

# 2022 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

## 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.

### Annual allocations

Groundwater levels in the Deep Lead of the GMA can be managed if required by restrictions on licensed take and use (or 'annual allocations').

Restrictions were not applied in 2021/22 as the three-year rolling averages (of groundwater recovery levels) were above the trigger levels – refer Figures 1 and 2.

The volume available for take in 2022/23 is 100 per cent of groundwater licence entitlement volume (licence volume) for all management zones (i.e., no restrictions).

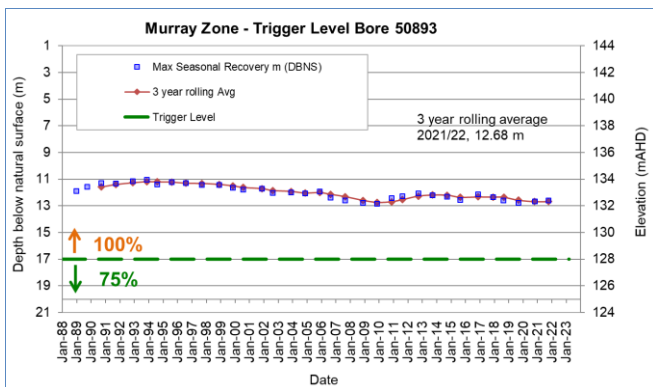


Figure 1. Trigger graph for Murray Zone restrictions

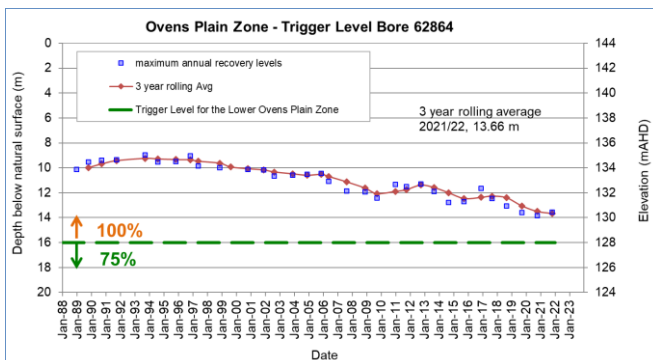


Figure 2. Trigger graph for Ovens Plain Zone restrictions

### Groundwater licence volume and use

The total recorded use in the GMA was 3,960.7 ML, or 20 per cent of licence volume (Table 1, Figure 3). This use was nine per cent lower than recorded in 2020/21.

Table 1. Licence volume and use for 2021/22

Management zone	Licence volume (ML/yr)	Recorded use (ML)
Bedrock Zone	1,420.6	121.9
Mid Ovens Zone	10,314.8	1,195.7
Murray Zone	3,632.0	633.3
Ovens Plain Zone	4,507.6	2,009.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,875.0</b>	<b>3,960.7</b>

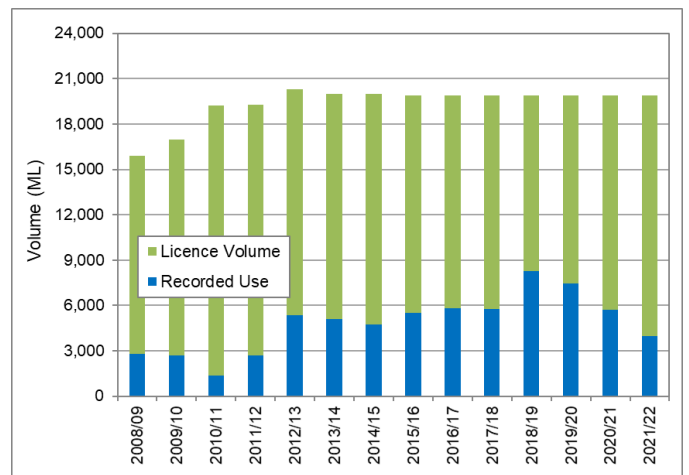


Figure 3. Annual recorded use as a proportion of licence volume

### Licence transfers

Licence volume can be transferred between licences in the GMA, on a temporary or permanent basis.

In 2021/22, the volume of temporary transfers in the GMA totalled 396 ML (Table 2), with one transfer of four ML to an unincorporated area license. The total volume of permanent transfers was 640 ML/yr, with two ML permanently transferred out of Lower Ovens GMA into Upper Ovens WSPA (Table 3)

Table 2. Temporary transfers in 2021/22

Management zone	Licence volume transferred from (ML)	Licence volume transferred to (ML)
Ovens Plain Zone	4	292
Mid Ovens Zone	142	-
Bedrock Zone	-	-
Murray Zone	250	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>392</b>

Table 3. Permanent transfers in 2021/22

Management zone	Licence volume transferred from (ML/yr)	Licence volume transferred to (ML/yr)
Ovens Plain Zone	-	495
Mid Ovens Zone	640	143
Bedrock Zone	-	-
Murray Zone	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>638</b>

**Licence compliance**

In 2021/22 there were no reported instance of alleged unauthorised take of groundwater (including overuse) in the GMA.

GMW has a zero-tolerance approach to unauthorised take of non-urban water. Relevant actions, if required, are taken in accordance with GMW’s Risk-Based Compliance and Enforcement Framework. More information is available on the GMW website, at [www.gmwater.com.au/compliance](http://www.gmwater.com.au/compliance).

**Groundwater levels**

GMW monitor groundwater levels in 62 State observation bores within the GMA.

In the Murray Zone during 2021/22, the lowest groundwater levels in the Deep Lead (Calivil Formation) at Brimin was 15.36 m below the surface/ This was 2.53 m higher (i.e., closer to the surface) than the previous year. As of June 2022, groundwater levels here had recovered to 13.02 m below the surface (Figure 4).

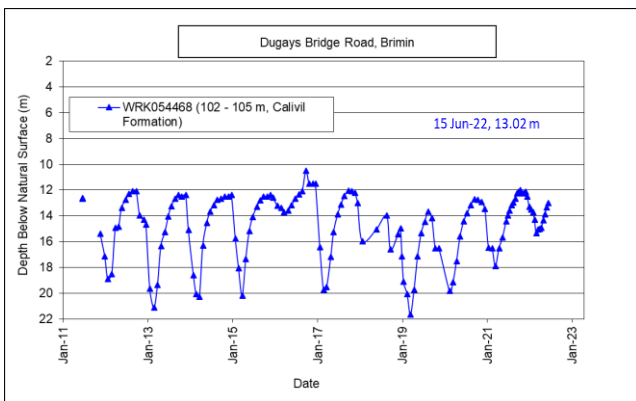


Figure 4. Groundwater level monitoring at Brimin

In the Ovens Plain Zone, groundwater levels in the Calivil Formation at Boorhaman dropped to 16.87 m below the surface in March 2022; and had recovered to 11.94 m by mid-June (Figure 5).

In the Mid Ovens Zone, groundwater levels declined to 4.24 m below the surface in the Calivil Formation aquifer at Oxley during 2021/22 (Figure 6).

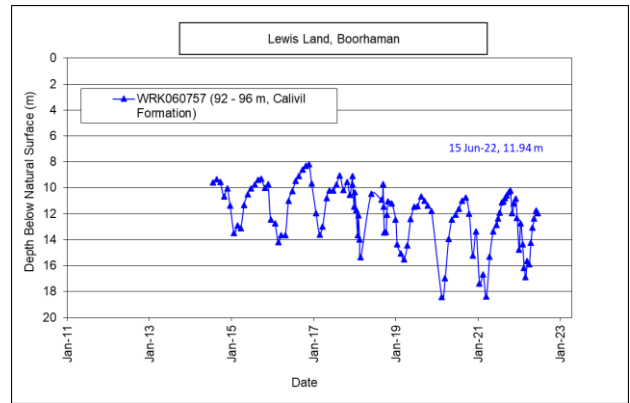


Figure 5. Groundwater level monitoring at Boorhaman

Groundwater levels in the shallow aquifer system (Shepparton Formation) bore at the same monitoring site (WRK053427) remained higher than the deeper bore throughout the year; and there was little variation in the levels (Figure 6).

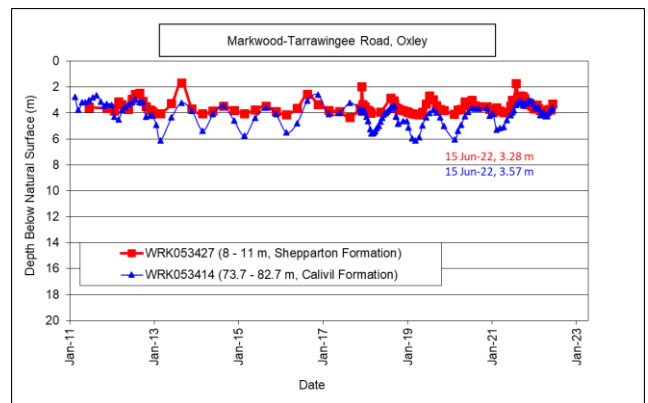


Figure 6. Groundwater level monitoring at Oxley

**Groundwater quality**

Groundwater salinity recorded for key State observation bores in the GMA have not shown any trends from previous values measured (Figure 7).

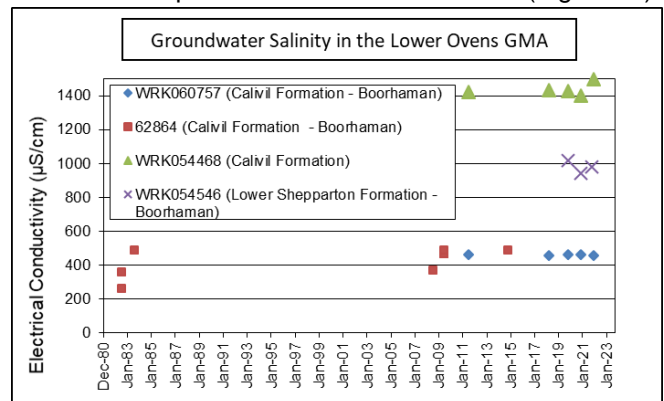


Figure 7. Groundwater salinity monitoring

**Where can I get more information?**

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

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