

## critical water planning for the Murrumbidgee Valley

ISSUE 3

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### CURRENT WATER AVAILABILITY

Light rain fell across the Murrumbidgee Valley in the past fortnight with most areas receiving less than 10 millimetres (mm).

From the 1<sup>st</sup> of June to the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, Wagga Wagga received only 5.6 mm of rain and Griffith received only 0.8 mm. Total inflow into the Murrumbidgee Valley system in May this year was 30 gegalitres (GL), better than the 7 GL recorded for May 2006. Inflow in the last two weeks has been approximately 20 GL, compared to 37 GL for June 2006. There has been minimal improvement in water availability in the Valley as a result of these inflows.

The inflow into the Snowy Hydro storages has also been minimal. However the small increase in storage volume in Blowering Dam is largely due to releases from Snowy Hydro into the Murrumbidgee system.

The following table shows storage levels as at the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2007.

Storage @ 14 <sup>th</sup> June	Volume GL	Percent of capacity	Change in Volume 28 May to 14 June GL
Burrinjuck Dam	254	25	+4
Blowering Dam	286	18	+32
Snowy Tumut Storage	148	n/a (?)	+3

### WHAT THIS MEANS

Sufficient water is available to meet town water supply for the whole of 2007/08 under level 4 water restrictions, and to meet the critical water needs of stock, domestic and industry (high security licences) in July 2007. A program is currently being developed to provide water to these industries.

It is highly likely that water availability will improve as the year progresses. The Murrumbidgee Critical Water Advisory Group and the Department of Water and Energy recognise that it is in the best interest of the region to help local industries remain viable until it is possible to distribute water more widely through the normal allocation process.

Currently no water has been set aside to meet the critical water supply needs for 2008/09. This will need to be considered during the coming months to ensure that we don't go into 2008 with no water set aside for towns for 2008/09.

## APPLYING FOR CONTINGENCY WATER

High security licence holders who have immediate water needs, such as intensive livestock, forestry industry, abattoirs, wine processing, and non deciduous tree crops, must apply for contingency water in writing by the 25th of June 2007.

Applications to provide an advance for survival water during July 2007 into accounts **must be made with your local water licensing authority on the attached form** (e.g. Murrumbidgee Irrigation).

\* MI have advised latest information to-date in a mailout to all MI customers 21<sup>st</sup> June-or refer to copy of the information on [www.mirrigation.com.au](http://www.mirrigation.com.au) under 21<sup>st</sup> June 07 announcement 'pre-season outlook information'.

Water use must be minimised and any breach of this requirement will result in the removal of the licence from this contingency program.

## RIVER MANAGEMENT DURING 2007/08

Under extreme conditions, it may be necessary to operate the Murrumbidgee River at lower than normal levels in many parts of the system. This will maximise the water available for critical industrial and permanent planting requirements. As a result, continuous flows may not be available in some effluent creeks, such as the Old Man Creek system and the Yanco Creek system. Discussions will be held with affected users to develop alternative supply arrangements.

## WATER TRADING IN 2007/08

Water held in accounts may be traded. This includes all water made available in 2007/08. However, if water users choose to trade their emergency contingency water it will be difficult to justify allocating any further contingency water in 2007/08. If the required water is unused it should be carried-over for the next month. All water credited to accounts in 2007/08 will be counted as part of the annual allocation.

## WATER AVAILABILITY OUTLOOK

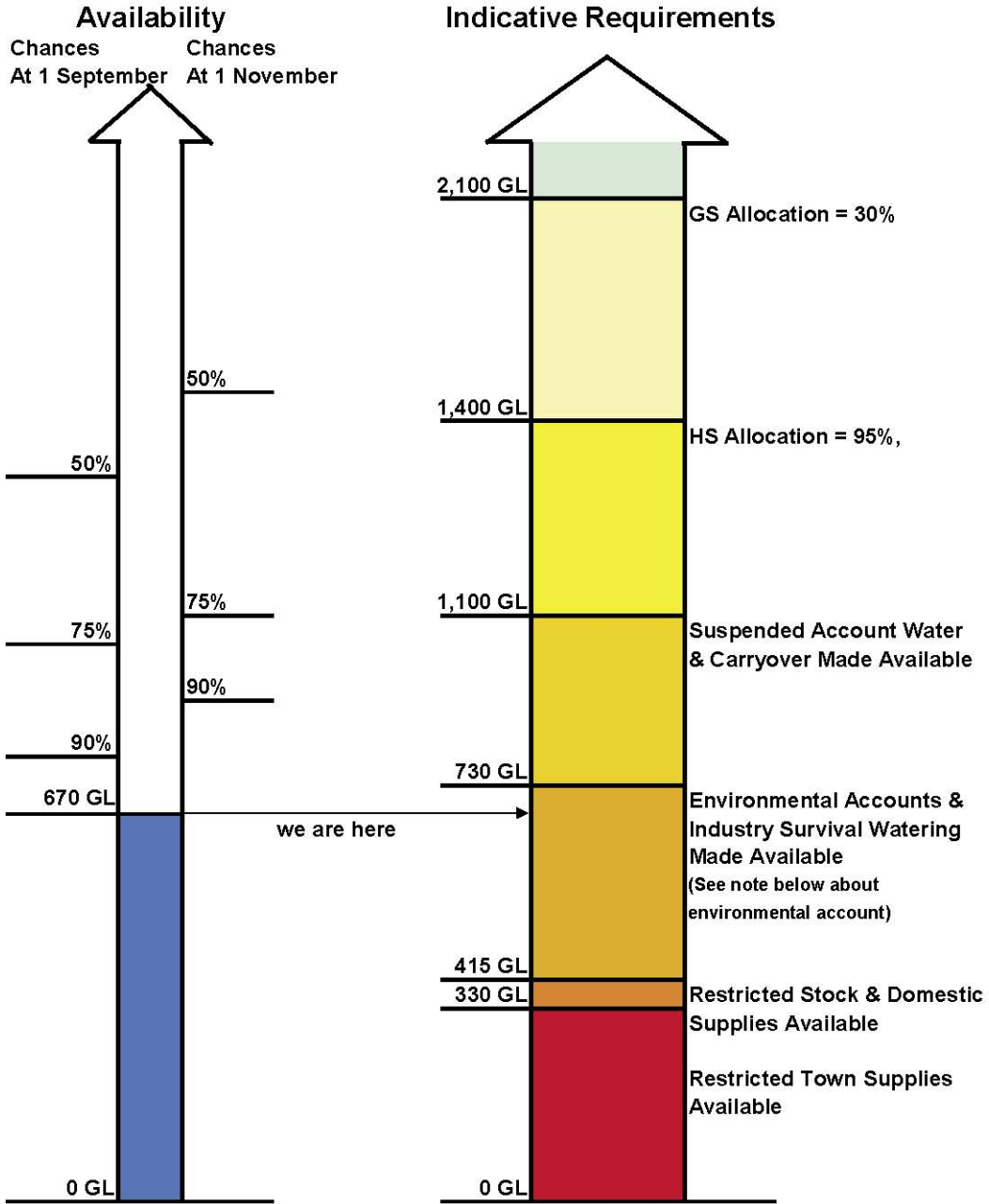
The following diagram shows the approximate probabilities of improvements in water availability occurring by the 1st of September and the 1st of November 2007. This diagram will change throughout the season as conditions change and other issues, such as reserving water for next year, need to be included.

In this diagram, the water currently available for 2007/08 is shown in the blue shading on the left hand arrow. This includes water in storages and future inflows under a repeat of the inflows experienced this year (2006/07). The chances of the water availability (blue shading) increasing by the 1st of September and the 1st of November 2007 is also shown on either side of the left hand arrow.

These probabilities are calculated using what is called dry sequence analysis. This uses the inflows in the last three months as an indicator of what **might** happen in the rest of the current year. These figures are **conservative**.

The water required to meet the various needs in the Murrumbidgee Valley are shown on the right hand arrow, starting with the highest priority requirement – critical town water supplies. The next highest priority requirements are shown in ascending order. As the blue shading (representing resources available) increases, more of the requirements shown on the right hand arrow can be met.

# Murrumbidgee Valley Indicative Outlook



## CONTACT

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