



NSW Government

Department of Water & Energy

Critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

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Current water availability

There has been some useful rainfall across the Murrumbidgee Valley in the past four weeks that has reduced irrigation demand for water, but has not resulted in any significant inflows to the major storages.

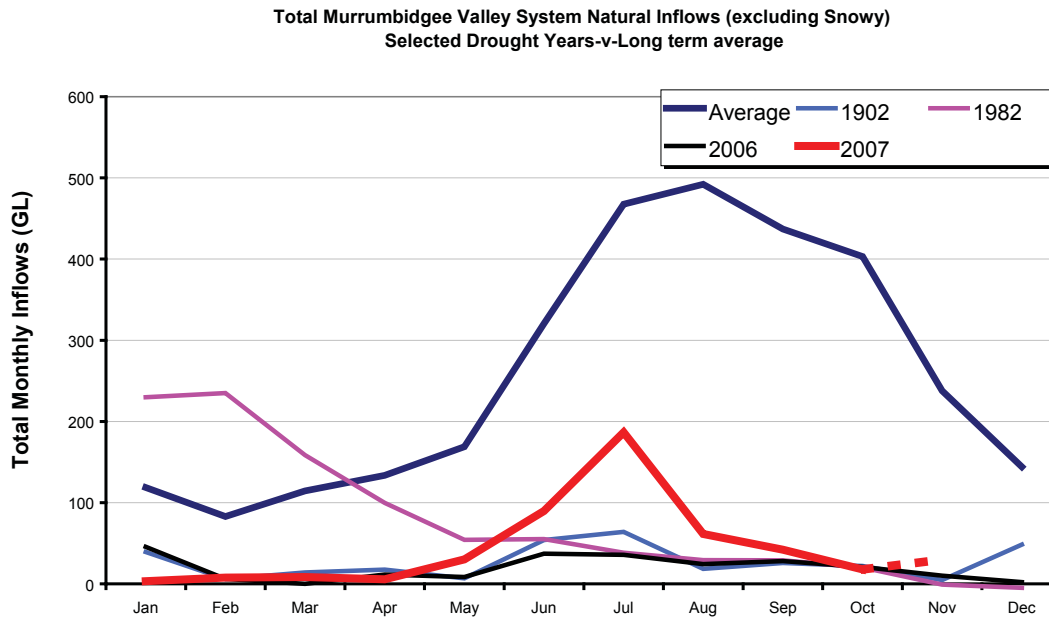
Since 10 October, Wagga Wagga has received 42 millimetres (mm) of rain, Griffith received 41 mm and Yass received 76 mm. The total inflow into the Murrumbidgee Valley system for October was 16 gigalitres (GL), which is slightly lower than the inflows recorded in October 2006. However, the total inflows in the Murrumbidgee system for the period of July to October 2006 was 110 GL, compared to 305 GL for the same period in 2007.

Inflows into the Snowy Mountains Scheme storages have continued to be above those recorded for the same period in 2006. The inflows into Blowering Dam are largely due to the releases from Snowy Hydro so far this year.

Murrumbidgee Valley storage levels as at 13 November 2007.

Storage @ 13 November 2007	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 12 September to 15 October GL
Burrinjuck Dam	386	37.5	-16
Blowering Dam	521	31.9	+22

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



What this means

On 2 November, Minister for the Climate Change, Environment and Water, Phil Koperberg, announced an increase in water availability for high security users to 80 per cent of entitlement, stock and domestic to 100 per cent and town water supply to 100 per cent.

These allocations, coupled with the re-crediting of the water suspended in 2006, will provide sufficient water for full permanent planting production in the Murrumbidgee Valley.

Water management arrangements for the Murrumbidgee Valley are now approaching those that would normally be in place under the water sharing plan. However, consideration still needs to be given to the repayment of environmental accounts and the priority of sharing of any future improvements between general and high security users.

The increase in water availability in the past two weeks has not been sufficient to enable a further allocation for irrigation, but has provided water to be made available to Murrumbidgee and Coleambally Irrigation Areas to meet the conveyance losses required to deliver additional domestic and stock supplies.

Water trading in 2007/08

All water in accounts may be traded. This includes all inter-valley and inter-state trades. Water can be traded back into the Murrumbidgee Valley as long as there is nett trade into the Murray.

An important exception to these arrangements is for those users who participated in the 2002/03 Snowy borrow arrangements. Water re-credited in 2007/08 from that which was suspended in 2006 may not be traded until the water borrowed from Snowy Hydro has been repaid.

Town water supply

Allocations for town water supplies have been increased to 100 per cent of entitlement. This has been necessary to meet needs of towns where use under Level 3 restrictions will exceed the current allocation.

The Department is still requesting all town water supply authorities to continue to implement Level 3 restrictions which limits outside water use.

There is a need to continue to be conservative with all water use as there is limited water set aside to meet the restricted town and domestic needs for 2008/09, and water required to meet the critical needs of industries will be met by inflows throughout the coming months.

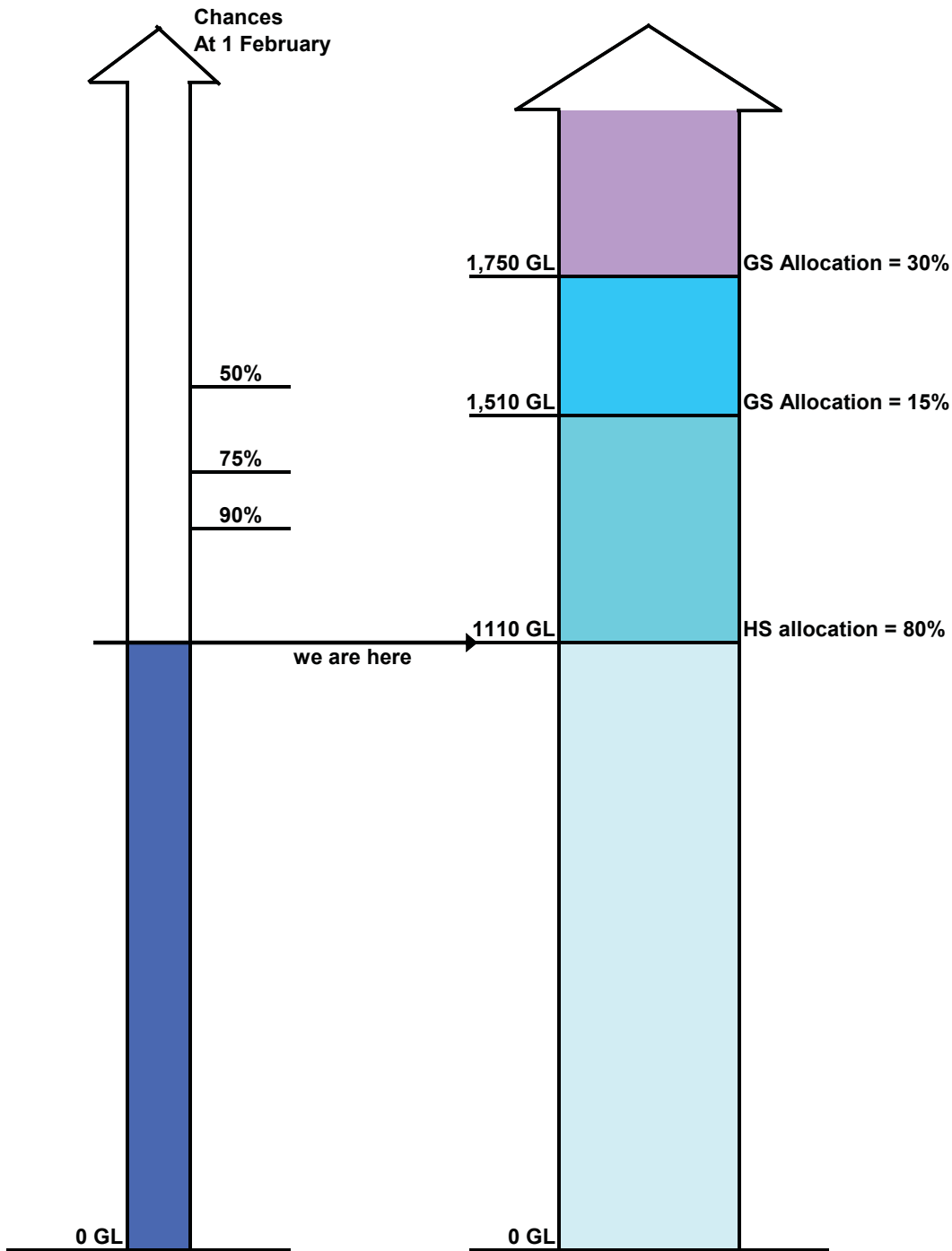
Water availability outlook

The following diagram shows the **approximate probabilities** of improvements in water availability occurring by the 1 February 2008. This diagram will continue to change throughout the season as conditions change and other issues, such as reserving water for next year, need to be included.

Murrumbidgee Valley Indicative Outlook

Availability @ 15/11/07

Indicative Requirements



Consideration now needs to be given to the provision of reserves for critical human needs for 2008/09, the repayment of the water borrowed from environmental water accounts in 2006, and priority of any further allocations between GS and HS users.

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