

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 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 2019/20 as the three-year rolling average groundwater recovery levels were above trigger levels (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The available volume for take in 2020/21 is 100 per cent of groundwater licensed entitlement volume (licensed volume) for all zones.

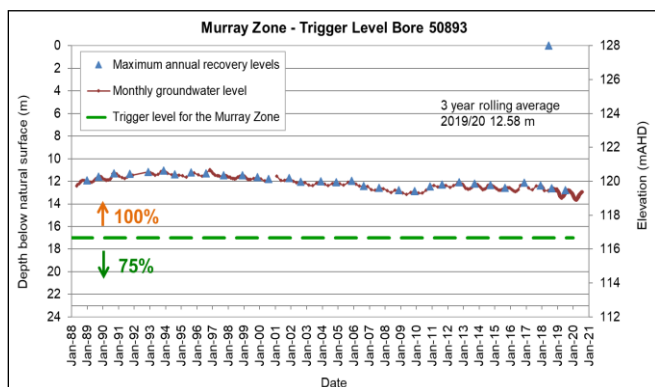


Figure 1. Murray Zone – Allocation trigger level

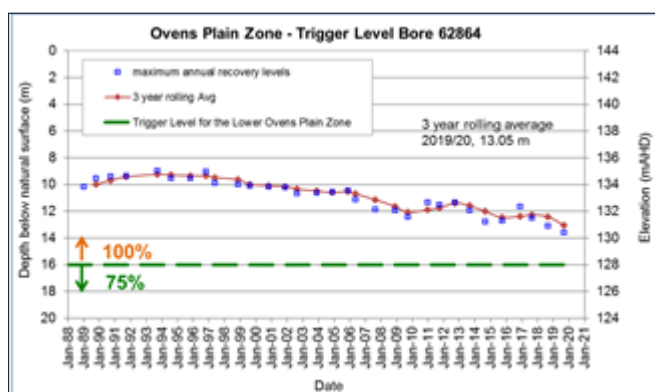


Figure 2. Ovens Plain Zone – Allocation trigger level

Licensed entitlement volume and use

Metered use in the GMA in 2019/20 was 5 per cent lower than the 2018/19 water year. The total metered

use across all zones was 7,430.5 ML, or 37 per cent of licensed volume (Table 1 and Figure 3).

Table 1. Licensed entitlement volume and use in the GMA during 2019/20

Management zone	Volume (ML/yr)	Use (ML)
Ovens Plain	3,707.6	2,785.8
Mid Ovens	11,116.8	2,827.3
Bedrock	1,420.6	310.3
Murray	3,707.6	1,507.1
Total	19,877.0	7,430.5

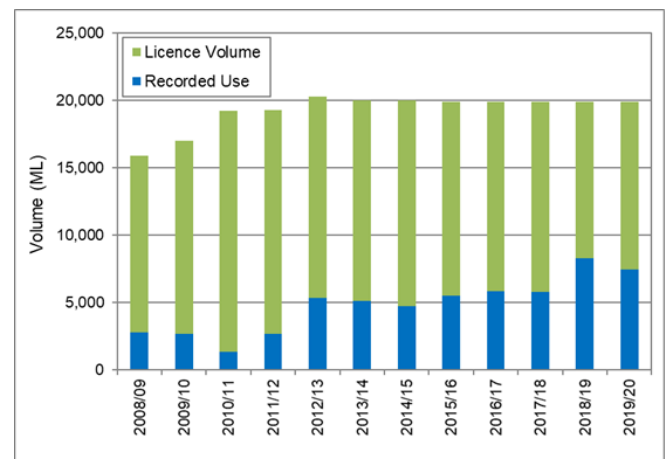


Figure 3. Metered groundwater use in the GMA

Groundwater trading

Licence holders may transfer licensed volume within in the GMA. There was an increase in 2019/20 water year for volume of temporary licensed volume transferred (Table 2) with 1,832 ML temporarily transferred compared to 1,283 ML in 2018/19.

Table 2. Temporary transfers in GMA in 2019/20

Management zone	Temporary transfer from (ML)	Temporary transfer to (ML)
Ovens Plain	260.0	1,711.0
Mid Ovens	1,572.0	121.0
Bedrock	0.0	0.0
Murray	0.0	120.0
Total	1,832	1,832

The 2019/20 water year also saw an increase in licensed volume transferred permanently (Table 3) within the GMA, with 912 ML/yr permanently transferred compared to 174 ML/yr in 2018/19.

Table 3. Permanent transfers in the GMA in 2019/20

Management zone	Permanent transfer from (ML/yr)	Permanent transfer to (ML/yr)
Ovens Plain	0.0	865.6
Mid Ovens	787.6	22.0
Bedrock	0.0	0.0
Murray	24.0	24.0
Total	811.6	911.6

Groundwater levels

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

In the Murray Zone, groundwater levels declined to 19.83 m which is 1.80m higher than the previous water year. As of May 2020, groundwater levels had recovered to 15.60m (DBNS) in Calivil Formation aquifer bore WRK054468 at Brimin (Figure 5).

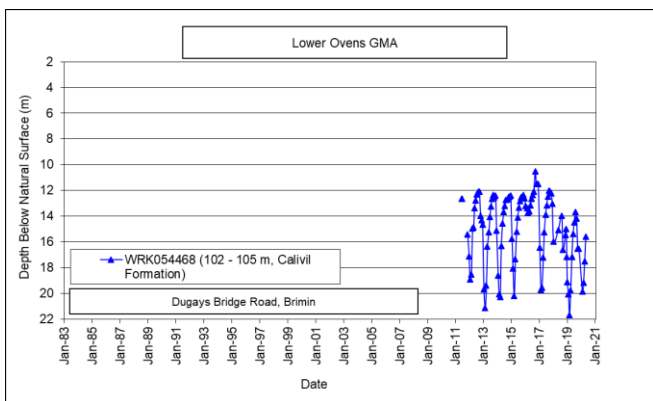


Figure 5. Murray Zone groundwater levels

In the Ovens Plain Zone, groundwater recovery levels in 2019/20 continued to decline from the water year prior, to 15.28m DBNS in Calivil Formation observation bore 62863 at Boorhaman, which also had the largest recorded drawdown level for this bore at 21.82 m DBNS (Figure 6).

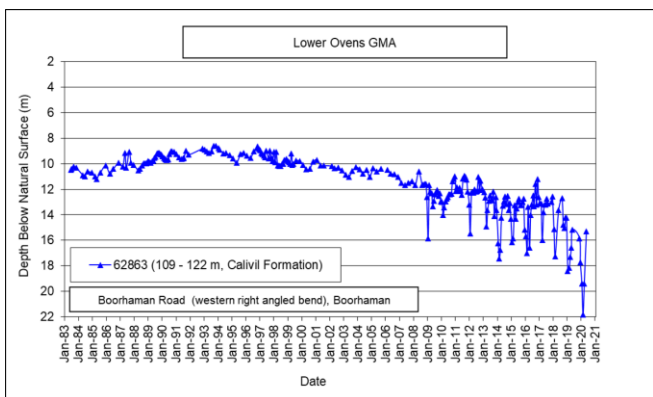


Figure 6. Ovens Plain Zone groundwater levels

In the Mid Ovens Zone, groundwater levels continued a marginal decline in the 2019/20 water year at 4.27m DBNS in Calivil Formation aquifer bore WRK053414 at

Oxley, with a drawdown within the water year of 1.7m (Figure 7). Groundwater levels in the Shepparton Formation aquifer bore WRK053427 at this location remained higher, with a maximum recovery level of 0.96 m DBNS.

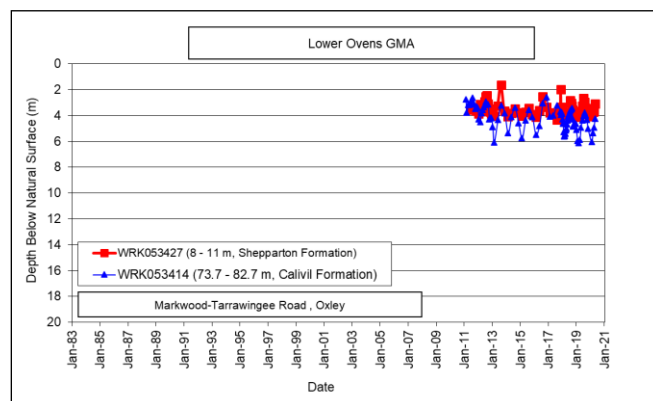


Figure 7. Mid Ovens Zone groundwater levels

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

Groundwater quality

Groundwater salinity is recorded from key State Observation bores in the north of the GMA have not shown any trends from previous values measured (Figure 8).

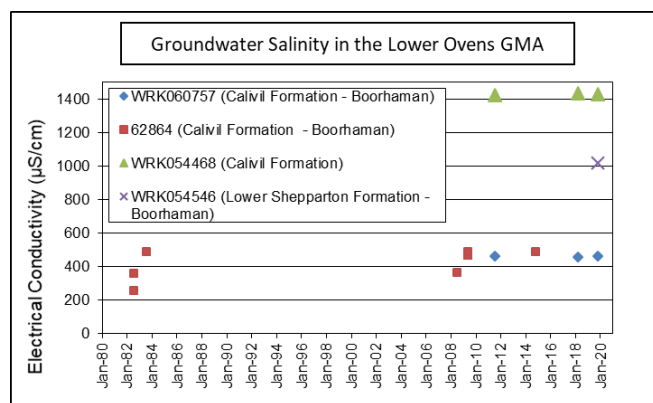


Figure 8. Groundwater salinity

Where can I get more information?

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