



Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

Issue 12 | 17 March 2008

Current water availability

Since the last communiqué there has been little rainfall throughout the Murrumbidgee Valley, other than from isolated storms. From 15 February to 12 March 2008 Wagga Wagga has received 26 millimetres (mm) of rain, Griffith 0 mm and Yass 29 mm.

Rainfall and subsequent inflows in the Murrumbidgee Valley have now reduced to low levels. With the Catchment drying out and flows receding, there has been little improvement in water availability in the Valley.

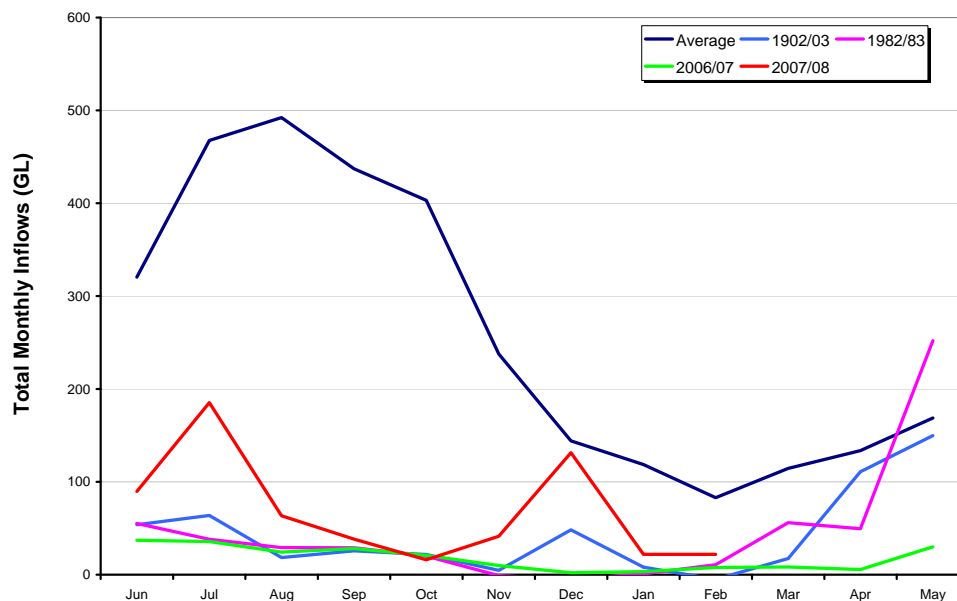
Similarly there have been only small inflows into Snowy storages.

Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 13 February 2008.

Storage @ 12 March 2008	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 12 February 2008 to 12 March 2008 GL
Burrinjuck Dam	429	42	+2
Blowering Dam	441	26	+19

This graph shows the long-term average system inflows comparing 2007/08 to recent drought years.

Total Murrumbidgee Valley System Natural Inflows (excluding Snowy)
Selected Drought Years-v-Long term average



What this means

There is sufficient water under a repeat of the worst recorded inflow sequence to provide for carryover basic human needs and critical industry requirements for 2008/09. However, continuous supply for all sections of the regulated system may not be guaranteed.

Water availability for 2008/09 remains seriously low and without substantial rainfall and inflows all water users can expect restricted supply.

As dry conditions have returned, the Department will take a conservative approach when planning future water management activities. Until sufficient water is reserved to maintain continuous supply and assure high security production in 2008/09, no further high or general security allocation announcements can be made. This strategy will be reassessed should significant improvements occur this water year.

Water trading in 2007/08

All water in accounts may be traded except for town water supply and stock and domestic allocations. This includes all inter-valley and inter-state trades. Water can be traded back into the Murrumbidgee Valley, as long as there is nett trade into the Murray Valley.

An important exception to these arrangements is for those users who participated in the 2002/03 Snowy Hydro borrowing arrangements. Water re-credited in 2007/08 from that which was suspended in 2006 may not be traded until the water borrowed from Snowy Hydro has been repaid.

All trade in the Murrumbidgee Valley **must be finalised** by close of business on 30 April 2008.

Carry over

Licence holders may carry over 15 per cent of their licensed entitlement into 2008/09. This means that licence holders can carry over all unused water that is in the licence holder's account as of 30 June 2008, up to a limit of 15 per cent of their total entitlement. However, although the Department will make every effort to do so, if the drought continues water may not be delivered when requested.

Town water supply

The water allocation for town water supply is at 100 per cent of entitlement. However, suppliers are advised to continue to remain conservative with all water use and continue to implement a water restriction that limits outside watering.

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.

Water availability outlook

Estimates of probabilities of improvements

Probabilities	August 1 2008	October 1 2008
95% high security allocation announced	1 chance in 2	9 chances in 10
25% general security allocation being announced	Negligible	1 chance in 2

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