



Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

Issue 8 | 15 November 2007

Current water availability

The rainfall in early November has resulted in some inflows to Murray Valley storages and has created some tributary inflows. This has maintained inflows in 2007 above the minimum set in 2006.

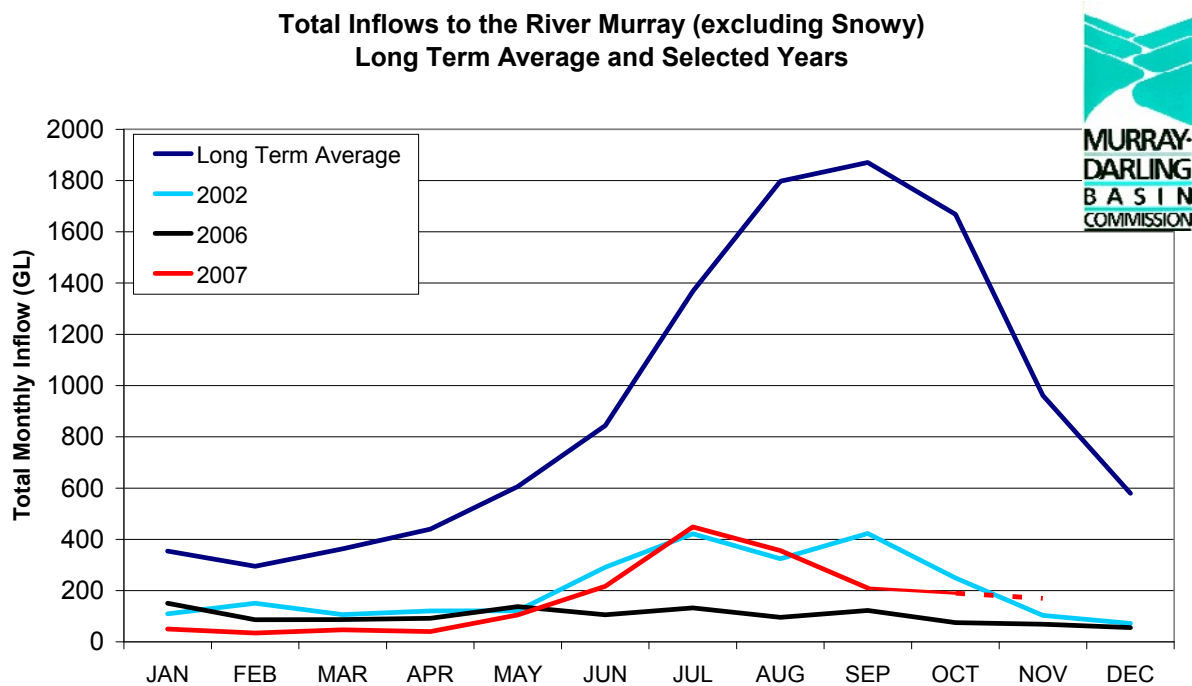
The additional water has been shared between NSW, Victoria and South Australia, in accordance with the Murray Darling Basin Commission (MDBC) modified sharing rules. NSW now has 295 gegalitres (GL) available for consumption in 2007/08. This is approximately half of what was available at this time in 2006.

From 10 October to 12 November, Albury received 94 millimetres (mm) of rain, Deniliquin received 21 mm, Wangaratta 40 mm, and Tumbarumba 88 mm. Falls in the upper catchments have been substantial with good inflows from the Kiewa, Ovens and Goulburn catchments. There was also a small increase in Snowy Mountain Scheme water resources that will increase the volume released by Snowy Hydro into the Murray Valley.

Storage levels as at 10 November 2007.

Storage @ 10 November 2007	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 10 October to 12 November GL
Hume Dam	814.8	26.6	-59
Dartmouth Dam	717.3	16.4	+29
Lake Victoria	427	64	-86
Menindee Lakes Storage	39.2	2.3	0

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



Murray-Darling Basin Commission November 2007

What this means

There is now sufficient water available to provide contingency (survival) water for permanent plantings to the end of March 2008. On 2 November, Minister Koperberg announced that contingency water would be available to the end of February 2008, however rainfall and inflows over the past fortnight have allowed for a final allowance of contingency water until the end of March.

The improvement in resources has also allowed for an increase in stock and domestic allocation from 50 to 75 per cent of entitlement.

There is also enough water to provide a pulse into the Wakool and Merran Creek systems. This water is for domestic and stock supplies and to maintain the environment. It cannot be used for irrigation. There is not enough water to maintain flows in these systems throughout summer and autumn. If conditions stay hot and dry, landholders should consider alternative supplies, including water carting or reducing stock numbers. Without significant improvement in water availability, irrigation water will not be available in these systems this water year, as the volume needed to convey irrigation water is too high.

The Contingency Planning Senior Officers Group has advised that each State should also start reserving water for critical human needs in 2008/09. NSW has begun to set aside water to secure the 75 GL required to meet these needs. Following advice from the Murray Critical Water Advisory Group, some water from improvements will be reserved monthly to meet this need. Depending on the improvement in volumes available to NSW, this water may be shared between;

- a) securing 2008/09 critical human needs and
- b) paying back suspended water from 2006.

Carryover

Delivery of water for licence holders wishing to carry over water for use in 2008/09 will be given a high priority. However, if the drought continues, water may not be deliverable when requested.

Contingency water

A further period of **summer** contingency (survival) water from **1 December 2007 through to 31 March 2008** is available. High security licence holders with permanent plantings are eligible to apply.

If you made an application for November contingency water there is no need to apply again, **unless** your circumstances have changed. Your November allowance will be used as the basis for determining the combined quantity. This summer contingency water will be credited to your account in one transaction in early December.

If you need to apply for summer contingency water, please complete the attached form. Water will be allocated on the basis of area of crop planted.

1. Grapes this will be 0.3 megalitres per hectare (ML/ha),
2. Citrus 0.6 ML/ha, and
3. Stone fruit 0.6ML/ha.

Accurate information is vital.

Applications for **summer** contingency water **must be made with your local water licensing authority** (i.e. irrigation corporation or the Department of Water and Energy. Irrigation corporations will put one order through to the Department).

Licence holders who have a licence with the Department of Water and Energy may fax completed applications directly to 03 5881 3456.

Town water supply

Town water supplies will remain at 50 per cent of entitlement. This allocation is likely to be increased if and when additional water becomes available and is needed to meet the needs of towns at level 4 restrictions: equivalent to no outside water use.

Councils will be encouraged to maintain the current level of water restrictions unless they have purchased a volume of water equivalent to 20 per cent of the volume required for Level 4.

Currently a temporary water restriction order applies to the taking of surface and groundwater water from the NSW Murray regulated river water source and all associated alluvial aquifers including the Lower and Upper Murray Groundwater Sources.

Within a town water supply area the use of this water is restricted to the town water restriction in place. Outside the town water supply area, the order restricts the use of water from these sources on domestic lawns. The Order applies to **all towns** supplied by water taken from these water sources in the Murray Valley. Additional *frequently asked questions* on this issue are available on the Departments website.

Water trading in 2007/08

All water in accounts is tradeable.

Outlook for 2008/09

A La Nina event is now established in the tropical Pacific Ocean and is predicted to persist until the end of summer and then weaken. However, La Nina events do not always provide increased rainfall.

If conditions similar to 2006 are repeated, the Murray Darling Ministerial Council will consider adopting a Southern Basin approach as experienced in 2007 to secure critical human needs; that includes the sharing the water from NSW and Victorian tributary systems.

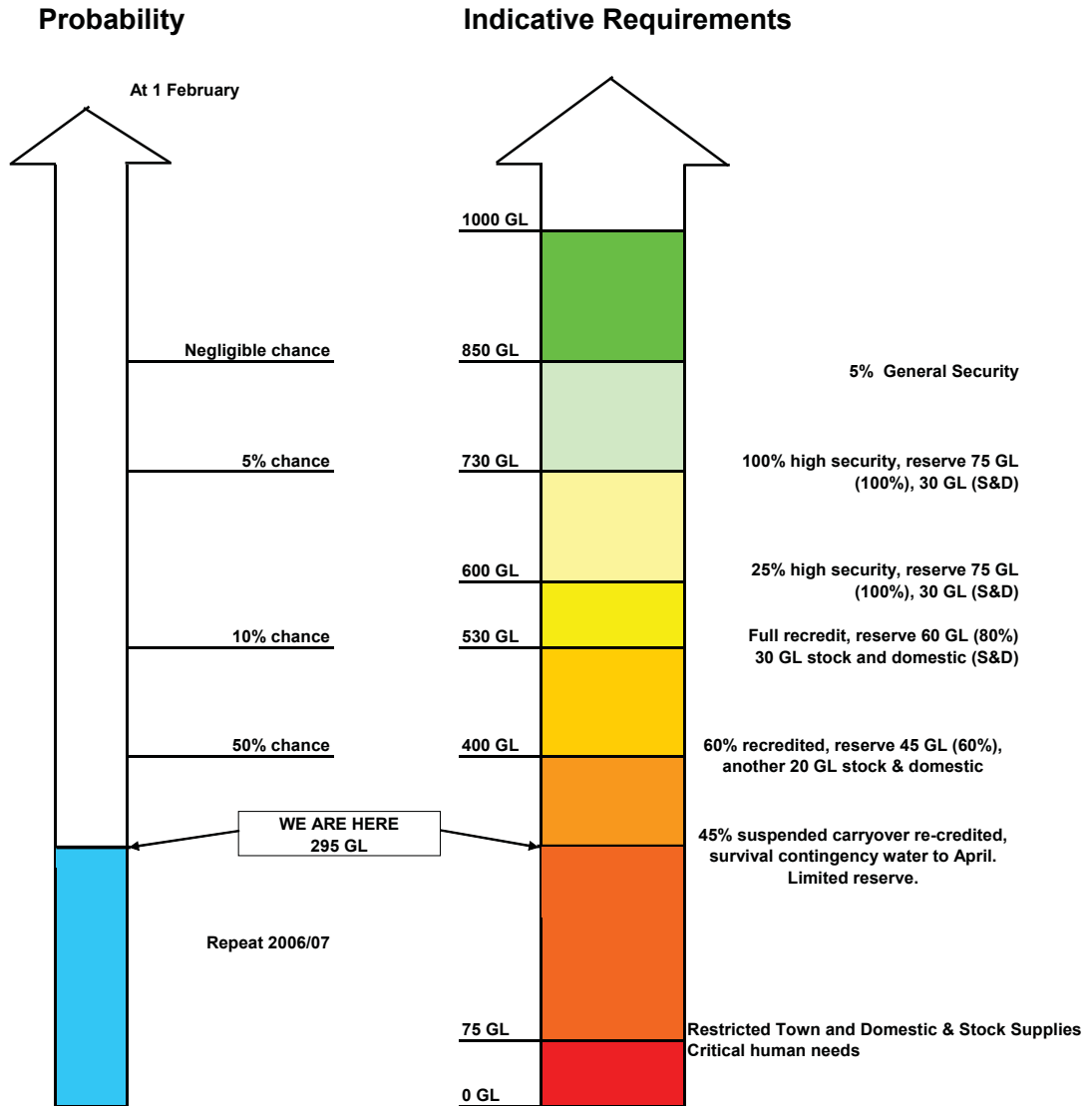
Water availability outlook

The following diagram shows the approximate probabilities of improvements in water availability occurring by 1 February 2008 and will change throughout the season.

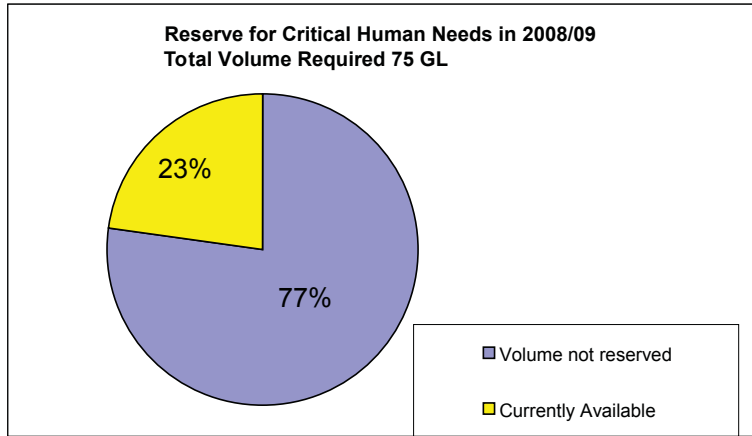
NSW Murray Valley Outlook

Based on end of October Assessment with adjustments for early November rain

These probabilities use statistics based on continuing drought and may underestimate the probabilities of allocation increases that require wet conditions.



Water is now being reserved to meet the needs of critical town water and domestic supply for 2008/09. The following pie chart shows how we are progressing.



Contact: Bunty Driver 03 5898 3900



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

FAX BACK APPLICATION FOR 2007/08 SUMMER CONTINGENCY WATER

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Fax number: _____

Email address: _____

Date: _____

Licence Number (High Security only): _____

Industry: _____

Number of Hectares planted:

Grapes: _____

Citrus: _____

Other, please specify: _____

Water will be allocated according to the survival water noted within the main document.
Please note there is no guarantee that this is what you will receive.

Signature of licence holder or delegated person

Fax to your Water Licensing Authority – This is whoever holds your licence. If your licensing authority is an irrigation company, they will send a bulk application to DWE

If your licence is held with the Department of Water and Energy, fax all applications to
03 5881 3465

DWE OFFICE USE ONLY

Approved volume: _____

Signature: _____