

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 2018/19 as the three-year rolling average groundwater recovery levels were above trigger levels (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The available entitlement for 2019/20 is 100% of licence volume for all zones.

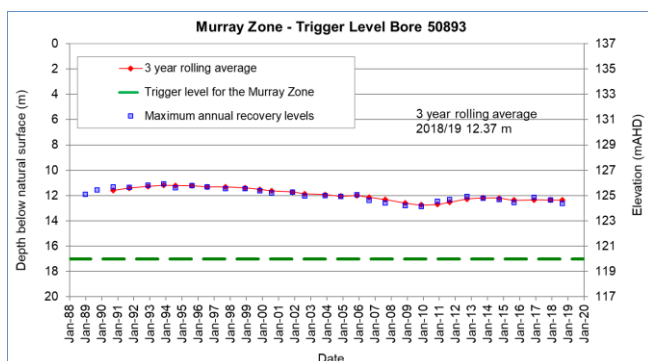


Figure 1 Murray Zone – Three-year rolling average of recovery level compared with trigger level

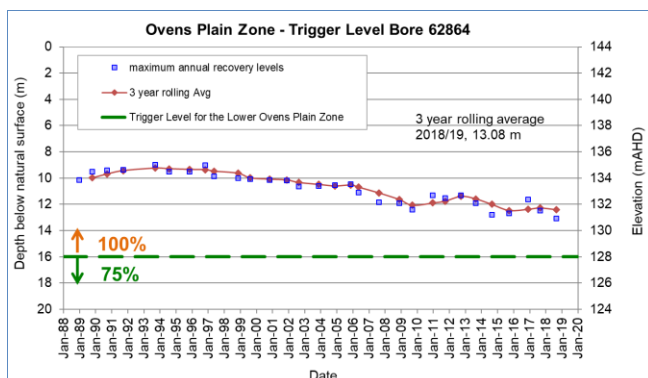


Figure 2 Ovens Plain Zone – Three-year rolling average of recovery level compared with trigger level

Groundwater volume and use

Metered use in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2018/19 was higher than the previous three years. The total

metered use across all zones was 8,285.3 ML, or 42% of licensed volume (Table 1 and Figure 3).

Table 1 Licensed groundwater volume and use in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2018/19

Management zone	Volume (ML/yr)	Use (ML)
Ovens Plain	3,190.0	2,408.2
Mid Ovens	11,632.4	3,193.5
Bedrock	1,420.6	3,51.4
Murray	3,632.0	2,332.2
Total	19,875.0	8,285.3

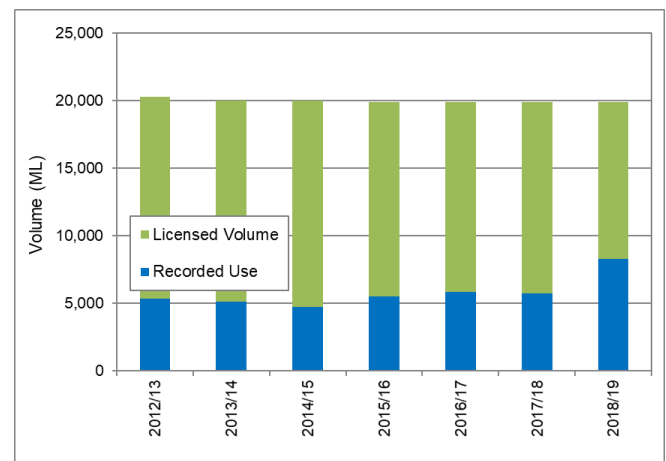


Figure 3 Metered groundwater use in the Lower Ovens GMA

Groundwater trading

Licence holders may transfer licensed volume on a permanent or temporary basis in the GMA. The 2018/19 season saw an increase in the volume of licence volume transferred (Table 2) with 1,293 ML/yr temporarily transferred compared to 804 ML/yr in 2017/18.

Table 2 Temporary groundwater transfers in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2018/19

Management zone	Temporary transfer from (ML/yr)	Temporary transfer to (ML/yr)
Ovens Plain	260	1,000
Mid Ovens	903	163
Bedrock	0	0
Murray	120	120
Total	1,283	1,283

The 2018/19 season also saw an increase in the volume of licence volume transferred permanently (Table 3), within the GMA with 174 ML/yr permanently transferred compared to 98 ML/yr in 2017/18.

Table 3 Permanent groundwater transfers in the Lower Ovens GMA in 2018/19

Management zone	Permanent transfer from (ML/yr)	Permanent transfer to (ML/yr)
Ovens Plain	0	0
Mid Ovens	24	17
Bedrock	0	7
Murray	150	150
Total	174	174

Groundwater levels

Groundwater levels are monitored in 62 State observation bores within the Lower Ovens GMA.

In the Murray Zone, groundwater recovery levels declined by around 2.0 m in 2018/19 to 14.0 m depth below natural surface (DBNS) in Calivil Formation bore WRK054468 at Brimin, with a seasonal drawdown of 8.7 m (Figure 5).

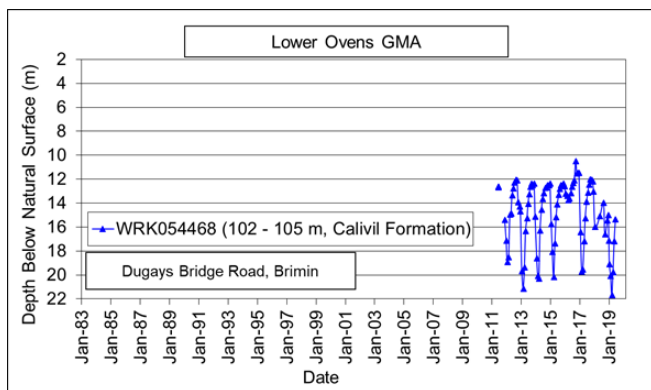


Figure 5 Murray Zone groundwater levels

In the Ovens Plain Zone, groundwater recovery levels declined by 0.6 m in 2018/19 to 13.1 m DBNS in Calivil Formation bore 62864 at Boorhaman, with a seasonal drawdown of around 7.1 m (Figure 6).

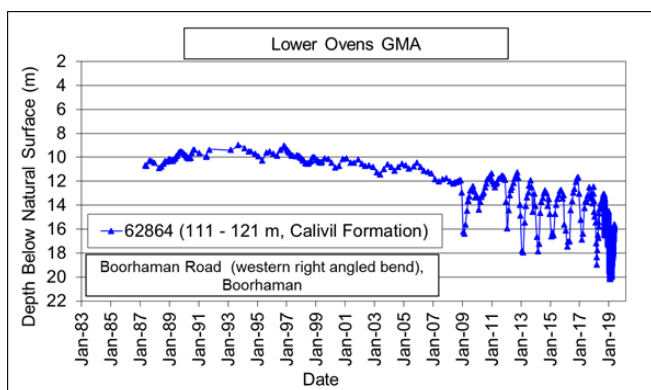


Figure 6 Ovens Plain Zone groundwater levels

In the Mid Ovens Zone, groundwater recovery levels declined by around 0.4 m in 2018/19 to 3.44 m DBNS in Calivil Formation bore WRK053414 at Oxley, with a seasonal drawdown of 2.7 m (Figure 7). Groundwater levels in the Shepparton Formation bore WRK053427 at this location were more stable and recorded a maximum recovery level of 2.84 m DBNS.

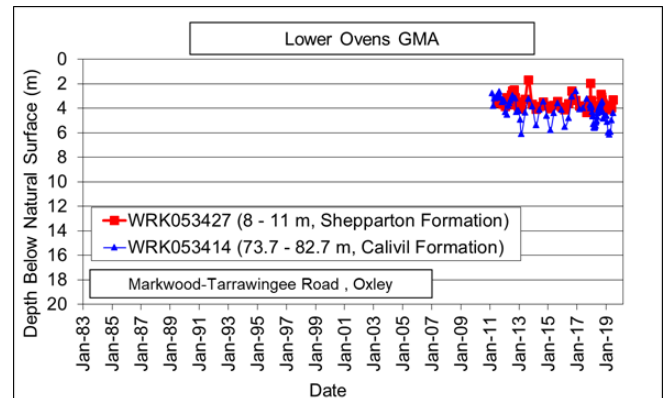


Figure 7 Mid Ovens Zone groundwater levels

Groundwater quality

Groundwater salinity is recorded from key State observation bores in the north of the Lower Ovens GMA (Figure 8). Ongoing annual sampling of these bores will enable any trends in groundwater quality to be observed.

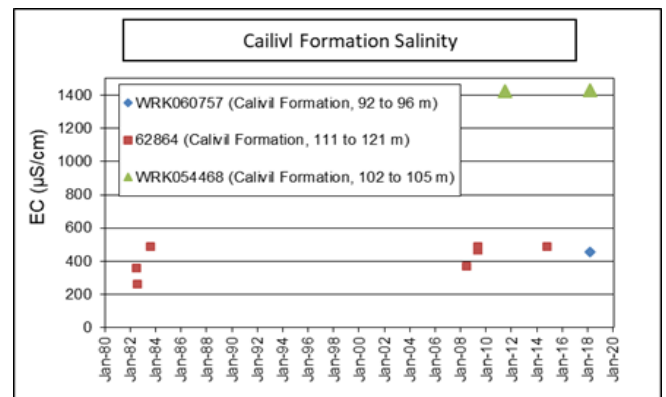


Figure 8 Groundwater salinity

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

Where can I get more information?

The Lower Ovens GMA Local Management Plan is available on the GMW website www.gmwater.com.au or call GMW on 1800 013 357.

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