

## Lower Ovens Groundwater Management Area

The Lower Ovens Groundwater Management Area (GMA) covers the Ovens River catchment downstream of Myrtleford. This includes the Buffalo and King Rivers, and extends north along the floodplain to the River Murray.

Groundwater resources in the Lower Ovens GMA are managed under a local management plan (the Plan) approved by Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) in 2012.

### Allocations

Groundwater levels in the GMA are managed by the potential to restrict water extraction through the application of restriction to licence take (referred to as Seasonal Allocations). Restrictions were not applied in 2017/18 as the three-year rolling average groundwater recovery levels were above trigger levels (Figure 1 & Figure 2). The available entitlement for 2018/19 is 100% of licence volume for all zones.

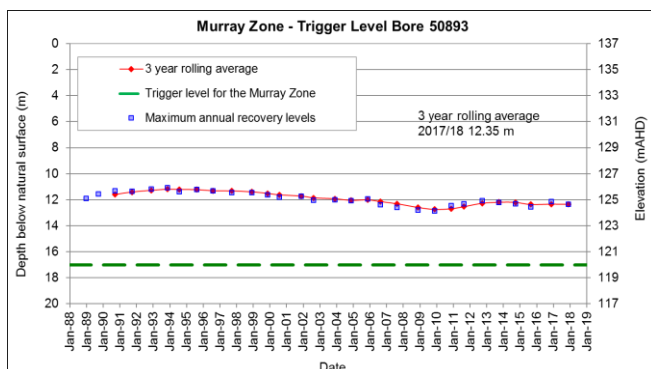


Figure 1 Murray Zone – Three-year rolling average of recovery level compared with trigger level

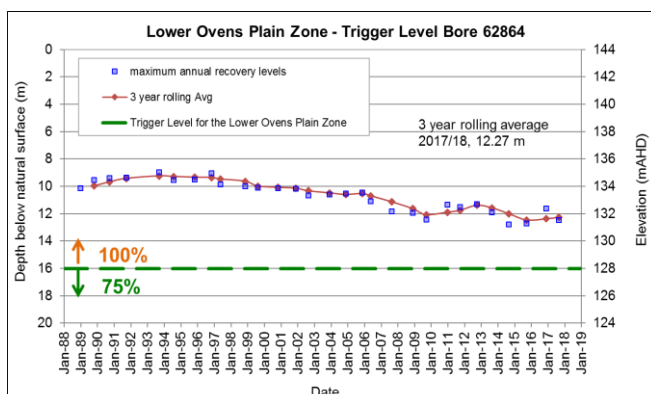


Figure 2 Ovens Plain Zone – Three-year rolling average of recovery level compared with trigger level

### Groundwater volume and use

Metered use in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2017/18 was similar to the previous three years. The total metered

use across all zones was 5,758.4 ML, or 29% of licensed volume (Table 1, Figure 3).

Table 1 Licensed groundwater volume and use in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2017/18

| Management zone | Volume (ML/yr)  | Use (ML)       |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Ovens Plain     | 3,190.0         | 1,409.9        |
| Mid Ovens       | 11,669.4        | 3,138.5        |
| Bedrock         | 1,413.6         | 273.1          |
| Murray          | 3,632.0         | 937.3          |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>19,905.0</b> | <b>5,758.4</b> |

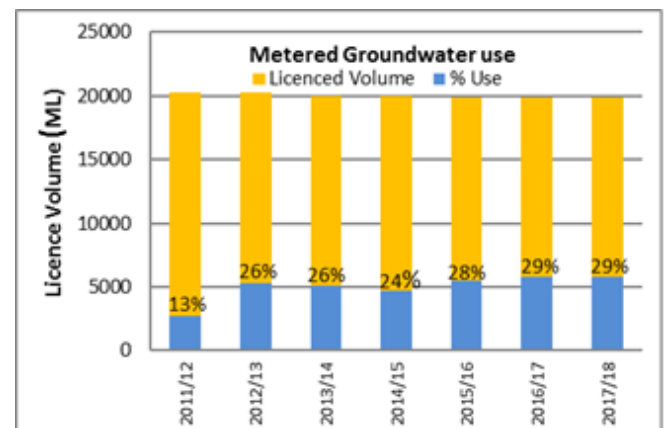


Figure 3 Metered groundwater use in the Lower Ovens GMA

### Groundwater trading

Licence holders may transfer licensed volume on a permanent or temporary basis in the GMA. The 2017/18 season saw an increase in the volume of licence volume transferred (Table 2) with 804 ML/yr temporarily transferred compared to 313 ML/yr in 2016/17. There was one temporary transfer of 19 ML from the Upper Ovens Management Zone 1 (1085) into the Lower Ovens Bedrock zone.

Table 2 Temporary groundwater transfers in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2017/18

| Management zone | Temporary transfer from (ML/yr) | Temporary transfer to (ML/yr) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ovens Plain     | 0                               | 265                           |
| Mid Ovens       | 337                             | 72                            |
| Bedrock         | 0                               | 19                            |
| Murray          | 448                             | 448                           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>785</b>                      | <b>804</b>                    |

The 2017/18 season saw a decrease in the volume of licence volume transferred (Table 3), into the Ovens Plains Zone with 6 ML/yr permanently transferred compared to 70 ML/yr in 2016/17.

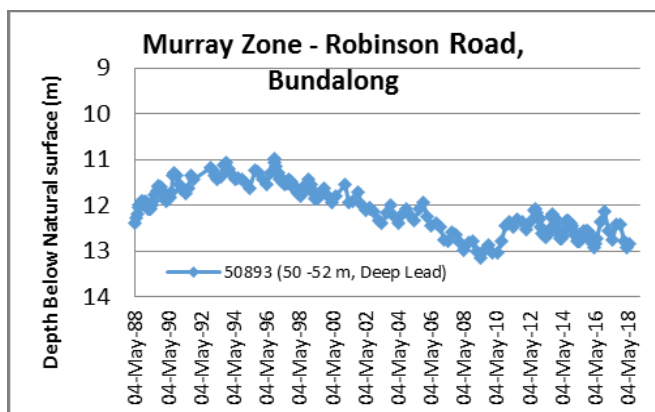
**Table 3 Permanent groundwater transfers in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2016/17**

| Management zone | Permanent transfer from (ML/yr) | Permanent transfer to (ML/yr) |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Ovens Plain     | 0                               | 6                             |
| Mid Ovens       | 28                              | 12                            |
| Bedrock         | 0                               | 10                            |
| Murray          | 70                              | 70                            |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>98</b>                       | <b>98</b>                     |

### Groundwater levels

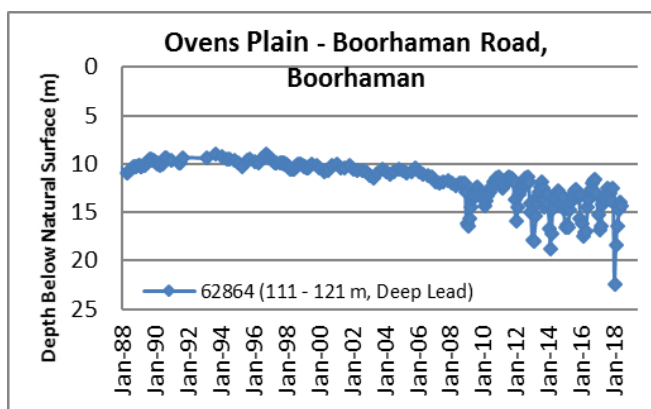
Groundwater levels are monitored in 62 State Observation Bores within the Lower Ovens GMA.

Groundwater levels during 2017/18 in the Murray Zone remained relatively steady (Figure 5). Minor seasonal fluctuations in groundwater levels are seen in this bore due to seasonal climatic variations.



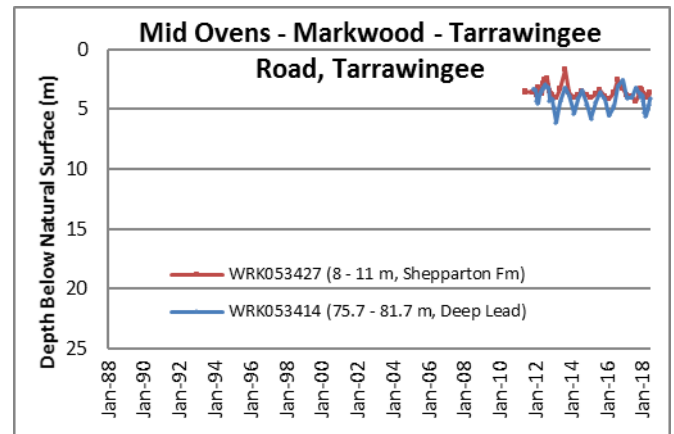
**Figure 5 Murray Zone trigger level bore**

Groundwater levels in the Ovens Plain Zone have decreased over the past year consistent with lower rainfall and increased licensed extraction from the deep lead aquifer (Figure 6).



**Figure 6 Ovens Plain Zone trigger level bore**

The groundwater response in the Mid Ovens Zone is similar to the Ovens Plain Zone, with a seasonal drawdown caused by rainfall and groundwater use (Figure 7). Groundwater levels also show a decrease over the last year which can be attributed to decreased rainfall for the 2017/18 season.



**Figure 7 Mid Ovens Zone nested bore site**

### Future Plan amendments

The Plan has been in place since 2012 and is currently being reviewed.

GMW will consult with groundwater users on proposed amendments which will likely include changes to the plan boundaries and opportunities for carryover of unused licence volume.

#### Looking to buy or sell licensed volume?

Watermatch is an online forum where licence holders can advertise their interest to buy or sell licensed volume; either groundwater or unregulated surface water.

Visit [www.watermatch.com.au](http://www.watermatch.com.au)

### Where can I get more information?

The Lower Ovens GMA Local Management Plan is available on the GMW website [www.gmwater.com.au](http://www.gmwater.com.au) or call GMW on 1800 013 357.