



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

Stock and Domestic water access outlook for the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys in 2008

In New South Wales, access to stock and domestic surface water can occur through either;

1. Basic Landholder Rights – which allows landholders with direct frontage to rivers and creeks to take water from them for stock and domestic purposes without the need for a water access licence or a water supply works approval.
2. A Water Access Licence for stock and domestic purposes issued by the Department of Water and Energy which must nominate a Work Approval.

Due to the continued drought conditions and resultant low river flows, landholders who have normally accessed a reliable supply through either of the above in the past may now face difficulty accessing required supplies at their pump sites.

Under normal arrangements high priority is given to the supply of stock and domestic water.

However, due to the extreme drought conditions, river levels will remain lower than normal. In some areas landholders who have a reliable supply in the past, may now have difficulty in accessing stock and domestic water or water may not be available at all.

The failure of the 'autumn break' in the weather to eventuate sees inflows remain at record low levels and consequently water to some areas cannot be guaranteed. Under the critical planning scenario, delivery of stock and domestic water will be constrained by the need to maintain low flows and minimise river losses within the whole of the Murray and Murrumbidgee systems.

It is essential for water supply throughout the basin, that the river losses in systems including channels, creeks and streams flowing out of the regulated rivers, be minimised as much as possible.

Which rivers creeks and channels can be relied upon and at what level?

Murray River levels are expected to remain low, disconnecting streams and wetlands that may have always had flow, whether a recognised regulated stream or not. If conditions don't improve, river levels of the regulated Murray water source will drop to extremely low levels.

People who divert water from the Murray should be vigilant of river levels and make necessary adjustments to their activities.

In the Murrumbidgee, efficiencies in delivery will mean that some systems may not receive a continuous supply.

The following streams and creeks have **already become disconnected as a result of falling river levels or low storages and without significant inflows these systems will not receive flow in the near future:**

- Colligen/Neimer system
- Yallakool /Wakool River
- Merran/ Cabool / Waddy / Little Barbers
- Old Man and Beavers creeks
- Lowbidgee irrigation district
- Flood runners and effluents off the Yanco/Colombo/Billabong Creek system
- Nimbo creek
- Holts Anabranh
- Euston Lakes

It is likely that the following have short term **interrupted supply for the whole season:**

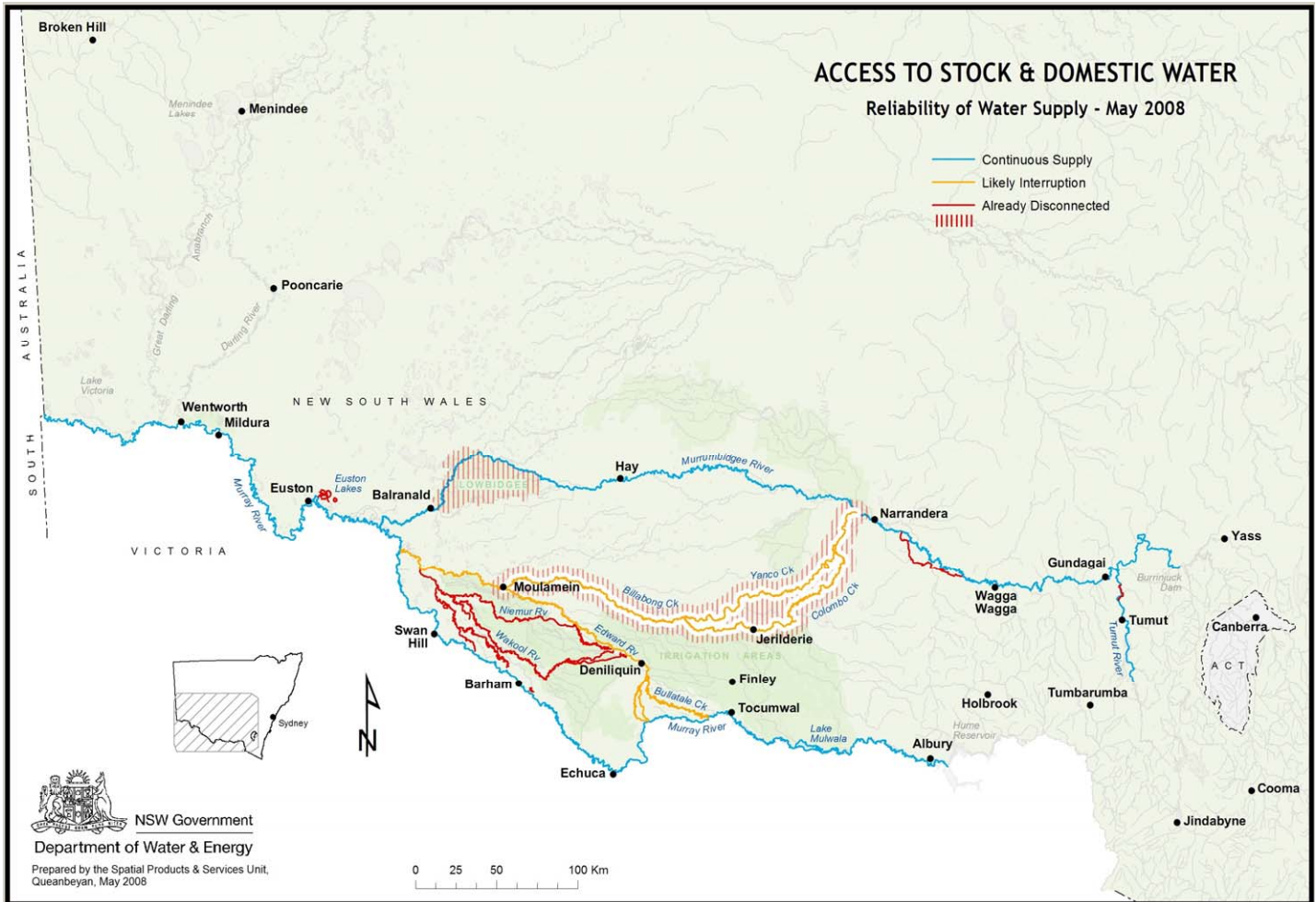
- Edward /Gulpa system
- Bullatale Creek

It is expected that the following will have **continuous supply but may have short term restrictions:**

- Murray River channel, and
- Murrumbidgee River Channel
- Tumut River main channel

Supply through channel systems will be managed by Irrigation companies and Trusts. It is advisable to contact your water supply Authority regarding water supply in these areas.

This map indicates the expected reliability of stock and domestic supply in the Murray and Murrumbidgee Valleys



When will the situation improve?

Currently inflows are running at record low levels. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) is suggesting that the probability for winter rain may be normal. If this occurs then it is likely that there will be some flows into the river that may be used to provide a stock and domestic replenishment.

Similarly there maybe reasonable inflows into the upper storages that is available to New South Wales. Any increase will be shared in first instance between supplies for stock and domestic and supplies for critical industries on which the basin community is hugely dependent.

What can I do?

Consider other options for Stock and Domestic water supply such as:

- Bores; Delays can be expected due to the heavy demand on drilling contractors and increased number of applications to process.
- Enlarging on-farm storages to capture run off. This must be within the properties harvestable rights entitlement.

Please contact Department of Water and Energy licensing staff before you **begin any work** to ensure that any necessary approvals are obtained and licence conditions are met.

The Department of Water and Energy can also provide advice on water quality.

The Department of Primary Industries supports a wide range of drought related programs which includes assistance with water supply for use in rural households. NSW DPI Livestock Officers can also advise on stock management such as feeding and water requirements.

Contacts

Department of Water and Energy www.dwe.nsw.gov.au/about/contactus.shtml (Licensing and Water Quality staff)

Department of Primary Industries (Live stock officers and Drought Support Workers)
www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/drought