



## Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

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Issue 14 | 15 May 2008

### Current water availability

There has been little to no rainfall in the last month across the Murray Valley. From 15 April to 12 May, Corryong had 28.6 millimetres (mm) of rain, Albury 30 mm, Deniliquin 10.6 mm and Mildura 6.8 mm.

The catchment is extremely dry and there has been virtually no runoff. Flows in all parts of the Murray-Darling Basin are now extremely low or have ceased. Inflows into Snowy River system storages remain extremely low and are similar to the record low levels observed at this time last year.

### Storage levels as at 13 May 2008

Storage @ 13 May 2008	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 14 April 2008 to 13 May 2008 GL
Hume Dam	298	10	+57
Dartmouth Dam	682	17	+5
Lake Victoria	270	40	-16
Menindee Lakes Storage	566	33	-18
Total volume	1816		+28

Nearly all of the inflow into Hume Dam is a result of a Snowy release of 2008/09 water.

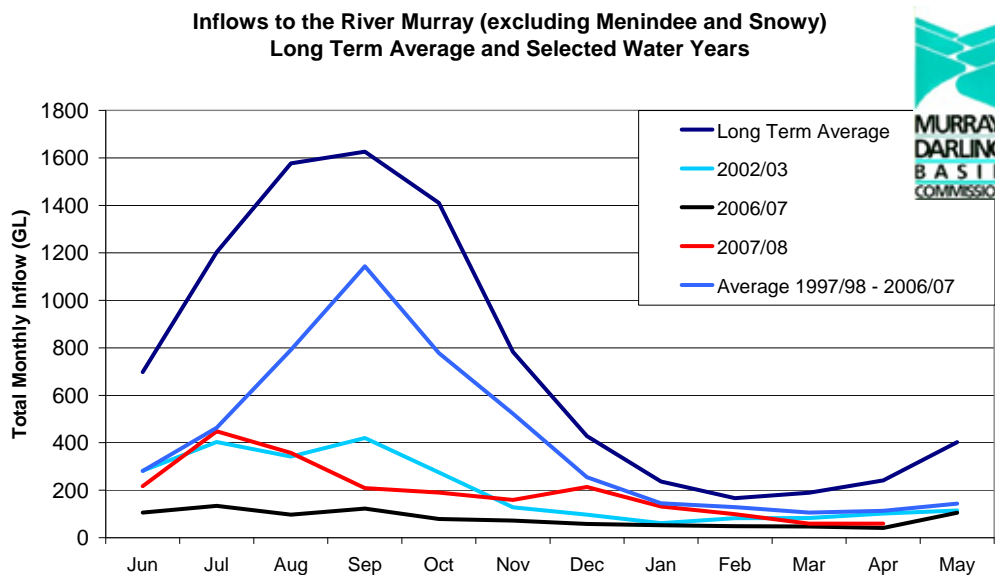
### This compares with storage levels at 14 May 2007

Storage @ 14 May 2007	Volume GL	Percent of Capacity
Hume Dam	178	6
Dartmouth Dam	469	10
Lake Victoria	236	35
Menindee Lakes Storage	81	5
Total volume	964	

While there is now a significant volume of water in storage compared to last year, much of this is held as carryover in individual accounts or is pre-release of Snowy Hydro's 2008/09 release commitments. There is also a large volume held in Murrumbidgee and Goulburn storages as undelivered inter-valley transfers.

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## This graph shows the long term average inflows into the Murray River:



Murray-Darling Basin Commission February 2008

Without any further rain May inflows will be less than recorded in 2007.

### What this means

While Murray Valley storage volumes are better than at this time last year, the water supply prospects for 2008/09 remain grim. The latest Murray-Darling Basin Commission Drought Update stated:

*“Whilst critical urban, stock and domestic requirements for 2008-09 are reasonably assured (but not yet guaranteed), opening water allocations for Murray irrigators in 2008-09 are again expected to be very low or zero, although some carryover water is likely to be available. Critical human needs for 2008-09 can be met for urban water users taking water supplies from the main stem of the Murray provided inflows are no worse than the record lows in 2006-07.”*

New South Wales is in a better position than it was at this time last year. At this stage it is not intended to implement the Department of Water and Energy's Critical Water Program as there is a significant volume of carryover in the Murray Valley. Similarly, there are substantial carryover volumes in the Murrumbidgee Valley and in Victoria and South Australia to underpin trade.

New South Wales has reserved water both within its Murray Valley resources and in the Menindee Lakes to support the delivery of water for critical human needs and carryover in 2008/09.

In contrast to this time last year, New South Wales will not commence this water year with a debt to other states and is in a better position to enable early high security allocations. This will require further inflows before 1 July.

All water users should be aware that if conditions deteriorate, potentially some carryover may not be available at the start of the 2008/09 water year. However, all efforts are being made to deliver carryover when required.

The first improvements in resource availability will be used to secure domestic and stock requirements and to provide sufficient high security water to ensure permanent planting survival.

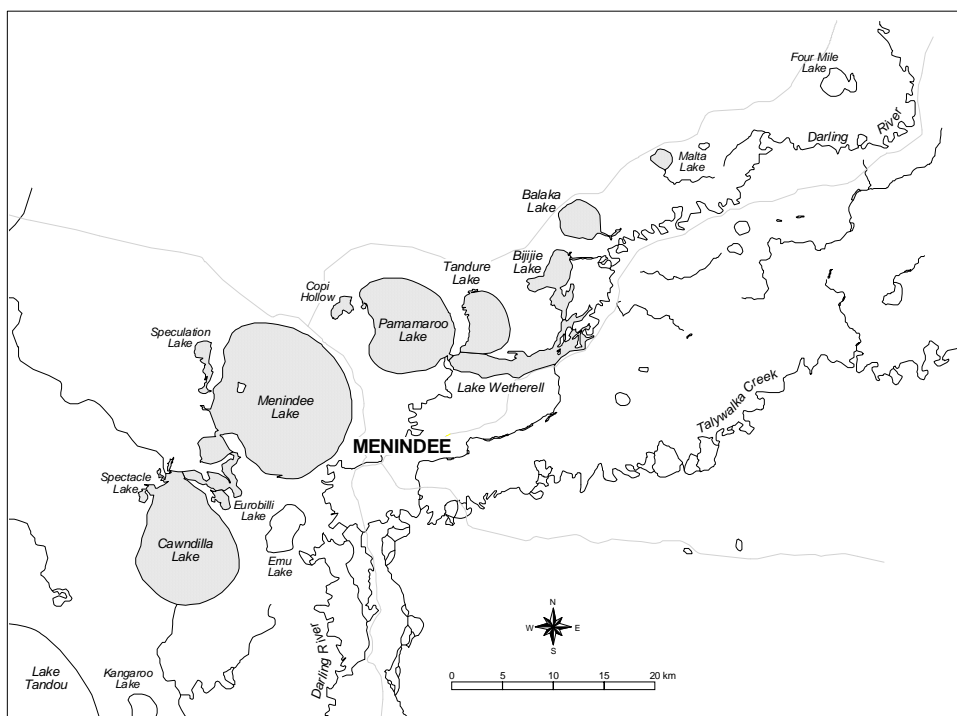
## Repayment of critical water

There are a number of licences that have not been able to repay the critical water allocations made in 2007. It now appears unlikely that all accounts will be balanced before the end of the 2007/08 water year. Unbalanced accounts will be carried-over to 2008/09, with repayment of outstanding accounts commencing when high security allocations reach 50 per cent. For critical industry users, repayment will commence at 80 per cent. This means that these licences will receive normal allocation credits until these allocation levels are reached.

## Management of the Menindee Lakes

Currently, the Menindee Lakes are at 33 per cent of capacity. Water is being stored in lakes Pamamaroo and Wetherell because this management minimises losses and evaporation. The lakes are being managed to ensure that Lower Darling high security allocations are available in 2008/09, to secure water supply for Broken Hill and to supplement New South Wales' critical supplies in the Murray valley.

When water is first released into lakes Menindee and Cawndilla, large volumes will be lost to seepage and there is a large "dead storage" component i.e. water that cannot be released from the lakes. Consequently, until a large volume of inflow is assured, the management of the lakes will be to keep Pamamaroo and Cawndilla full where ever possible and pass additional inflow down stream to Lake Victoria. Only when there are inflows greater than losses will water be passed in to Lake Menindee.



## Town water supply

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. Implementing water restrictions maybe given consideration if conditions deteriorate further.

## Trade

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

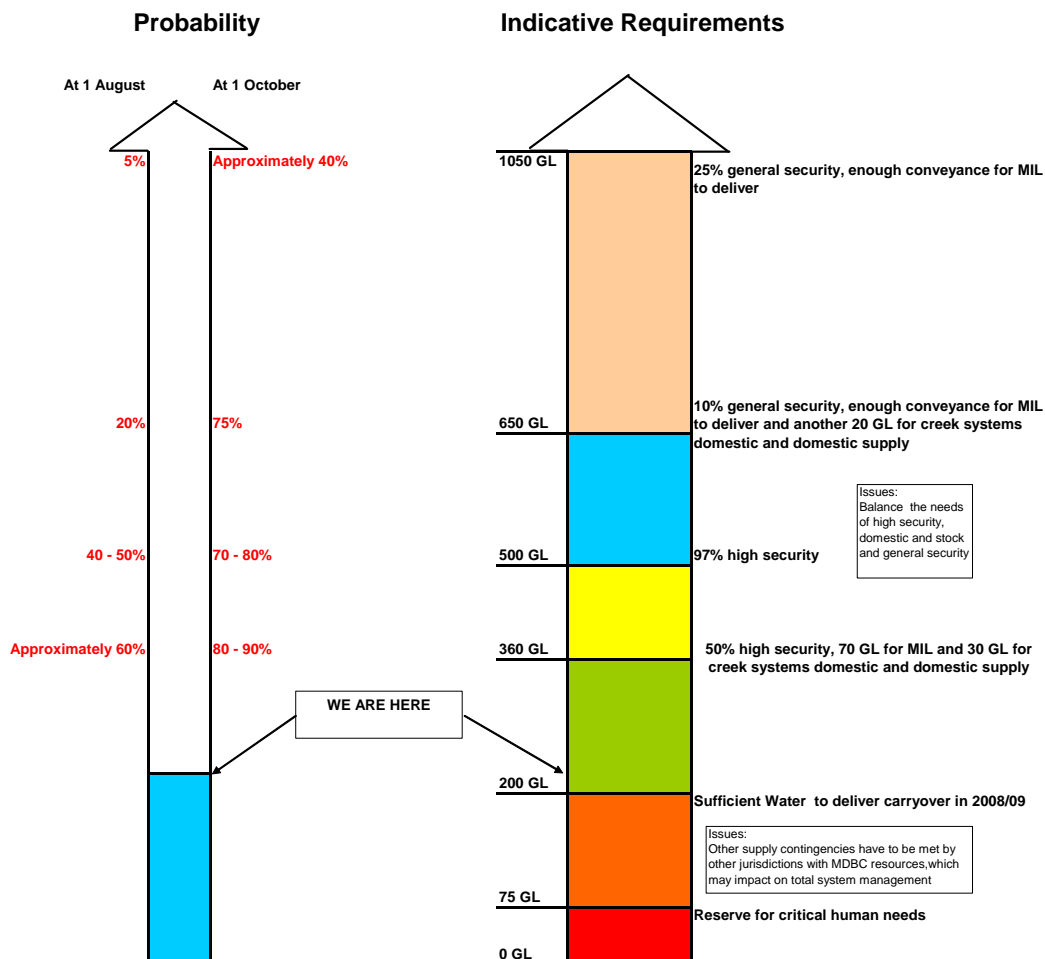
## Compliance

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](mailto:watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au). All reports are confidential.

## Water availability outlook

### NSW Murray Valley Outlook

Based on end of April Assessment



Please note: the volumes indicated above do not include individual carryover. These probabilities are indicative only and will change as the season progresses

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