



RURAL WATER NEWS

AUGUST 2009

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OUTLOOK AND PLANNING FOR SEASON 09/10

Storage Situation and Allocation Outlook.

To date inflows to storages have been disappointing. Rainfall in early July has primed catchments which remain wet and ready to respond to future rainfall events.

Total Murray-Darling active storage on the 22nd July was 1,453GL in comparison to 1,195 GL on the 25th February, an increase from 14% to 17% of capacity. Volume in storage is slightly lower than this time last year. As at 22nd July, Dartmouth Dam held 880GL (23% of capacity) well below the long term average of 3100GL. Hume Reservoir holds 499GL (16% of capacity), Lake Victoria 284GL (42% of capacity), and Menindee Lakes have not changed in recent weeks holding 247GL (14% of capacity). In Victoria, Eildon holds 557GL (17% of capacity). The Loddon Campaspe and Broken systems hold significantly less than last season.

As at the middle of July, Murray system inflows were 180GL, slightly above the historical low of 135 GL received in July 2006. The long term average inflow for July is 1,190GL. As such the outlook for this season is poor. The August to October period is historically the most productive for inflows.

How are Murray allocations made?

The Murray-Darling Basin Agreement (now a Schedule to the Water Act 2007) defines the water sharing and water accounting rules between the 3 States – NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority is responsible for estimating the total water available in the storages and then sharing this water between the three States according to the Agreement. This is generally undertaken twice monthly to facilitate allocation announcements by each State.

Over the last 2 years there have been minor changes to the sharing rules to assist each State cope with severe drought conditions particularly ensuring operation of the Murray River and meeting critical human needs.

Each State is then responsible for distributing its share of water between its water users, including urban, stock and domestic, irrigation, channel losses and environment. In northern Victoria this task is administered by the State's Resource Manager, Goulburn Murray Water, in accordance with Victoria's allocation policy set by Government and the Victorian Murray Bulk Entitlement Orders.

The primary sharing rules are as follows:-

- Inflow to Dartmouth, Hume Reservoir and the Kiewa River is shared 50:50 between NSW and Victoria.
- Inflow into Menindee Lakes is NSW water, unless the storage is in MDBA control, in which case it is shared 50:50 between NSW and Victoria
- Victoria, generally has access to all inflow from the Ovens, Broken, Goulburn, Campaspe and Loddon Rivers.
- NSW generally has access to all inflow from the Murrumbidgee River and Billabong Creek.
- NSW and Victoria then need to supply South Australia with an equal share of their entitlement flow each year.

This varies in periods of drought (determined by the amount of water expected to be held in reserve at the end of the following May) when inflows to Dartmouth, Hume Reservoir and the Kiewa River are shared equally between NSW, Victoria and South Australia. Under this condition, known as a “period of special accounting” there is no requirement for the upper States to supply South Australia from their share of the resource. Minor changes have been made in recent seasons to ensure delivery of water for critical human needs during the current severe drought.

Allocation Outlook from the State’s Resource Manager Goulburn Murray Water (GMW)

Allocations remain at 0%. The August to October period is historically the best period for inflows, however the last 3 seasons have seen inflows at the lowest end of historic records and consistent with the Dry scenario used by GMW for forecasting allocations.

Murray System Allocation Outlook

The latest seasonal outlooks are given below. The following terminology is used in the tables:

- ‘Wet’ - Inflow volumes that have 1 chance in 10 of being exceeded
- ‘Average’ - Inflow volumes that have 5 chances in 10 of being exceeded
- ‘Dry’ - Inflow volumes that have 9 chances in 10 of being exceeded

Murray System

Inflow Conditions	1 Jul 2009	15 Aug 2009	15 Oct 2009	15 Dec 2009	15 Feb 2010
Wet	0%	23%	95%	100%	100%
Average	0%	0%	39%	66%	81%
Dry	0%	0%	5%	11%	19%

If inflows track similar to those experienced in the last three springs then our losses could be met and a small first allocation made in mid October. Under the Dry scenario the forecast maximum allocation of 19% would occur in mid February. LMW expects that further improvements after February would be retained to support operating the river and providing critical human needs in the following season.

River Management.

River Murray Operations goal is to conserve water in upstream storages as long as possible to avoid transmission and evaporative losses. Currently Lake Mulwala is being refilled with inflows from the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers and downstream of Yarrawonga Weir the river is being run at minimum levels. Over the next few months, downstream storages, tributaries inflows and weir pools will be used where possible to meet demand and subsequently be topped up from major storages as required. The benefit of drawing down lower storages is that it maximises the potential to capture and store inflows from tributaries of the river during late winter and spring.

In our region, flows and river levels should be similar to those experienced last season.

Lower than normal flows will also increase the risk of algal blooms particularly when water temperatures rise.

Access to your water

In light of the above, particularly the uncertainty regarding future inflows, LMW and its customers face the following circumstances:-

Private Diverters holding carryover allocation in their Allocation Bank Account (ABA) will be able to access water as needed. Adequate water is now available in storages to run the river to supply critical human needs although at much lower flows and levels. Carryover is able to be delivered on the back of these minimum flows. River levels may impact on pump suction which have not yet been modified for lower river levels.

LMW still requires further allocation of operational water to cover Irrigation District and Millewa distribution system losses. A small volume of operational water has been provided to cover losses from the distribution system during the current 3 week pumping events for Domestic and Stock use. Customers holding carryover have been able to access water during these events. As the season progresses and more operational water becomes available, pumping events will become more frequent.

The last allocation provided LMW with a further small allocation of operational water which now allows us to reduce the pumping interval to 2 weeks and extend the duration to 2 days (with an option of a 3 day pumping event if demand exists). This schedule will be revised with each increase in operational water however it should be noted that our full season operational water requirements may not be fully covered when Customers receive their first allocation. Continuous pumping will commence when we have confidence that we can run the system for the full season.

A Drought Irrigation schedule for Irrigation District customers is attached. Please read carefully and retain for reference.

Water Orders can be placed on the Internet and by Telephony in the normal manner. Planners are available to take orders by phone between 8am & 10am Monday to Friday on non pumping days, 8am & 4pm Monday to Friday on pumping days when pumping occurs during the week. Planners are not available to take orders on weekend pumping days. Please plan ahead.

Trade of allocation (temporary trade).

New South Wales has put in place an interim moratorium on temporary trade (trade of allocated water) from the Murrumbidgee Valley to the Murray Valley including interstate trades. This is due to the dry conditions and to save on transmission losses which would be experienced by delivering water to the Murray Valley. Temporary trade from the Lower Darling to the Murray Valley is also not allowed. Trade within Victoria and with South Australia is not restricted.

Managing your water between properties.

It is now possible for customers with multiple properties to apply to link those properties to a single allocation bank account (ABA) and cancel the other ABA's. Effectively this means that your allocations from many Water Shares will be deposited/credited into one single ABA and usage across all properties withdrawn/debited from that same ABA. This process avoids the need for trading between properties to maximise carryover and to cover use early in the season. It also means you can trade into one ABA and use that water on any or all of your properties. If you require further information or assistance please contact the Water Trading Team on 50513400 regarding Form 40.

Tracking your Usage, Trade and Allocations.

"WaterNow", our internet based water ordering system has been upgraded. WaterNow is accessible to all Customers including Private Diverters, Domestic & Stock Customers and Water Share Holders not connected to land, who receive an account from LMW.

The site now provides data from the Victorian Water Register into the assessment page of WaterNow in a much more precise format providing the balance of your ABA and a history of

allocation trades for the current season, usage per outlet, and meter readings by simply going to the site and logging on using an outlet and pin number as advised in the mail. An instruction booklet on how to use WaterNow is available online and a hardcopy will be posted in the next month along with outlet and pin numbers again. **If you need assistance call the Water Trading Team or Operations Group on 50513400**

Customers will also be able to access Silo, Weather Forecasts, River Management and storage reports, flow and salinity forecasts and other information through this site.

On entry to WaterNow you will be asked to enter your contact details and email address. This will allow us to forward by email, allocation announcements and other critical advice as soon as we receive that information.

Customers without internet should contact our Operations room for advice on water available and usage quoting their outlet and pin number. Planners are available by phone between 8am & 10am Monday to Friday

Domestic and Stock Supplies – Does your property have sufficient on property storage?

Every Domestic and Stock (D&S) customer should have on property water storage in the event of LMW being unable to supply water on demand due to the drought or maintenance requirements. It is prudent to review the need for additional storage. Customer should consider their storage requirements and as a guide we recommend a minimum based on 250 litres per person per day for a six week period. This equates to a total storage volume of 42,000 litres (2 x 20,000 litre tanks for a family of 4).

Robinvale Project update

Progress on the installation of the pipeline continues with completion of this now expected to occur in late September, earlier than previously expected.

Domestic and Stock Meter installation is expected to be completed by December 2009.

Construction of the Pump Station is well underway with the concrete basement constructed, pumps and motors delivered and river works commencing. Construction is scheduled for completion in late November 2009, with commissioning programmed into January 2010.

Customer connection to the new high pressure system is anticipated from early February 2010 onwards. The existing irrigation system will be in operation as a dual system for a number of months post the commissioning of the new system.

Sunraysia Modernisation Project.

District customers are now receiving updates on the project by mail and information sessions are being held across the three affected districts.

Renewal of Customer Service and Advisory Committee Appointments

In relation to the 30 June 2009, CSAC membership renewal process the Board resolved to rollover the appointment of the retiring members for 12 months in each of the irrigation districts of Merbein and Red Cliffs. This decision was taken such that all members would have continuity of knowledge and understanding of the issues around the development of the Business Case and planning for the detailed design for the Sunraysia Modernisation Project.

This also occurred in Robinvale for similar reasons reflecting the delivery and commissioning status of that project.

