



## Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

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### Current water availability

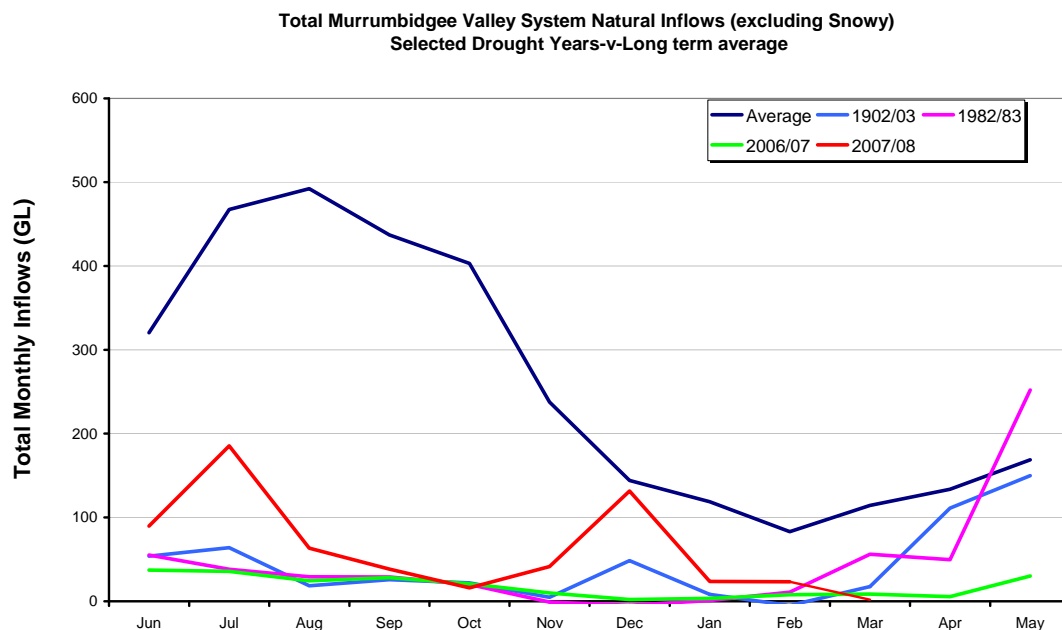
Once again there has been very little rainfall throughout the Murrumbidgee Valley. From 12 March to 14 April 2008, Wagga Wagga received 27.2 millimetres (mm) of rain, Gundagai 91.6 mm, Cooma 37.9 mm and Hay 6.4 mm.

Flows have continued to recede and are now extremely low in both the regulated and unregulated sections of the Valley. Inflows into Snowy River system storages have also been extremely low and close to the recorded low levels observed at this time last year.

The following table shows Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 14 April 2008.

Storage @ 14 April 2008	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 12 March 2008 to 14 April 2008 GL
Burrinjuck Dam	425	41	-4
Blowering Dam	407	24	-34

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



## What this means

While current conditions persist and inflows remain low, water availability at the start of 2008/09 will be slightly better than at the start of the 2007/08 water year.

Currently, there is enough water in Murrumbidgee Valley storages to supply critical human needs and deliver carryover, provided we receive at least minimum inflows into Valley storages over winter. If flows remain extremely low, consideration will be given to re-instating the Department of Water and Energy's (DWE) Critical Water Planning Program for permanent plantings and intensive industries.

DWE will not be making any further allocation announcements this financial year, unless there is a substantial improvement in water availability and there is enough water to meet the needs of permanent plantings and industry in 2008/09.

## 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.

## Licence conversion

In the Murrumbidgee regulated water source, general security water access licence categories can be converted to a high security licence. This requires application to DWE in the first instance.

Licence holders who wish to convert their general security licence to high security, or vice versa, may apply to do so. Supplementary licences cannot be converted to any other licence category.

An application for conversion of a general security to a high security licence will only be considered when the account for the general security licence holder is at 100 per cent of entitlement i.e. the account is full.

A conversion factor of 0.55 applies when converting general security to high security. For example, a general security share component of 100 megalitres will convert to a high security share component of 55 megalitres.

## Accounting

At the time the new high security licence is issued, the old general security licence is cancelled. The new account will be credited with the old general security account multiplied by the conversion factor **plus** any water in the account that is in excess of the full share component of the general security licence. Once converted, there can be no more water credited to that account for **that water year**. Once the conversion is finalised, water can be traded into or out of the new account.

## **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 DWE will make every effort to do so, if the drought does not break, 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 to 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 DWE's Compliance Unit on 1800 633 362 or by email to [watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au](mailto:watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au).

## **Water availability outlook**

The probabilities remain similar to last month; probabilities for 2008/09 will be included in the May communiqué.

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