



Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

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Current water availability

There has been little rain across the Murrumbidgee Valley in the last month. From 12 May to 11 June, Wagga Wagga received 22.6 millimetres (mm), Gundagai 35.8 mm, Cooma 19.3 mm, Hay 17.6 mm and Griffith 20.8 mm. During the month the rainfall at Wagga, Gundagai and Hay was only 34 per cent of the expected average and 18 per cent of the Griffith average.

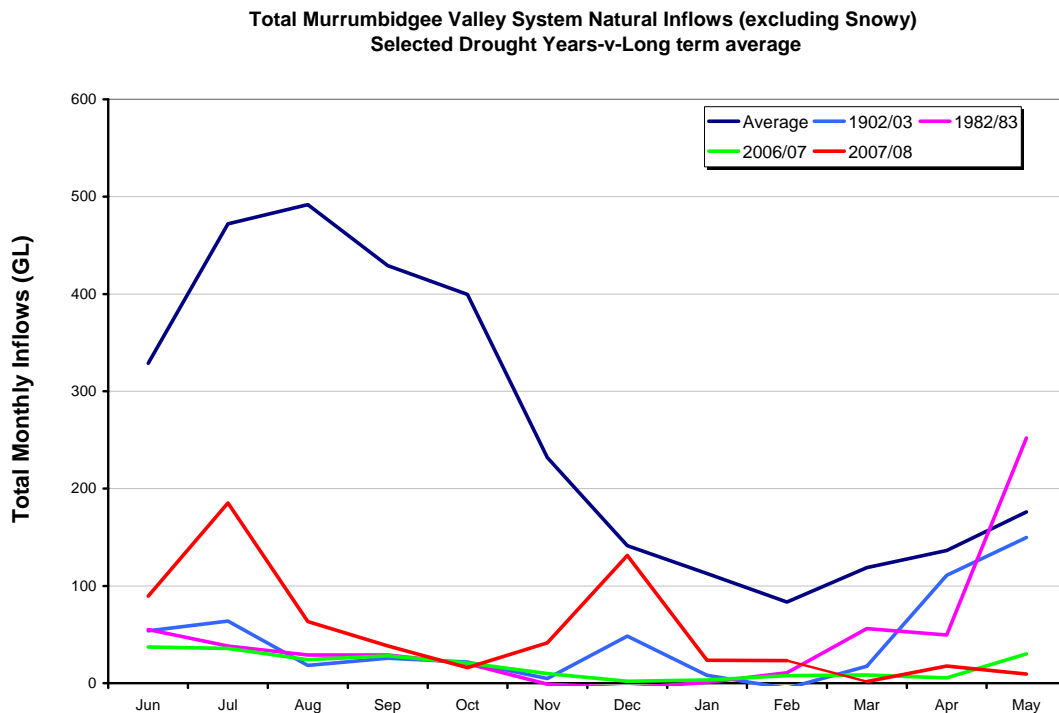
With the catchment in an extremely dry condition, almost all flows are extremely low or have stopped. Inflows into the Snowy River system storages also remain extremely low. Inflows throughout the entire region continue to remain at record low levels.

The following table shows Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 11 June 2008.

Storage @ 11 June 2008	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 13 May 2008 to 11 June 2008 GL	Volume at this time last year.
Burrinjuck Dam	422	41	0	254 GL 24 %
Blowering Dam	553	33	+110	273 GL 15 %

While there is significantly more water in storage now than at this time last year, much of this is held in individual accounts as carryover, undelivered inter-valley transfers (about 76 GL) or is a pre release of Snowy Hydro future commitments.

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



What this means

Provided inflows do not reduce further before 1 July, there will be sufficient water for;

1. basic human needs
2. restricted domestic and stock supply
3. carryover of unused water from 2007/08

Flows have been reduced to absolute minimums to conserve as much water as possible for delivery throughout the season. As a consequence, supply in some sections of the Murrumbidgee Valley including the Tumut River has been interrupted. It is expected flow rates will increase when water availability improves or the downstream demand increases after 1 July.

At this stage only the minimum volume of conveyance water needed to deliver these supplies will be provided into irrigation corporations and the Yanco Creek.

Every effort will be made to deliver carryover on demand.

All water users should be aware that the calculations of water availability include an allowance for future inflows throughout the 2008/09 year based on minimum inflows. While a very conservative estimate has been made, there is still a possibility that the inflows may be less than forecast.

Account limits in 2008/09

The Department of Water and Energy will attempt to apply to the provisions of the Water Sharing Plan in relation to the account limits.

High security accounts will be limited to a maximum of 95 per cent including carryover and the announced available water determination (allocation), until the general security allocation exceeds 95 per cent.

General security accounts will be limited to a maximum of 100 per cent of entitlement including carryover and announced available water determination.

Water trading

All trade in the Murrumbidgee Valley **ceased** on 30 April 2008. Trading will **recommence** on **1 July 2008**.

Town water supply in 2008/09

Because water availability remains low, the allocation for town water supply on 1 July 2008 is likely to commence at 50 per cent of entitlement. At this stage it is expected that all towns in the Valley will be on some level of water restrictions at the start of the new water year.

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. All reports are confidential.

Water availability outlook

Probability	1 August	1 October
9 chances in 10	High security 18% General Security 0%	High security 44% General Security 0%
3 chances in 4	High security 24 % General Security 0%	High security 95% General Security 1%
1 chance in 2	High security 40% General Security 0%	High security 95 % General Security 9%

Note:

- These probabilities have been calculated using dry tercile statistics ie; based on March, April May inflow data which indicates that the 2008/09 will be lower than average.
- This advice only provides an indication of potential improvements and any planning decisions should also recognise the current conditions and meteorological predictions.

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