2024/2025 Newsletter

Goulburn-Murray WATER

Lower Campaspe Valley

Water Supply Protection Area

Groundwater Management Plan

Groundwater Management

The Lower Campaspe Valley Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) extends from Lake Eppalock in the south to the Murray River in the north.

Groundwater resources are managed by Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) in accordance with the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA Groundwater Management Plan, approved by the Minister for Water in 2012 (the Plan).

Groundwater licence volume and use

On 30 June 2025, the total licence volume in the WSPA was 55,860.4 megalitres per year (ML/yr). For the 2024/25 season, recorded use in the WSPA was 34,673.3 ML, or 62 per cent of licence volume (Figure 1).

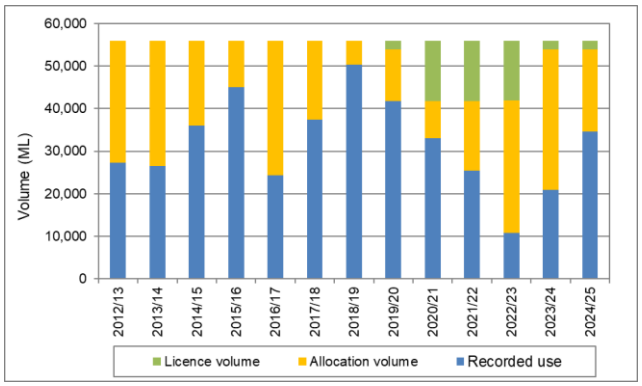

Figure 1 Licence volume, allocation and use

Carryover

A total of 13,509 ML was carried over by licence holders in the WSPA for use in the 2024/25 water year. The volume that has been carried over into the 2025/26 water year is 13,299.43 ML.

Annual Allocations

2024/2025 Allocation

Allocations are determined by comparing the three-year rolling average of the maximum groundwater level recovery triggers set by the Plan. Triggers are based on the depth below the natural surface in metres (mDBNS).

In the 2024/25 water year, the Elmore- Rochester, Bamawm and Echuca zones had an allocation of 100 per cent of licensed groundwater entitlement volume (licence volume), whilst the Barnadown zone was subject to an allocation of 75 per cent.

2025/2026 Allocation

Allocations have been announced at 100 per cent for the Elmore- Rochester, Bamawm and Echuca zones for 2025/26 (Figure 2), whilst Barnadown has a 75 per cent allocation (Figure 3) for the 2025/26 water year.

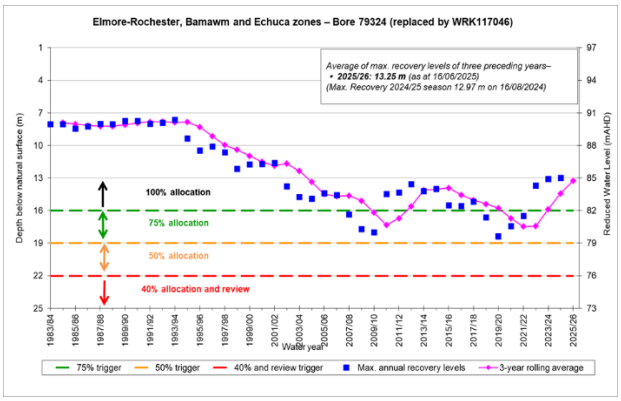

Figure 2 Trigger graph for Elmore - Rochester zone allocation, 2025/26

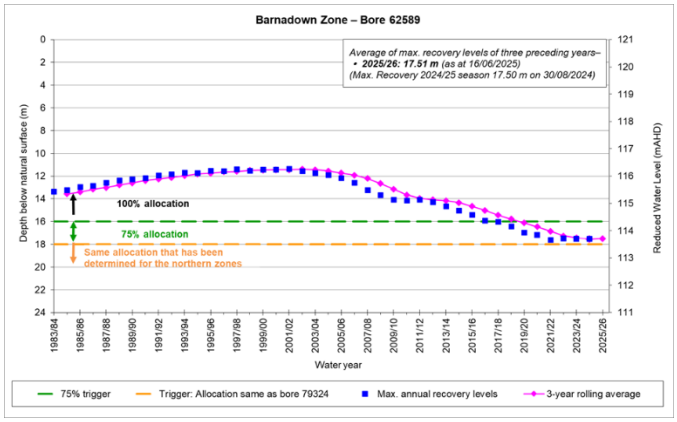

Figure 3 Trigger graph for Barnadown allocation, 2025/26

Licence transfers

In 2024/25 there were seventeen temporary transfers for a total of 4,223 ML and eight permanent transfers for a total of 895 ML/yr (Figure 4).

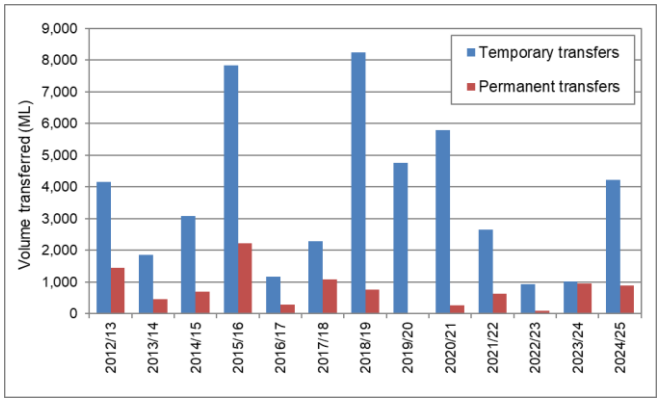

Figure 4 Trading activity for 2024/25

Refer to the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA Groundwater Management Plan for Prescriptions on trading rules.

Groundwater level monitoring

Groundwater levels are monitored across the GMA by the State Observation Bore Network (SOBN).

Monitoring indicates that seasonal groundwater recovery levels have been generally declining since the Plan was implemented in 2012.

The maximum seasonal recovery level in Deep Lead observation bore (60134), located near Rochester in the Elmore-Rochester Zone was slightly higher in 2024/25 (12.51m) than the maximum level in 2023/24 (7.37m) and seasonal drawdown slightly less. This is a consistent pattern across bores in this area (Figure 5).

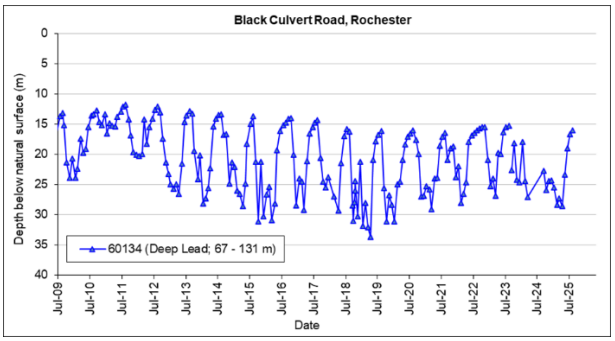

Figure 5 Groundwater level monitoring at Black Culvert Road, Rochester

At Strathallan, in the Bamawm Zone levels recorded in Deep Lead bore 47247 indicated the maximum recovery level was 3.53 m lower during 2024/25 than the previous year (Figure 6).

Maps, hydrographs and previous years newsletters can be found on the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA webpage.

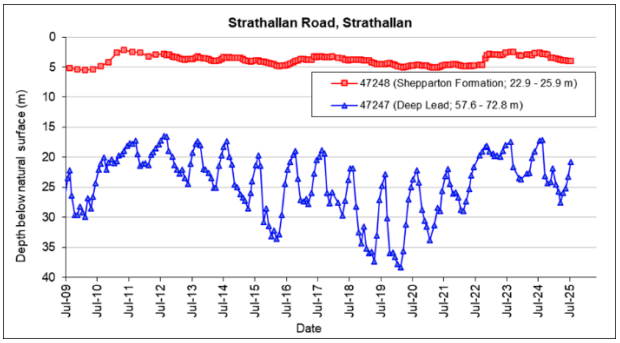

Figure 6 Groundwater level monitoring at Strathallan Road, Strathallan

In the Echuca Zone, groundwater recovery levels were like 2023/24 levels. There was no data on seasonal drawdown in 2024/25 (Figure 7).

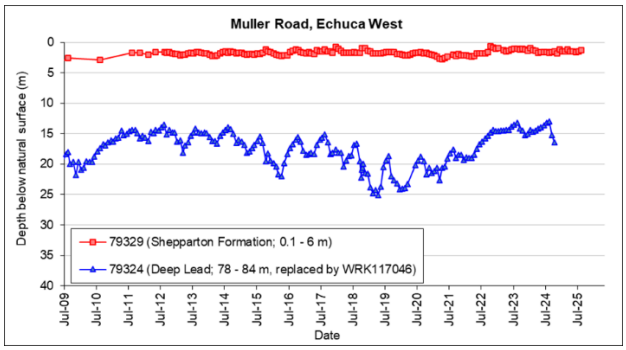

Figure 7 Groundwater level monitoring at Muller Road, Echuca West

In the Barnadown Zone, the maximum recovery level in 2024/25 was 25.12 m DBNS compared to 23.80 m DBNS in the previous year. The lower recovery is consistent with less than average rainfall recharge conditions experienced in the catchment (Figure 8). An overall pattern of gradual decline is observed between years in the maximum recovery level.

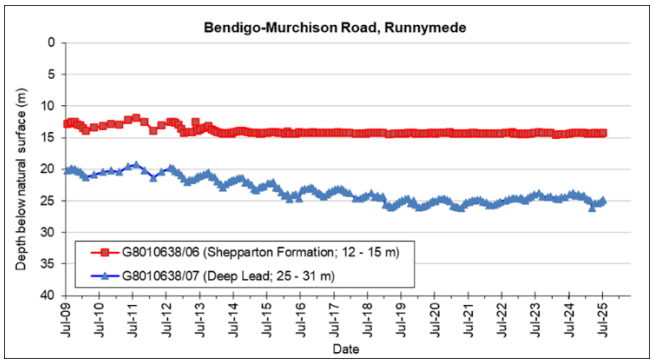

Figure 8 Groundwater level monitoring at Bendigo - Murchison Road, Runnymede

Groundwater Salinity monitoring

Groundwater user salinity sampling

GMW sent 120 sample bottles to licence holders to collect a groundwater sample for their bore for analysis. There were 35 sample returned 29 per cent. The results of these samples range between 500 to more than 2000 EC.

Targeted sampling of private bores

GMW has enlisted nine licence holders to participate in a targeted groundwater salinity monitoring program. Samples are collected on an annual basis from the same set of private bores which have been strategically selected based on location and bore construction details. Two samples were returned for analysis in 2024/25 with levels stabilised to 3,000 µS/cm.

Sampling of state observation bores

Samples were collected from 11 State observation bores in 2024/25. Results showed variations between water years, however, bore 47251 in Bamawm Zone had a slight increase from a value of 3,800 µS/cm in 2023/24 to 4,000 µS/cm in 2024/25.

Bore 102828 in the Echuca Zone remained stable in 2024/25 compared to a significant decline from a value of 9,900 µS/cm in 2020/21 to 8,800 µS/cm in 2021/22 and remained stable at 8,800 µS/cm in 2024/25.

All other sites recorded slight increases compared to the previous water year. There were no strong trends in the data; however, salinity levels have been generally declining in some bores since 2015/16.

Continued monitoring of groundwater quality will enable trends to be better understood and support future management decisions.

Licence compliance

In 2024/25, there were no prosecutions or convictions relating to groundwater 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.

Please refer to the Water Use Compliance web page.