



critical water planning

for the Murrumbidgee

ISSUE 6

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CURRENT WATER AVAILABILITY

There has been little rain fall across the Murrumbidgee Valley in the past 8 weeks and natural inflows into the major storages, Burrinjuck and Blowering dams, have receded to low levels. From 15 August to 12 September 2007, Canberra received 20 millimetres (mm) of rain, Wagga Wagga received 12 mm, and Griffith received only 2 mm.

Total inflow into the Murrumbidgee Valley system in August was 62 gigalitres (GL). The inflow to the Snowy Hydro storages has continued to be above the inflows for the same period in 2006. Increased levels in Blowering Dam are largely due to releases from Snowy Hydro into the Murrumbidgee system.

The following table shows storage levels as at 12 September 2007.

Storage @ 12 September 2007	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 13 August to 12 September 2007 (GL)
Burrinjuck Dam	423	41%	-8
Blowering Dam	482	30%	+7

These storage volumes, together with assured inflows from Snowy Hydro and water in downstream storages, represent the total water available to the Murrumbidgee Valley. Allocation announcements are based on this total water availability, together with allowance for river losses, normal end of river system flows, and water already used this year.

A key difference between water availability this year, and water available in other years, is that storage levels in the Snowy Hydro reservoirs are at critical low levels. The Snowy release to the Murrumbidgee Valley for 2007/2008 is currently less than half of the normal volume. In a typical year, releases from Snowy Hydro are sufficient to ensure full allocations to all towns and High Security users.

The Department of Water and Energy continues to meet regularly with the critical water advisory group to discuss water supply strategies and options for the remainder of 2007/2008 and for 2008/2009.

WHAT THIS MEANS

On 28 August 2007 Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water, Phil Koperberg, announced that inflows to Snowy Hydro and the Murrumbidgee Valley had been sufficient to increase the allocation to Murrumbidgee High Security licences from 30% to 60%.

Whilst contingency water is now no longer necessary, some contingency water will continue to be reserved for intensive livestock and forest industries until High Security water allocations improve.

WATER TRADING IN 2007/2008

The requirement for High Security users to complete trades by the end of September 2007 is not required in 2007/2008. All trades entered into after that date will be honoured.

Water can be traded into the NSW Murray Valley, without restrictions and to other states, subject to their rules.

Water from the Murray and interstate can be traded into the Murrumbidgee Valley, subject to there being a net trade out of the Murrumbidgee.

RULES FOR CARRYOVER FROM 2007/2008 TO 2008/2009

All High and General Security licences will be allowed to carryover up to 15% of entitlement, as was permitted last water year.

Carryover for High Security will be permitted until the Water Sharing Plan is re instated.

TOWN WATER SUPPLY

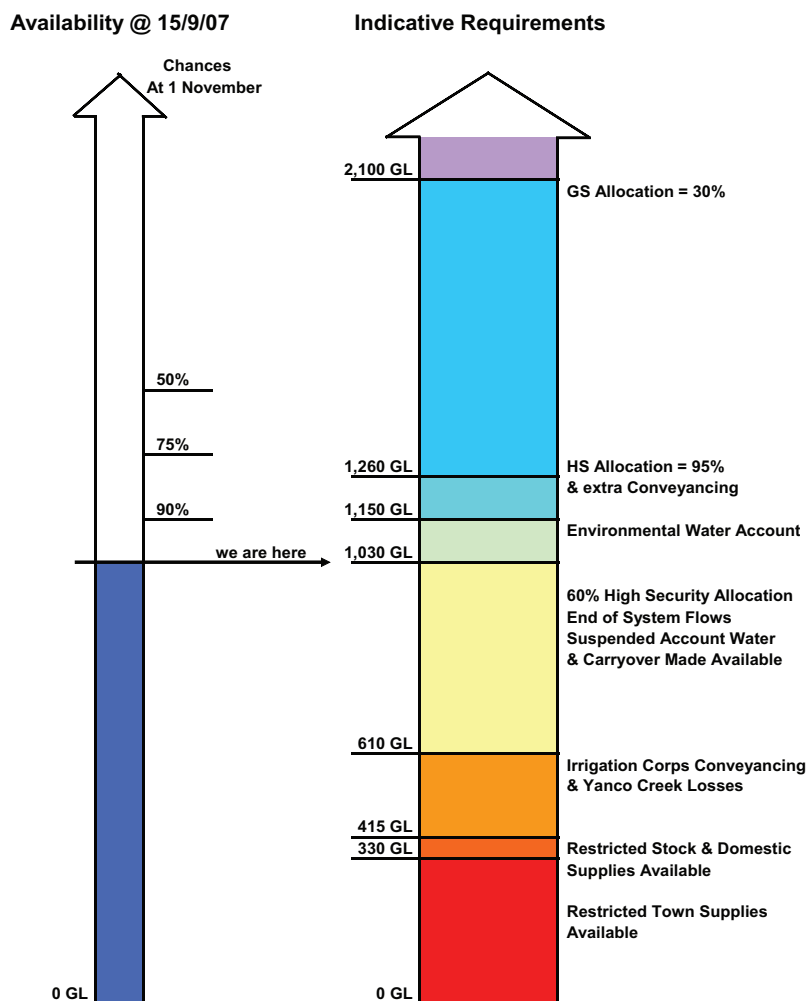
Sufficient water is now available for town water supply for the whole of 2007/2008 and towns have been advised that they may now ease water restrictions from Level 4 to Level 3a, which allows some outside watering in the warmer months.

However, there is currently no water reserved for next year and there remains the need to be conservative with all water use.

WATER AVAILABILITY OUTLOOK

The following diagram shows the **approximate probabilities** of improvements in water availability occurring by 1 November 2007. As previously advised, water availability and the probabilities for improvement will change throughout the season as conditions change and other issues, such as reserving water for next year, need to be considered.

Murrumbidgee Valley Indicative Outlook



CONTACT

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