Goulburn-Murray WATER

Annual Water Outlook

November 2025

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Contents

Executive Summary

Rainfall during the 2024/25 water year was average to below average for large parts of northern Victoria. Inflows were close to half of the long-term average at most Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) storages. Inflows were particularly low at Lake Eppalock and the Loddon storages where inflows were below 10 per cent of their annual average.

The Campaspe system was the only system to open with a seasonal determination of 100 per cent of high-reliability water shares (HRWS) for the 2025/26 water year. The Goulburn and Loddon systems opened the year with 31 per cent HRWS and the Murray system opened with 39 per cent HRWS. The Broken and Bullarook systems opened at 0 per cent HRWS.

By 17 November 2025, seasonal determinations had increased to 100 per cent HRWS in the Murray, 62 per cent in Goulburn and Loddon systems and 37 per cent in the Broken system. The Bullarook system remained on 0 per cent HRWS.

The seasonal climate outlooks issued by the Bureau of Meteorology on 27 November 2025 indicate the chances of exceeding median rainfall across the GMW region from December 2025 to February 2026 is about 50 per cent.

Resource improvements in 2025/26 will be directed towards increasing HRWS seasonal determinations in the Broken, Goulburn, Loddon and Bullarook systems before reserves for 2026/27 are established. The Broken, Bullarook and Ovens catchments are classified as annual systems and water availability will depend on seasonal conditions and inflows closer to the start of 2026/27.

GMW, as delegated Resource Manager for northern Victorian systems, will issue a detailed outlook for 2026/27 seasonal determinations in regulated systems on Monday 16 February 2026.

The unregulated systems of the Central and Eastern regions started the 2025/26 season with few restrictions; only the Black Dog Creek (Upper) and Bight Creek in the Central were impacted. However, the Western region began the water year with restrictions on a number of smaller creeks across the Loddon and Campaspe catchments. Under the Bureau of Meteorology's rainfall outlook, restrictions in the larger streams are likely, while the smaller tributary streams will experience restrictions and suspensions.

Groundwater aquifers across northern Victoria were accessed late into the season at the end of the 2024/25 period, there was minor to medium reductions in groundwater levels observed due to lower-than-average rainfall and average to above average use. Groundwater licence holders have access to 100 per cent of their entitlement, except for licence holders in the Barnadown Zone within the Lower Campaspe Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) who have a 75 per cent allocation and the Newlyn and Blampied Zones of the Loddon Highlands WSPA who have 50 per cent allocation for 2025/26. Groundwater levels are expected to reduce in 2025/26 with increased extraction anticipated.

With all GMW's western storage levels (i.e. Campaspe and Loddon catchments) currently being under 50 per cent capacity, there is a risk of poorer water quality conditions later in 2025/26 such as elevated salinity. Elsewhere, water quality is likely to remain satisfactory unless blue green algae or blackwater events occur.

Introduction

Part 4-2 of the Statement of Obligations (General) 2015 requires water corporations to prepare an Annual Water Outlook by 1 December each year. This document provides information in accordance with this obligation and will assist the development of the Water Outlook for Victoria.

The purpose of the Annual Water Outlook is to provide an outlook of water availability for the remaining months of 2025/26 and what conditions are possible at the start of the 2026/27 water year.

GMW's role is to efficiently manage, store and deliver water to more than 21,000 active customers involved in a diverse range of enterprises and interests across northern Victoria. Our customers include gravity irrigation, regulated and unregulated surface water diverters, groundwater, urban water corporations and environmental water holders. More information about GMW and its services are available on the GMW website, www.gmwater.com.au/about.

This water outlook covers the status and outlook for regulated, unregulated and groundwater sources, as well as water quality.

While this outlook focuses on water availability due to streamflows, storage levels and water quality, there may be other rare circumstances due to extreme events or emergencies such as bushfires in our catchments, major loss of power supply or water contamination that may require restrictions to manage water demands.

Current climate and streamflow in the longer context

Victoria's climate and streamflow is highly variable, but within this variability we have experienced a warming and drying trend over recent decades.

In comparison to historical conditions, the GMW region is already experiencing trends toward:

- higher temperatures and hotter days
- reductions in rainfall during the cooler months
- increases in extreme, short-duration rainfall events in some locations
- a shift in the streamflow response to rainfall with typically less streamflow generated for a given amount of rain in some catchments, particularly in western Victoria.

Some of the rainfall declines in the cooler months can be attributed to increases in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. During the cooler months, we have been receiving less rainfall from low-pressure and frontal systems.

In the future, over the longer term the GMW region can expect:

- the rainfall reductions during the cooler months to persist
- increases in extreme rainfall events
- increases in potential evapotranspiration due to higher temperature and lower relative humidity
- reductions in streamflow because of less rainfall and higher potential evapotranspiration
- the streamflow response to rainfall to no longer remain the same and generally decline.

Victoria's climate will continue to be variable, with wet years and dry years against a background drying trend. With a warmer future and projections of declining water availability, we can expect more frequent and severe droughts in coming decades and increases in extreme rainfall events.

The Victorian Government is investing in further research to better understand how Victoria's climate is changing and the water resource implications, through the Victorian Water and Climate Initiative. More information on the observed changes and longer-term future climate and water projections can be found at: www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/climate-change-and-victorias-water-sector/hydrology-and-climate-science-research/victorian-water-and-climate-initiative.

Regulated Systems

Current seasonal conditions

Rainfall over the 2024/25 water year was below average across most of the GMW region, with the Broken, Goulburn, Campaspe and Loddon catchments experiencing a very much below average year. Inflows were less than half the long-term average at most GMW storages. Inflows into Lake Eppalock and the Loddon storages were less than 10 per cent of their annual average (based on climate conditions observed since 1975).

In 2024/25 inflows into Lake Eildon and Lake Hume were 37 per cent and 30 per cent of the average annual volume respectively. Inflows to Goulburn Weir, Lake Buffalo and Lake William Hovell were close to 50 per cent of the long-term average. Dartmouth Reservoir received 66 per cent of the long-term average.

Rainfall across northern Victoria from July to October 2025 was average to below average (Figure 1) following below average rainfall in the first half of the calendar year. Dry conditions contributed to lower-than-average storage inflows (Table 1). Inflows to all storages between July and October 2025 followed a similar, below average, trend to inflows observed in 2024/25.

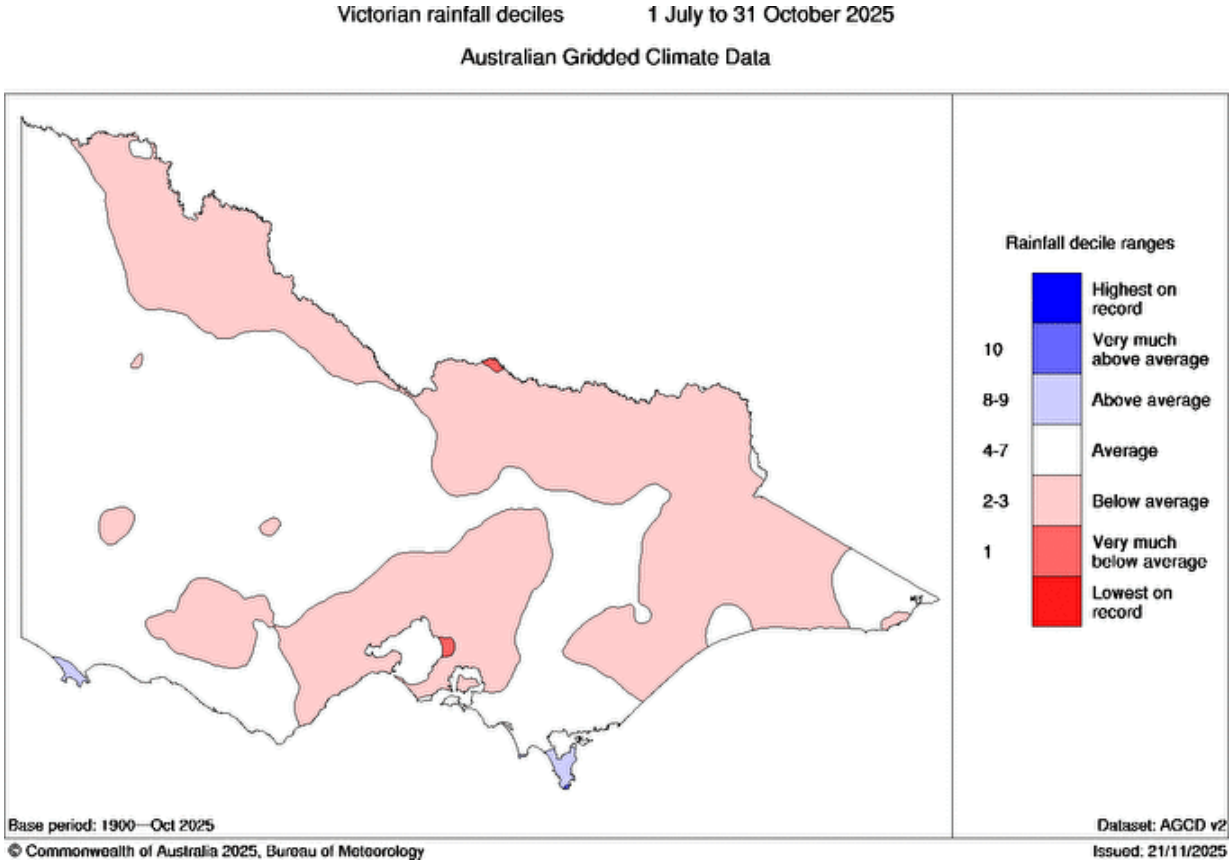

Figure 1. Rainfall deciles for 1 July to 31 October 2025

Table 2 outlines the change in storage volumes and percentages from July to mid-November. Following a dry end to 2024/25 with very high demand, most storages were close to 50 per cent of capacity heading into winter 2025. Some storages had increased by mid-November. Combined with low inflows, demand for water to deliver environmental flows at Lake Eildon and Lake Eppalock meant these storages have fallen since 1 July. Lake William Hovell filled on 21 July 2025 and Lake Buffalo filled in mid-October 2025.

Table 1. July to October 2025 inflows to the major GMW storages

Storage	July – October inflow (GL)	Percent of average[2]	Chance of greater inflow[2]
Eildon	375.3	43 %	88 %
Goulburn Weir[1]	223.4	32%	91 %
Hume[1]	594.3	40 %	87 %
Dartmouth	341.1	70 %	67 %
Buffalo	127.0	50 %	77 %
William Hovell	67.9	55 %	79 %
Nillahcootie	11.6	29 %	81 %
Eppalock	9.7	9%	90 %
Cairn Curran	8.4	11 %	90 %
Tullaroop	3.3	10%	89 %

[1] Natural inflows excluding releases from upstream storages

[2] Historical flow records that have been adjusted to match climate conditions observed since 1975

Table 2. Storage volume changes from July to mid-November

Storage	1 July 2025 Volume (GL)	1 July 2025 Percentage full	15 November 2025 Volume (GL)	15 November 2025 Percentage full	Volume change (GL)	Percentage full change
Eildon	1,924	57.7%	1,870	56.1 %	-54	-1.6 %
Hume	1,171	39.0%	1,411	47.0 %	240	8.0 %
Dartmouth	2,576	66.8%	2,832	73.5 %	256	6.7 %
Buffalo*	18.8	79.9%	23.3	99.1 %	4.5	19.2 %
William Hovell	7.7	56.0%	13.7	100.1 %	6.0	44.1 %
Nillahcootie	17.8	44.0%	29.4	72.8 %	11.6	28.8 %
Eppalock	172	56.5%	144.4	47.4 %	-27.6	-9.1 %
Cairn Curran	56.7	38.6%	54.6	37.2 %	-2.1	-1.4 %
Tullaroop	33.1	45.4%	32.2	44.2%	-0.9	-1.2%

*Lake Buffalo level is managed through winter and spring by passing inflows until the storage was allowed to fill in October

Water availability in northern Victoria early in 2025/26 was supported by the opening seasonal determinations plus the volume carried over from 2024/25. By 17 November 2025, seasonal determinations were all below 100 per cent HRWS except the Murray and Campaspe systems, which both had 100 per cent HRWS.

The volume carried over from 2024/25 in the Goulburn and Murray systems was 768 GL and 500 GL respectively.

Seasonal determinations on 17 November 2025 are shown in Resource Availability

Murray System

The Murray system started 2025/26 with a seasonal determination of 39 per cent HRWS. Dry conditions resulting in below average inflows through winter and the start of spring meant that the seasonal determination gradually increased to 100 per cent on 17 November 2025. Flows into the Menindee Lakes helped support water availability for Murray entitlement holders.

Low inflows during winter and spring meant that operational releases to manage storage levels at Lake Hume were not required in the 2025 winter and spring.

Table 3.

Resource Availability

Murray System

The Murray system started 2025/26 with a seasonal determination of 39 per cent HRWS. Dry conditions resulting in below average inflows through winter and the start of spring meant that the seasonal determination gradually increased to 100 per cent on 17 November 2025. Flows into the Menindee Lakes helped support water availability for Murray entitlement holders.

Low inflows during winter and spring meant that operational releases to manage storage levels at Lake Hume were not required in the 2025 winter and spring.

Table 3. Seasonal determinations on 17 November 2025

Water System	High-Reliability Water Share	Low-Reliability Water Share
Murray	100%	0%
Broken	37%	0%
Goulburn	62%	0%
Campaspe	100%	0%
Loddon	62%	0%
Bullarook	0%	0%

As specified in clause 10.5 of GMW's Murray bulk entitlement, water was borrowed from the Barmah-Millewa Forest Environmental Water Allocation at the start of the 2025/26 water year to support early seasonal determinations for high-reliability water shares. As the Murray seasonal determination is 100 per cent HRWS, the water borrowed from the Barmah-Millewa Forest Environmental Water Allocation will be paid back before further resource improvements are set aside for 2026/27 reserves.

On 10 October, the risk of spill in the Murray system was below the 10 per cent threshold needed to make a low risk of spill declaration. A total of 116 GL was returned to allocation accounts in the Murray system.

Goulburn System

The reserves established in the Goulburn system from inflows during 2024/25 were enough for the system to commence the 2025/26 water year with a seasonal determination of 31 per cent HRWS. Resources slowly increased during winter and early spring to enable the seasonal determination to reach 62 per cent HRWS on 17 November 2025. Large seasonal determination increases have not been possible due to low inflows to Lake Eildon and Goulburn Weir.

Low inflows into Lake Eildon and environmental water deliveries meant that the storage level did not approach the target filling arrangements through winter and into spring. As a result, no releases from Lake Eildon under the target filling arrangements and subsequent deductions from spillable water accounts have occurred in 2025/26.

On 11 August, the risk of spill in the Goulburn system was below the 10 per cent threshold needed to make a low risk of spill declaration. A total of 33 GL was returned to allocation accounts in the Goulburn system.

Broken System

The Broken system opened the 2025/26 water year with a seasonal determination of 0 per cent HRWS.

Lake Nillahcootie reached approximately 73 per cent capacity during late September 2025. Seasonal determinations increased from 0 per cent to 12 per cent HRWS on 1 September and increased gradually to reach 37 per cent HRWS on 17 November 2025.

Campaspe System

The Campaspe system opened the 2025/26 water year with a seasonal determination of 100 per cent HRWS. Lake Eppalock levels slowly fell during winter and spring 2025 due to well below average inflows and water released for environmental and irrigation purposes. There were sufficient reserves established in 2024/25 for the seasonal determination to open on 1 July 2025 at 100 per cent HRWS.

No spills from Lake Eppalock have occurred this season due to the dry conditions and low inflows.

On 10 October, the risk of spill in the Campaspe system was below the 10 per cent threshold needed to make a low risk of spill declaration. A total of 17.5 GL was returned to allocation accounts in the Campaspe system.

Loddon and Bullarook Systems

In accordance with the bulk entitlement rules, the Loddon system 2025/26 seasonal determination has increased in line with the Goulburn system. The seasonal determination started 2025/26 at 31 per cent HRWS on 1 July and increased to 62 per cent HRWS on 17 November 2025.

The Bullarook system is the smallest of the GMW systems with two relatively small annual storages. The Bullarook system opened with a 0 per cent HRWS seasonal determination on 1 July 2025. Very low inflows in winter and spring have not been enough to secure the system operating requirements for 2025/26, and the seasonal determination remains at 0 per cent HRWS. Water users can access to the allocation carried over from 2024/25. Dry inflow contingency measures such as reducing passing flows have been used to manage the available resource during winter and spring.

Ovens System

Despite entitlement holders having water shares, the Ovens system does not receive incremental seasonal determinations like the six other regulated systems operated by GMW. The system is managed similarly to an unregulated stream because of the high volume of inflows relative to storage size. Entitlement holders are restricted if the inflows into the system and the volumes held in Lake Buffalo and Lake William Hovell are insufficient to meet all demands in the system.

Entitlement holders are currently not restricted, as inflows into the system are meeting demands. The spillway gates were lowered at Lake Buffalo in June 2025 and the storage increased to 80 per cent of capacity. Due to low inflows, filling to 100 per cent of capacity occurred during October. Entitlement holders in the Ovens, Buffalo and King rivers currently have access to their spill-reliability entitlements. Access to the spill-reliability entitlements will cease later in the season once the storages commence fully regulated operations.

Outlook comparison

The outlook for seasonal determinations published on 15 July 2025 (Table 4) indicated that even with average inflows, 100 per cent HRWS was not expected to be reached in the Murray, Goulburn, and Loddon systems by mid-October. Based on the storage inflows outlined in Table 1, the seasonal determination increases to 15 October followed the patterns suggested by the outlook. The Goulburn and Loddon systems have tracked slightly better than the dry inflow scenario. Seasonal determinations in the Murray system have tracked between the average and dry inflow scenarios, due to the inflows into Hume, Dartmouth and the Menindee Lakes as well as flow contributions from the Ovens River.

Table 4. Outlook for seasonal determinations for 15 October 2025 as published on 15 July 2025

Water System[2]	Inflow Scenario[1]		
	Wet	Average	Dry
Murray	100%	93%	67%
Broken	100%	100%	0%
Goulburn/Loddon	100%	85%	48%
Bullarook	100%	100%	0%

[1] Note dry conditions are defined as inflow volumes to major storages that are greater in 90 years out of 100, average conditions are inflow volumes to major storages that are greater in 50 years out of 100 and wet conditions are inflow volumes to major storages that are greater in 10 years out of 100

[2] Campaspe outlook not included as the seasonal determination was 100 per cent HRWS on 1 July 2025

Outlook for remainder of 2025/26

The Bureau of Meteorology's three-month outlook for December 2025 to February 2026, issued on 27 November 2025, indicated the chances of exceeding the median rainfall over most of GMW's irrigation and catchment areas is about 50 per cent (Figure 2).

The Bureau of Meteorology's Southern hemisphere update issued on 27 November advised:

- *The sea surface temperature (SST) analysis for the week ending 23 November 2025 shows warmer than average waters across much of the Australian region. A broad area exceeding 1.2 °C above average extends across much of the Coral Sea and along parts of the east coast. Off the south-east coast, waters are cooler than average.*
- *SSTs in the Australian region were the second warmest on record for October, with forecasts for December to February indicating warmer-than-average SSTs are likely to continue in the region, especially to Australia's east. Warmer oceans can provide increased moisture and energy, that can enhance the severity of storms, cyclones and rain systems.*
- *Latest assessments of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) indicate La Niña is underway. There are clear signs the tropical Pacific ocean and atmosphere are now coupled, meaning they are acting to reinforce and sustain the La Niña pattern.*
- *Observations in the tropical Pacific Ocean have been consistent with La Niña conditions since early October. The latest relative Niño3.4 SST index value for the week ending 23 November 2025 is −0.93 °C. Sustained values below −0.8 °C are consistent with a La Niña pattern. Weekly values of the relative Niño3.4 index have been fluctuating around the La Niña threshold since mid-to-late September.*
- *Atmospheric indicators, such as trade winds, pressure and cloud patterns over the equatorial central Pacific, also show consistent signs of La Niña. As at 23 November 2025, the 30-day Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) is +16.1, while the 90-day SOI value is +8.5. Sustained 90-day SOI values above +7.0 are indicative of La Niña. Trade wind strength and cloud patterns have been indicative of La Niña since at least mid-to-late September.*
- *Short-term 30-day SOI values are likely more positive due to Severe Tropical Cyclone Fina developing near Darwin from 19 November 2025, lowering surface pressure in the region. Transient tropical systems can affect the short-term SOI during the summer months and are not necessarily a reflection of the state of the climate system.*
- *The Bureau's model currently predicts that tropical Pacific Ocean temperatures are likely to remain at La Niña levels until early 2026 before returning to neutral. This timing aligns with most international models assessed.*
- *The negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) event remains active but has been weakening steadily over the past three weeks. The latest index value is −0.60 °C for the week ending 23 November.*

- *The Bureau's model predicts a return to a neutral IOD in December. This is consistent with most international models assessed and the typical IOD life cycle.*
- *The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) index is neutral as at 21 November 2025. It is forecast to become negative over the coming week. However, there is a broad range in possible outcomes, indicating increased uncertainty into December.*

Temperature and rainfall outlook updates are available from the Bureau of Meteorology website (www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/).

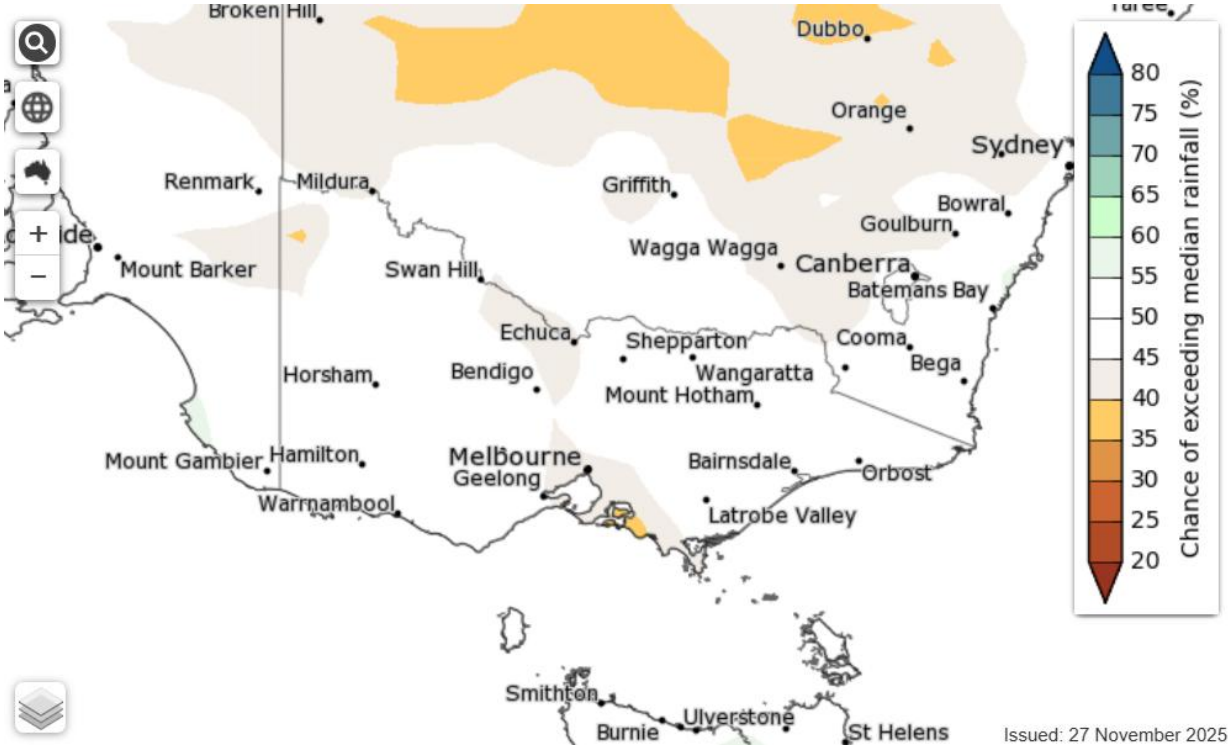

Figure 2. Chance of exceeding median rainfall for the period December 2025 to February 2026 (Source Bureau of Meteorology).

As the historical peak inflow period has passed and catchments have dried during spring, inflows are not expected to increase significantly unless passing severe weather systems bring heavy rain to the catchments.

Resource improvements in the Goulburn and Loddon systems will contribute to allocation increases until seasonal determinations reach 100 per cent HRWS. If inflows follow the dry outlook scenario, seasonal determinations in both systems are expected to be about 67 per cent HRWS by mid-February 2026. For the Broken system, the dry outlook scenario indicates the seasonal determination would increase to 45 per cent HRWS by mid-February 2026.

As the Murray system seasonal determination reached 100 per cent HRWS on 17 November, future resource improvements will continue to repay the volume borrowed from the Barmah-Millewa Forest Environmental Water Allocation. Once this has been fully repaid, further reserves for 2026/27 will be established.

The Goulburn system HRWS seasonal determination is still below 100 per cent, meaning the necessary operating reserves for 2026/27 are yet to be established. It is extremely unlikely that a LRWS seasonal determination will be announced in either the Goulburn system or the Murray system in 2025/26.

Resource improvements in the Bullarook system will contribute to securing the operating requirements for 2025/26 before seasonal determinations can increase. Inflows close to the long-term average are required to commence allocating water to high-reliability entitlements by mid-February 2026 in the Bullarook system. Seasonal determination are likely to remain on 0 per cent HRWS if inflows follow the dry scenario.

Entitlement holders in the Ovens system may experience restricted diversion access this water year if low storage inflows continue and water from the storages is needed to meet demand before the end of December. History indicates that restrictions are not needed to manage demand when the storages are still at capacity in January.

Irrigation and environmental water demand over the remaining months of 2025/26 will determine storage levels heading into the next peak inflow period and how much allocation is carried over into 2026/27. The volume carried over into 2026/27 may be less than recent seasons due to lower seasonal determinations.

Outlook for 2026/27

Reliable long-term weather outlooks for the start of 2026/27 are not available as the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall outlooks only cover three months. GMW, as Northern Victoria Resource Manager, will release a detailed first outlook for the 2026/27 water year on 16 February 2026 using historical inflows (adjusted for conditions since 1975). The outlook will be updated on 15 May 2026.

If conditions are dry in 2026/27, dry inflow contingency measures may be required in the Broken, Campaspe, Loddon and Bullarook systems.

Murray System

With this season's seasonal determination exceeding 50 per cent HRWS, the early season reserve volume has been set aside for 2026/27. This volume contributes to system operating requirements at the start of a water year to enable delivery of carryover from the start of the season. If extreme dry conditions are experienced, seasonal determinations are likely to be very low in 2026/27. Seasonal determinations will be available under dry inflow conditions but are unlikely to reach 100 per cent HRWS. Average inflow conditions should allow seasonal determinations to reach 100 per cent HRWS during spring 2026.

Goulburn System

The seasonal determination in the Goulburn system is greater than 50 per cent HRWS and the early reserve for 2026/27 has been secured. Average inflow conditions should allow seasonal determinations to reach 100 per cent HRWS during spring 2026. Seasonal determinations will be available under dry inflow conditions but are unlikely to reach 100 per cent HRWS. Like the Murray system, seasonal determinations could be very low if inflows are extremely low.

Campaspe System

With the seasonal determination at 100 per cent HRWS on 17 November 2025, all resource improvements are building reserves for HRWS seasonal determinations in 2026/27. There is currently 21 GL reserved for 2026/27. This should enable allocation carried over into 2026/27 to be delivered. Water available for seasonal determinations will depend on inflows during the 2026/27 winter and spring.

Loddon System

About 17 GL has been set aside for operating commitments 2026/27. This is not sufficient to meet all system operating requirements but should allow delivery of allocation carried over early in the season. Seasonal determinations in the Loddon system will be the same as the Goulburn system in 2026/27 if conditions allow. If inflows are insufficient in the Loddon system to maintain the same seasonal determination as the Goulburn system, the Loddon system seasonal determination will be lower than the Goulburn system. Winter and spring inflows during 2026 will determine the amount of water available for allocation.

Broken System

The Broken system is an annual system, so 2026/27 reserves will depend on use of water this water year and the inflows during winter and spring 2026. Unless the seasonal determination reaches 100 per cent HRWS and 100 per cent LRWS this year, there will be limited operating reserves for 2026/27.

Bullarook System

Like the Broken, the Bullarook system is an annual system, so 2026/27 reserves will depend on how much water is used this water year and the inflows during the traditional inflow months in 2026.

Ovens System

Water availability in the Ovens system depends on weather and streamflows, making it difficult to determine water availability in 2026/27. Restrictions are unlikely under wet and average inflow conditions but are possible under drier scenarios.

Unregulated Systems

Current seasonal conditions

Unregulated streams are monitored in accordance with relevant Local Management Rules (LMRs) or Water Supply Protection Area (WSPA) management plans. Minimum streamflow requirements are outlined in LMRs and WSPA management plans. A minimum flow requirement of 3 ML/day is applied to streams that do not have an LMR or WSPA.

If minimum flow requirements are not met, restrictions are put in place (Table 5). Restrictions range from Stage 1 Roster (access to 10 per cent of entitlement every 10 days) to Stage 5 suspension (only diversion for domestic and stock use is permitted). LMRs and the details of rosters and restrictions are available online at www.gmwater.com.au/water-resources/diversions.

Table 5. Stage 5 Suspensions on unregulated streams on 27 November 2025

Catchment	Stream	Suspension start date
Broken	Boosey Creek	11/1/2023
Goulburn	Sunday Creek (Kurakurac & Kilmore)	8/10/2025
Kiewa	Bight Creek	30/12/2023
Murray	Black Dog Creek (Upper)	30/12/2023
Murray	Indigo Creek	20/11/2024
Campaspe	Axe Creek	15/10/2025
Campaspe	Cornella Creek	1/11/2023
Campaspe	Emu Creek	15/10/2025
Campaspe	McIvor Creek	15/10/2025
Campaspe	Mt Ida Ck (runs straight into Eppalock)	28/10/2024
Campaspe	Sheep Wash Creek	15/10/2025

Campaspe	Sweenies Creek	15/10/2025
Campaspe	Wanalta Creek	18/11/2016
Campaspe	Wild Duck Creek	15/10/2025
Loddon	Adekate Creek	5/11/2024
Loddon	Bannacher Creek	7/11/2025
Loddon	Bet Bet Creek	5/3/2024
Loddon	Bullock Creek	5/3/2024
Loddon	Loddon River D/S Fernihurst Weir	7/11/2025
Loddon	Muckleford Creek	19/02/2024
Loddon	Penny Royal Creek	7/11/2025
Loddon	Twelve Mile Creek	7/11/2025

Outlook for remainder of 2025/26

The Bureau of Meteorology's three-month outlook for December 2025 to February 2026, issued on 27 November 2025, indicated the chances of exceeding the median rainfall over most of GMW's irrigation and catchment areas is about 50 per cent (Figure 2). This forecast across northern Victoria throughout summer, will likely result in reduced streamflows and an increase in restrictions. Smaller tributary streams will experience restrictions.

The Bureau of Meteorology current seasonal streamflow forecast predicts low stream flows for November 2025 to January 2026 across the GMW region due to dry conditions. (www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/).

Upper Murray Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts that median flows are likely and there is a 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the Upper Murray catchment from December 2025 to February 2026
- No restrictions are forecast for the main stem of the unregulated Murray River and the Mitta Mitta River above Lake Hume
- Tributaries will most likely experience restrictions during the summer of 2026

Kiewa Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts low flows and a 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the Kiewa catchment between December 2025 and February 2026
- No restrictions are forecast for the Kiewa main stem while some smaller tributaries will experience restrictions during the summer of 2026

Ovens Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts low flows and a 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the Ovens catchment between December 2025 and February 2026
- Restrictions are likely for the main stem of the Ovens River upstream of Myrtleford during the 2026 summer
- Small tributaries will experience restrictions during summer of 2025/26.

Goulburn Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts median flows and a 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the Goulburn catchment between December 2025 and February 2026
- Restrictions are likely for the main tributaries which flow into the Goulburn River upstream of Seymour
- Small tributaries will experience restrictions

Broken Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts median flows and around 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the upper parts of the Broken catchment between December 2025 and February 2026
- The Broken River tributaries will experience restrictions

Campaspe Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts low flows and a 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the Campaspe catchment between December 2025 and February 2026
- The Upper Campaspe, Coliban and all tributaries will experience restrictions

Loddon Catchment

- The Bureau of Meteorology predicts low flows and a 50 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall in the Loddon catchment between December 2025 and February 2026
- The Loddon River upstream of Cairn Curran Reservoir and most tributaries will experience restrictions

Outlook for 2026/27

Access to unregulated systems in 2026/27 will depend on weather conditions (Table 6).

Table 6. Unregulated systems outlook for 2025/26

Catchment	Very Dry weather conditions (flows are less than expected in 95 out of 100 years)	Dry weather conditions (flows are less than expected in 75 out of 100 years)	Average weather conditions (flows are less than expected in 50 out of 100 years)
Broken	All streams on suspension.	All minor tributaries on suspension.	All minor tributaries on restriction or suspension.
Kiewa	All minor tributaries on suspension. Kiewa River on restriction.	All minor tributaries on suspension. Kiewa River on restriction.	All minor tributaries on restrictions.
Upper Murray	All minor tributaries on suspension. Upper Murray River on restriction.	All minor tributaries on suspension. Upper Murray River on restriction.	All minor tributaries on restrictions.
Ovens	All minor tributaries on suspension. Upper Ovens River and larger tributaries on restriction.	All minor tributaries on suspension. Upper Ovens River and major tributaries on restriction.	All minor tributaries on restrictions. Tributaries of the Upper Ovens to be on the same level of restriction as the Ovens main stem above Myrtleford. Several smaller tributaries on suspension.
Goulburn	All minor and major tributaries on restriction or suspension.	All minor tributaries on suspension. All major Goulburn tributaries on restriction.	Most minor tributaries on restriction or suspension.
Campaspe	All streams on suspension.	All streams on suspension.	All tributaries and the Upper Campaspe on restriction or suspension.
Loddon	All streams on suspension.	All streams on suspension.	All tributaries and the Upper Loddon on restriction or suspension.

Note: worst conditions on record are defined as instream flows that are greater in 95 years out of 100, dry conditions are greater 75 out of 100 years, average conditions are inflow volumes to major storages that are greater in 50 years out of 100 and wet conditions are inflow volumes to major storages that are greater in 10 years out of 100).

Groundwater

Current seasonal conditions

Currently, groundwater licence holders in the Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA are on 75 per cent allocation in the Barnadown Zone and in the Loddon Highlands WSAP the Newlyn and Blampied Zones are on 50 per cent. The remaining Groundwater Management Units have access to 100 per cent of their entitlement (Table 7).

Table 7. Groundwater allocation for 2025/26

Groundwater Management Unit (GMU)	2025/26 Allocations (% Licensed Volume)
Barnawartha GMA	100%
Broken GMA	100%
Central Victorian Mineral Springs GMA	100%
Eildon GMA	100%
Katunga WSPA	100%
Kiewa GMA	100%
Loddon Highlands WSPA - Newlyn and Blampied Zones - All other Zones	 50% 100%
Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA - Barnadown Zone - All other Zones	 75% 100%
Lower Ovens GMA	100%
Mid Goulburn GMA	100%
Mid Loddon GMA	100%
Shepparton Irrigation GMA	100%
Strathbogie GMA	100%
Unincorporated GMU	100%
Upper Goulburn GMA	100%
Upper Murray GMA	100%
Upper Ovens WSPA	100%
West Goulburn GMA	100%

*WSPA = Water Supply Protection Area; GMA = Groundwater Management Area

Outlook for remainder of 2025/26

Groundwater use and trading activity is likely to be above average in the 2025/26 season due to forecasts of an even chance of predicted median rainfall and above average temperatures across northern Victoria in late 2025 and early 2026.

Outlook for 2026/27

Groundwater recovery and drawdown levels in northern Victoria are dependent on rainfall recharge and groundwater extraction. The predicted above-average groundwater use in 2025/26, reduced allocations in the regulated system, and average rainfall across the region is expected to cause a reduction in groundwater levels across all aquifers.

Groundwater levels in the Loddon Highlands WSPA and Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA will be closely monitored with the impact of allocations on the resource (Table 8).

Table 8. Groundwater outlook for 2026/27

Catchments	Groundwater Management Unit	Groundwater level outlook	Allocations outlook
Loddon/ Campaspe	Central Victorian Mineral Springs GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Mid Loddon GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Loddon Highlands WSPA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100% for all zones apart from Newlyn and Blampied zones which may be 50%
	Lower Campaspe Valley WSPA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels with expected increase in usage	75% allocation for Barnadown zone. 100% allocation all other zones.
Goulburn/ Broken/ Mid Murray	Broken GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Eildon GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Katunga WSPA	Increased usage, seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels.	Remain at 100% allocation Dependent on 5 year rolling average
	Mid Goulburn GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Shepparton Irrigation GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Strathbogie GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Upper Goulburn GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	West Goulburn GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
Kiewa/ Ovens/ Upper Murray	Barnawartha GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Kiewa GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Lower Ovens GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Upper Murray GMA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%
	Upper Ovens WSPA	Seasonal drawdown and recovery likely to reduce water levels	Remain at 100%

Surface Water Quality

Current seasonal conditions

Blue green algae recreational warnings for several major storages that persisted through winter were able to be removed during spring 2025.

Blue green algae warnings were issued in November 2025 for Hepburns Lagoon and some small parts of the Torrumbarry Irrigation Area.

No other water quality issues have been experienced recently.

Outlook for 2025/26

Compared to recent years, the lower water level at many storages heading into summer is likely to result in low storage levels at the end of the irrigation season. This may contribute to poorer water quality in the smaller western storages in autumn 2026, such as elevated salinity (measured as electrical conductivity) and manganese concentrations.

Blue green algae risk is more difficult to assess. While reduced runoff to storages may lessen the risk due to reduced mobilisation of sediments, low water levels can result in higher water temperatures that elevate the risk. Regular monitoring will continue to be necessary to understand the risks and issue public warnings when required.

Hypoxic blackwater events remain a possibility throughout summer but are highly dependent on the location and intensity of rainfall events. The lack of winter-spring rainfall across the region may increase this risk in some areas.

The occurrence of elevated blue green algae or hypoxic blackwater events is unlikely to affect GMW's supply to rural customers, as the phenomena are not considered harmful to irrigated agriculture. However, both events can impact aquatic life, town water supplies and recreational use of water bodies. Current blue green algae warnings in GMW water bodies can always be found on our website at www.gmwater.com.au/news/bga along with links to further information.

Information Updates

GMW update seasonal determinations on the 1st and 15th of each month, or next business day, until all seasonal determinations are 100 per cent HRWS. Seasonal determinations are then updated on the 15th of each month, or next business day until all seasonal determinations are 100 per cent LRWS.

The first outlook for 2026/27 seasonal determinations will be issued on Monday 16 February 2026 and updated on Friday 15 May 2026. The first seasonal determination announcement for 2026/27 will be on Wednesday 1 July 2026.

All resource management updates can be located on the Northern Victoria Resource Manager website at www.nvrm.net.au.

Information about stream rosters and restrictions (www.gmwater.com.au/water-resources/diversions/rosters-and-restrictions) and groundwater allocations (www.gmwater.com.au/water-resources/ground-water) is available on the GMW website.