

Critical water planning for the Murray Valley

Issue 30 | 15 December 2009

Current water availability

There has been some reasonable rainfall across the Murray Valley during the past four weeks with a few centres receiving well over their average falls for November. While this has freshened up the country, it has not generated any significant inflow.

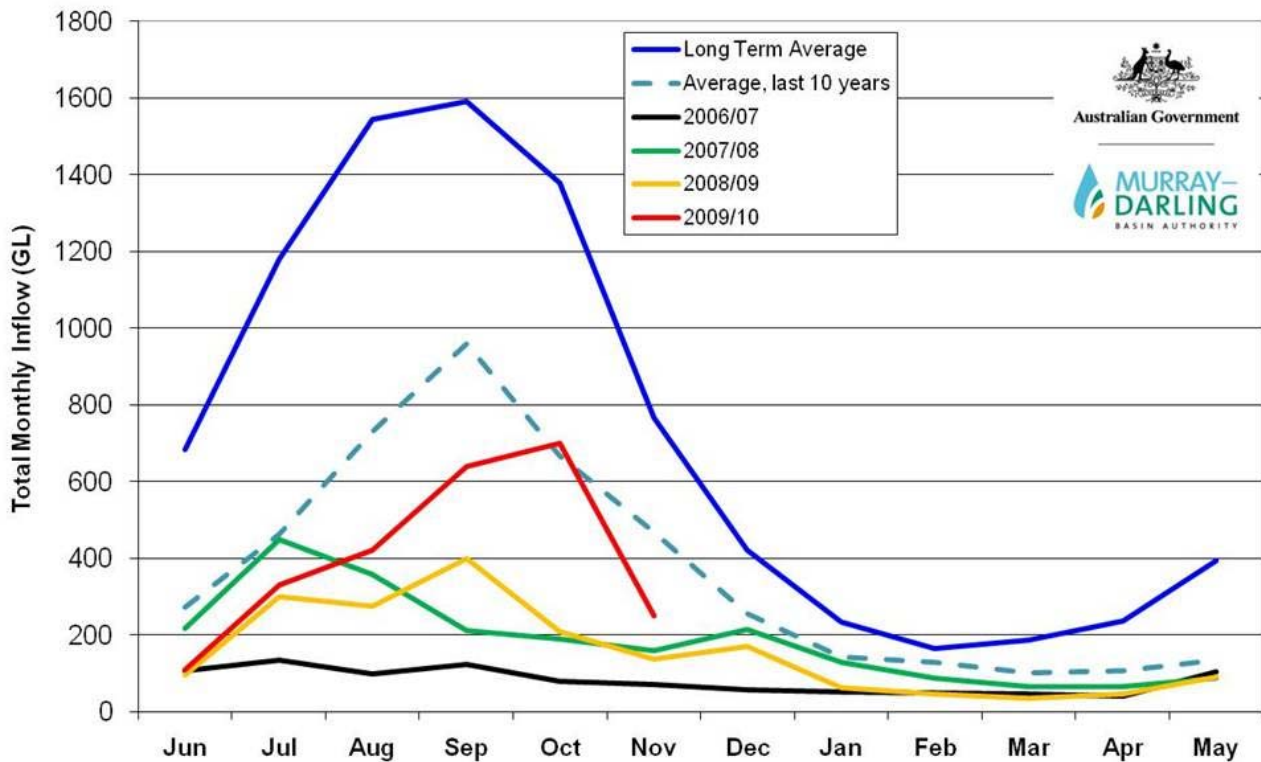
Rainfall summary

Location	From 10-30 November (mm)	From 1-10 December (mm)	Total (mm)	December average (mm)	% of December average
Thredbo Village	147.4	25.4	172.8	118.1	146
Albury	58.8	1.2	60.0	52.4	115
Deniliquin	55.8	5	60.8	29.5	206
Mildura (airport)	63	9	72	23.5	306

The following table shows Murray Valley storage levels as at 10 December 2009.

Storage @ 10 December 2009	Volume (GL)	Percent of capacity	Change (GL) in Volume since 12 November	Approximate volume at this time last year
Hume Dam	1038	34	-138	972
Dartmouth Dam	1208	31	+ 8	873
Menindee Lakes	157	9	- 25	297
Lake Victoria	351	52	-6	257
Total volume	2754			

Inflow graph



There has been 250 gigalitres of inflow into the Murray system over the past month.

What this means

In the past month there has been only 250 gigalitres of Murray system inflow, which is well below the average for this time of year. This volume has to be shared between New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

The small inflows that have occurred over the past month have been set aside to meet critical human needs for the New South Wales Murray Valley for 2010/11. To date, approximately 48 per cent of critical human needs water required for next year has been reserved. However, there is not enough water available to increase general security allocations, which will remain on 10 per cent of entitlement.

Flows now extend throughout the entire Wakool River system with some irrigation available to licence holders in that area.

There is sufficient water available to maintain low flows in this system throughout summer.

The next assessment will be carried out mid January 2010, with a critical water planning communiqué to be issued on 15 January 2010.

Trade

The second trade ballot for the Murrumbidgee Valley finished on 3 December. This ballot was over subscribed with the full 42 gigalitres being committed to trade out of the valley. The majority of this water was purchased by South Australian interests.

At this stage the NSW Office of Water will continue to monitor the situation to determine if future ballots are the best method to manage these constraints.

All other trades within the Murray Valley may occur under the same rules as for 2008/09 with trades continuing to be permitted from upstream to downstream of the Barmah Choke.

Trade is **not permitted** out of, or into, the Lower Darling River Valley.

Carryover

While the Murray Lower Darling Water Sharing Plan remains suspended, carryover rules in the Murray Valley will remain as they were in 2008/09. The Murray Lower Darling Water Sharing Plan will only recommence when water resources improve enough to provide full high security allocations for the both the 2009/10 year and 2010/11.

This will also trigger the resumption of carryover rules outlined in the water sharing plan.

Until then, high and general security and conveyance licences will be allowed to carryover up to 100 per cent of their entitlement. Water use, that is allocations plus carryover, for each licence in 2010/11 will be limited to 100 per cent unless additional water is purchased in that year.

Lower Darling River Management

Flows have now ceased in all reaches of the Barwon-Darling system and the level of water in Lake Wetherell is falling due to releases and increasing evaporation. There is enough water in Lake Wetherell to secure water supply to Broken Hill for over 21 months.

Compliance

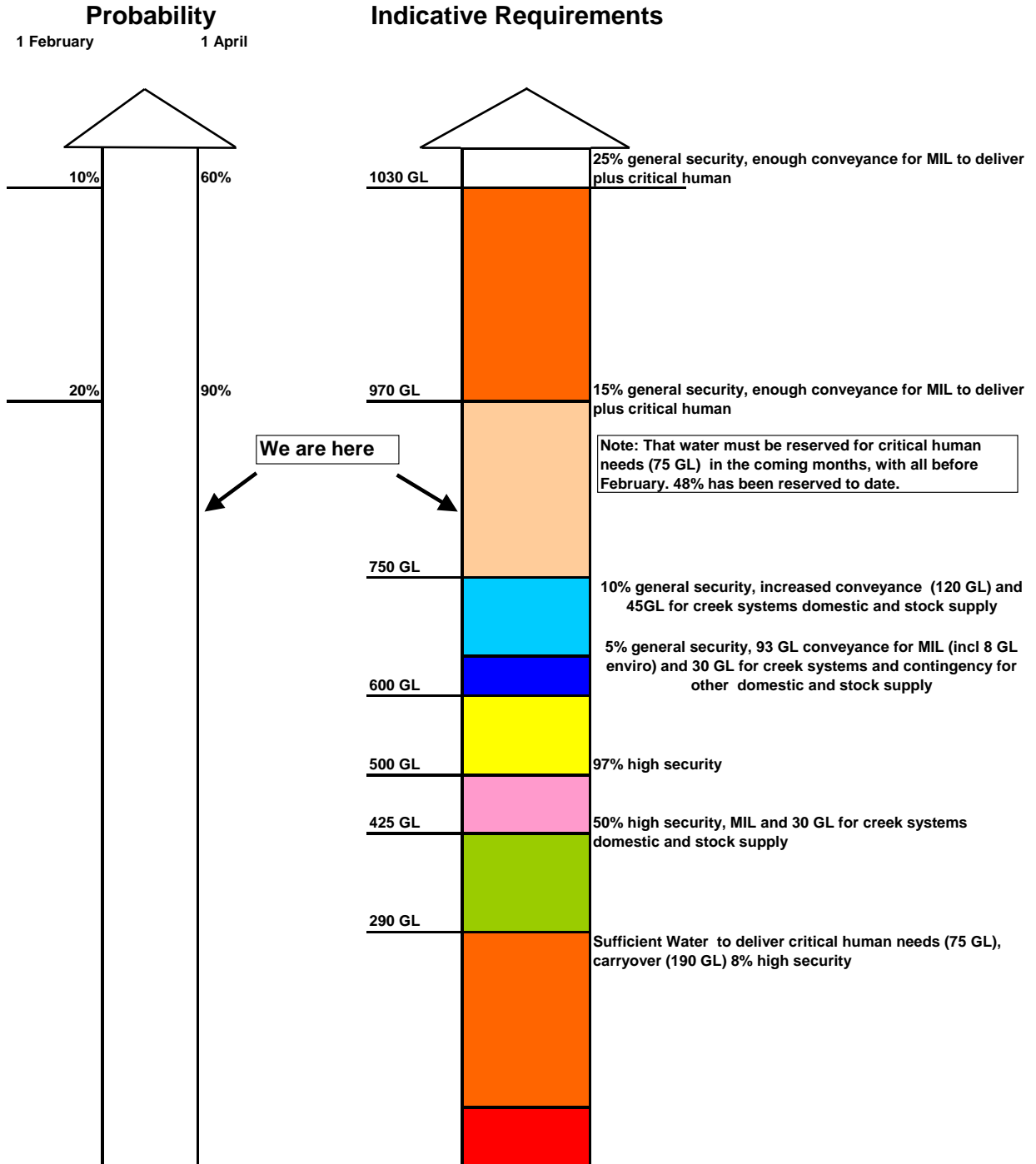
The NSW Office of Water's Drought Contingency Planning Program will only work if everyone adheres to the restrictions and is careful with **all** water use. To ensure that the system is run fairly, the community should report any suspected breaches to the Office's Compliance Unit on 1800 633 362 or by email to watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au. All reports are confidential.

Water availability outlook

The figures that have been used to inform this diagram is based on dry tercile (driest 1/3 of years) and are very conservative.

The volumes on the "rocket" are indicative only and may change depending on the priority of access following stakeholder feedback and the reservation of water for 2010/11.

□ **NSW Murray Valley Outlook**
 As at 10 December 2009



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