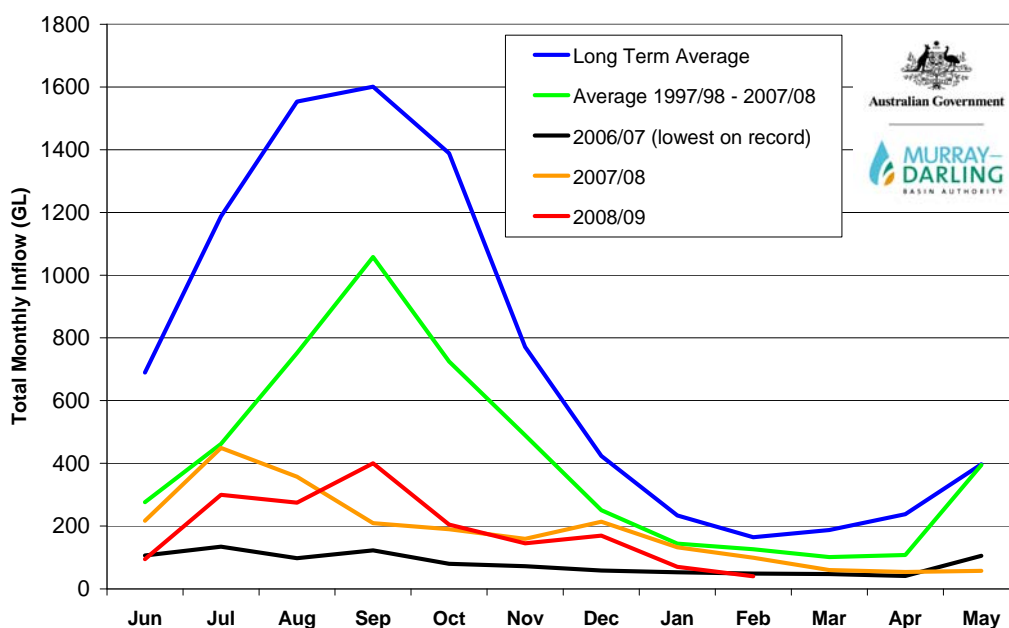
Weather conditions now appear to have moderated across the catchment with the seasonal outlook now suggesting the chance of average rainfall during autumn.

Rainfall over the period has been low, with Thredbo receiving 32.5 millimetres (mm) Albury 4.4 mm, Deniliquin 4.4 mm and Mildura 8.8 mm respectively.

The following table shows Murray Valley storage levels as at 11 March 2009.

Storage @ 11 March 2009	Volume (GL)	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 12 February 2009 (GL)	Volume at this time last year
Hume Dam	252	8	-135	341
Dartmouth Dam	858	22		601
Menindee Lakes	225	13	+117	541
Lake Victoria	161	24	N/A	249
<b>Total volume</b>	<b>1496</b>			<b>1732</b>

### INFLOW GRAPH



Inflows have now fallen to the low levels experienced in 2006/07.

## WHAT THIS MEANS

Drought conditions continue across the southern valleys and without a substantial autumn break there will not be enough water available to supply all carryover and high security needs on 1 July 2009.

There is enough water reserved to meet all critical human needs; this is all town water supply under Level 4, provide a minimal stock and domestic supply along the regulated river system and supply a small volume to Murray Irrigation Limited for town water and stock and domestic supply.

Any further inflows will not be allocated to until sufficient water has been reserved to supply all carryover in 2009/10.

## CARRYOVER

Carryover in 2008/09 is available for all licence categories except town water supply and stock and domestic.

Carryover is limited to the 100 per cent of licensed entitlement. This means that if your licensed entitlement is 150 megalitres, this is the maximum that can be carried over. This includes all water traded in.

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.

The total amount of water that can be credited to accounts in 2009/10 from carryover and announced allocation is 100 per cent. Additional water is only available if purchased in 2009/10.

## MID-MURRAY TRIBUTARIES

The stock and domestic replenishment flow recommenced to the Wakool River system on 9 March. This followed improved weather conditions and advice from NSW DPI Fisheries and the Murray Daring Freshwater Research Centre that fish refuge was deteriorating as a result of evaporation.

The flow was postponed following two fish kills as a result of severely reduced oxygen levels caused by high water temperatures, coupled with high organic loads.

Approximately 30 gigalitres of water will be delivered in these systems to meet the stock and domestic needs of drought effected landholders.

This water is only available for stock and domestic use and not available for irrigation. Irrigation may only be available for users in this system following the completion of the replenishment in all streams and the current *323 Order (Water Management Act 2000)* being repealed. This will depend on additional water becoming available to continue flows beyond May 2009.

The Department of Water and Energy has contingency plans in place should any further black water events occur and will continue to monitor water quality closely.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE MENINDEE LAKES

Following the heavy rainfall in the upper Darling catchment in mid February, the Menindee Lakes storage will increase to approximately 15 per cent of capacity.

To minimise losses, water will be stored in Lake Wetherell. Releases to Lake Pamamaroo will only occur if there is sufficient to cover evaporative losses and exceed dead storage. Any volume less than this, that would otherwise exceed the capacity of Lake Wetherell, will be diverted into the Lower Darling River.

These inflows have secured Broken Hill's water supply for 21 months.

## TOWN WATER SUPPLY

Town water allocations remain at 95 per cent of entitlement and water to meet critical human needs for 2009/10 has been reserved. Town water supply authorities are now responsible for managing water restrictions within their licensed entitlement.

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

## TRADE

All water in accounts is tradeable under the same rules that applied in 2007/08. All trades (including interstate trades) must be lodged with State Water by 31 May 2009.

The rules applying to trades from upstream of the Barmah Choke to downstream and from out of the lower Darling River will cease on 31 May 2009, and will be reviewed for the 2009/10 water year.

## 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

The following table shows the indicative probabilities as of 11 March for the remainder of the water year if record low flows continue.

Date	Critical Human needs	Delivery of full Carryover	* Stock and domestic	# 50% high security allocation
1 July	95%	25%	15%	10%
1 August	99%	75%	50%	30%
1 September	99%	90%	75%	60%

\* Stock and domestic:

This is stock and domestic water supplied to effluent streams and smaller irrigation companies and includes survival water for permanent plantings.

# This estimate includes additional MIL conveyance and high security.

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