

Critical water planning for the Lachlan Valley

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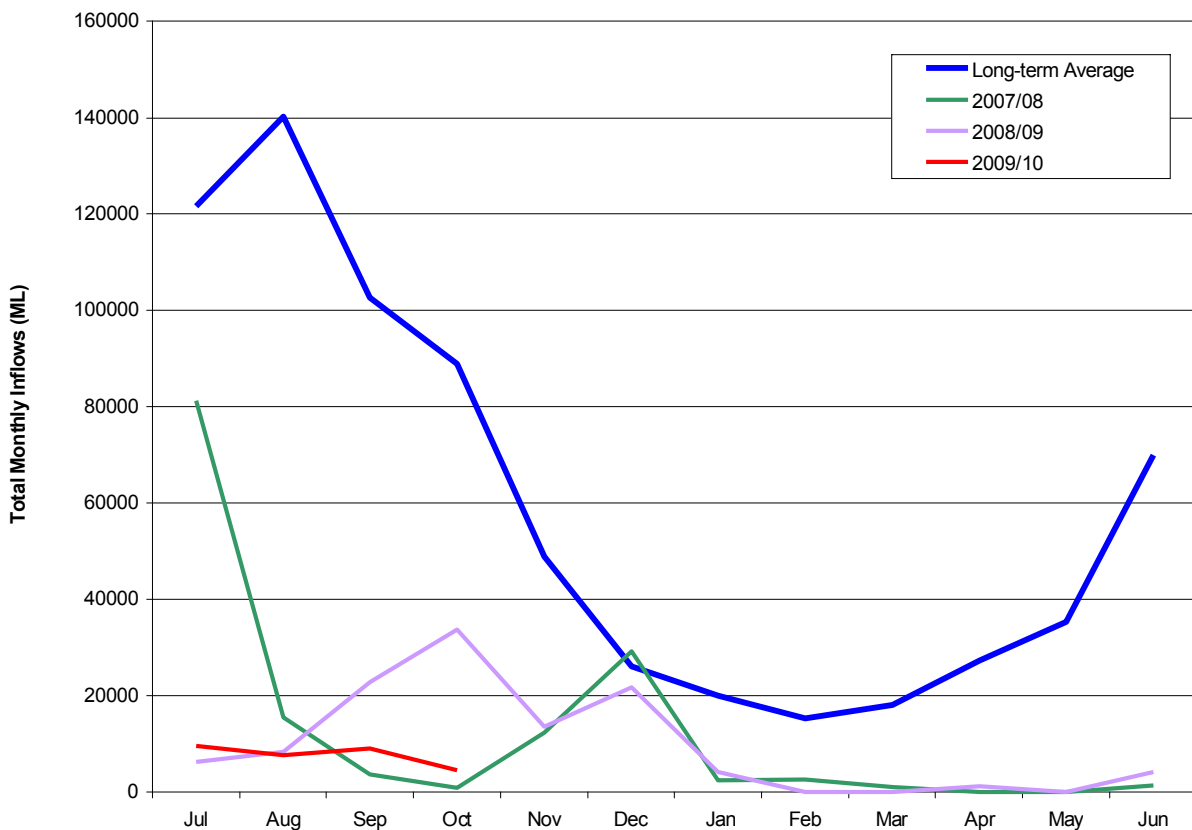
Current water availability

With the failure of spring rains, the catchment only received some scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms providing a range of only 10-30mm of rainfall during October. This provided an inflow of 4,000 megalitres into storage. Inflows from July to September provided 26,000 megalitres. To run the river normally takes around 135,000 megalitres per year.

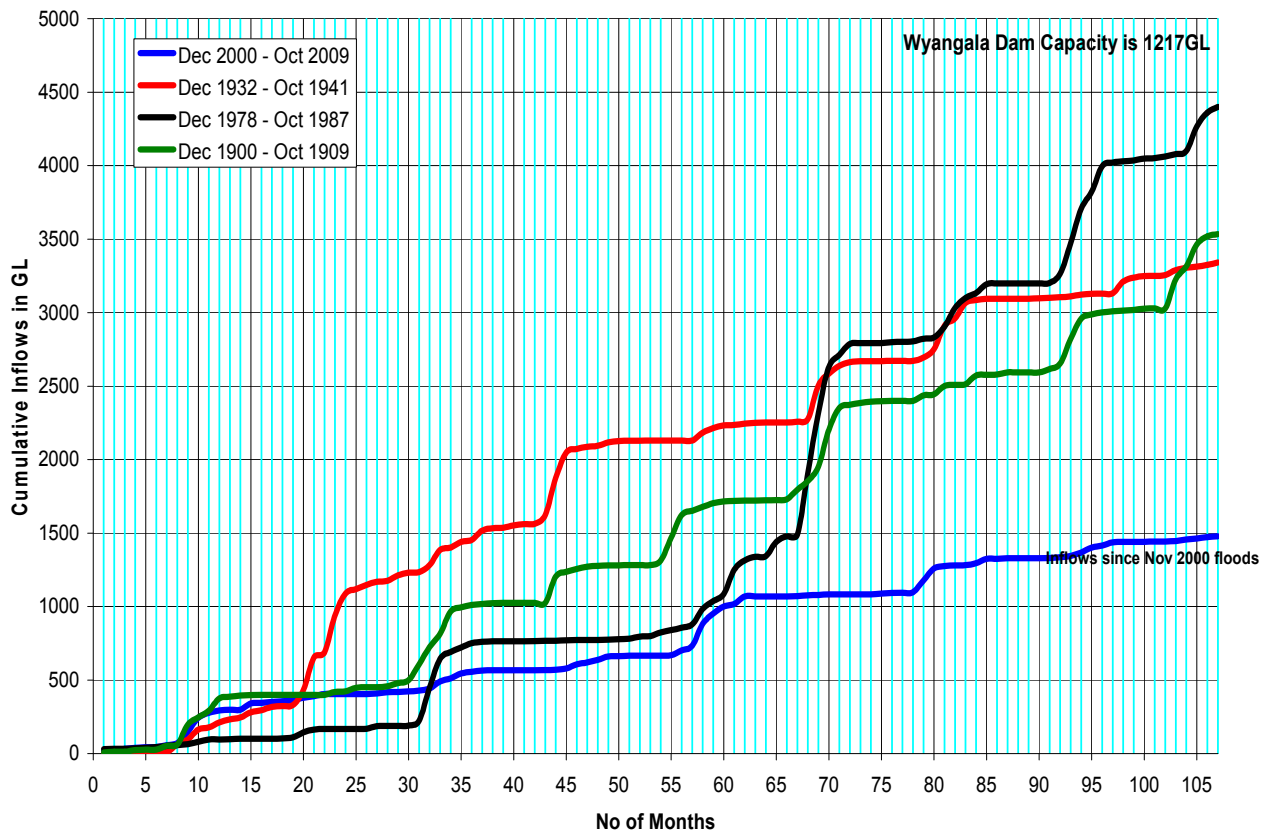
The following table shows storage levels in gigalitres (GL) as at 31 October 2009.

	Volume (GL)	Percentage of capacity	Change in volume (GL) since 1 July
Wyangala Dam	64	5.3%	-0.9%

Inflow graph



Wyangala Drought Inflows for 107 Months Starting in December



What this means

There is not enough water to provide flows to the full length of the Lachlan River for the full year. To run the river as in recent years would mean Wyangala Dam would be dry by February 2010.

To preserve the available water for as long as possible it is necessary to reduce flows from Wyangala Dam from 500 megalitres per day to approximately 250 megalitres per day. This will result in flows only reaching to Condobolin. It is proposed that periodic flows downstream of Condobolin will provide water to Lake Cargelligo weir pool. This means flow will cease between pulses and the river will not run continuously.

The reduction in releases will also cause no flows into Wallamundry Creek, Nerathong Creek and Wallaroi Creek systems.

Also, Jemalong weir pool will remain at daily river levels and will not supply water into Jemalong or Carrawaby Creeks.

The decision to reduce flows passing Condobolin was taken after considering the delivery losses in various sections of the river, as well as how towns can be supplied with critical water needs.

Lachlan River Management during 2009/10

A Temporary Water Restriction Order has been made under Section 324 (1) of the *Water Management Act 2000* for the Lachlan Regulated River water source. The order imposes specified restrictions and prohibitions on taking water from that water source.

The following is a guide to the provisions in the Order:

To preserve water for domestic and stock rights for as long as possible after releases from Wyangala Dam are reduced, all access licence holders are prohibited from taking water from the Lachlan River downstream of Condobolin and from Nerathong Creek, Wallamundry Creek, Wallaroi Creek, Jemalong Creek and Carrawabity Creek.

These restrictions do not apply if the holder of the access licence has an **approved** water order with State Water Corporation and the water is taken in accordance with that water order.

Given the severity of the water shortage, to provide equity to all water users, access to water for **domestic** purposes under an access licence or basic landholder rights along the whole Lachlan river is restricted to the same town water restrictions imposed by the Shire Council for the local government area in which the taking the water occurs. For example, if you reside in the Forbes Shire Council area, you must adhere to the water restrictions being applied in the town of Forbes.

You must check with your local Shire Council regularly to review water restrictions, as restrictions can vary as available water resources change.

To encourage water use efficiencies by decreasing evaporative and transmission losses, water for stock watering purposes under an access licence or basic landholder rights along the whole Lachlan River can only be taken through a pipe to a trough. You are not permitted to take water using a water pump with an inlet diameter greater than 50mm. The total volume of water that can be taken for stock watering purposes is restricted to three megalitres per landholding, per water year.

These restrictions do not apply if the NSW Office of Water is satisfied and has made a determination in writing that the prohibition does not apply to a landholder and that other specific arrangements are deemed acceptable.

These emergency measures are required to ensure that essential human needs for towns, villages and landholders along the river can be met during this critical water shortage.

A copy of the full order is available on the NSW Office of Water website www.water.nsw.gov.au under the Water Allocation section.

Town water supply

The townships of Cowra, Forbes and Condobolin will continue to receive town water supply from the Lachlan River. Parkes town water is mostly supplied through groundwater, but will still maintain access to its Lachlan River pumps. The NSW Office of Water is working with the Shire Councils in the Lachlan Valley to investigate the construction of emergency bores, or other alternative measures to secure town water supply.

The NSW Government announced as part of the Lachlan Assistance Package, assistance totalling \$2.1 million for emergency bores at Forbes, Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo, Ivanhoe, Euabalong, Euabalong West, Booligal and Oxley.

As water flows diminish, individuals will be required to modify their works as necessary for the extraction of water from lower river levels.

Accessing water from weir pools is only permissible with the required access licence, or as a basic landholder right. This access is subject to the restrictions described above.

Water trading in 2009/10

Consideration is being given to allowing Domestic and Stock allocations to be traded although this is likely to be subject to some limitations.

High security allocations can be traded, but buyers need to be aware of limitations on access from this critical flow operation.

NSW Government Lachlan Assistance Package

To assist our struggling farmers and rural communities the NSW government announced a \$4.45 million drought assistance package on 5 November 2009 which includes:

- \$250,000 to extend the 50 per cent transport subsidy for domestic water transport to all rural landowners along the Lachlan River, below Condobolin
- The deferral of general security fixed water charges for the Lachlan Valley for six months. This will be revisited in the New Year in light of dam storage levels and rainfall.

Fish habitat

The water shortage and reduction of flows within the Lachlan system is expected to place native fish populations under stress and may initiate fish kills as pools dry out.

Report all incidences of fish becoming stressed, stranded or dying to Industry and Investment NSW (formerly NSW Fisheries) by phoning:

- Allan Lugg on 4428 3401 or 0409 912 686, or
- Adam Vey on 6042 4205 or 0419 185 506.

Water users who wish to undertake works within the river or creek to access water, need to be aware that penalties may apply in relation to harming the habitat of threatened fish species without proper authorisation. Constructing block banks across waterways, dredging pump holes, and removing snags from the river channel, may constitute offences under the threatened species provisions of the Fisheries Management Act 1994. Water users are advised to seek advice well before undertaking such work.

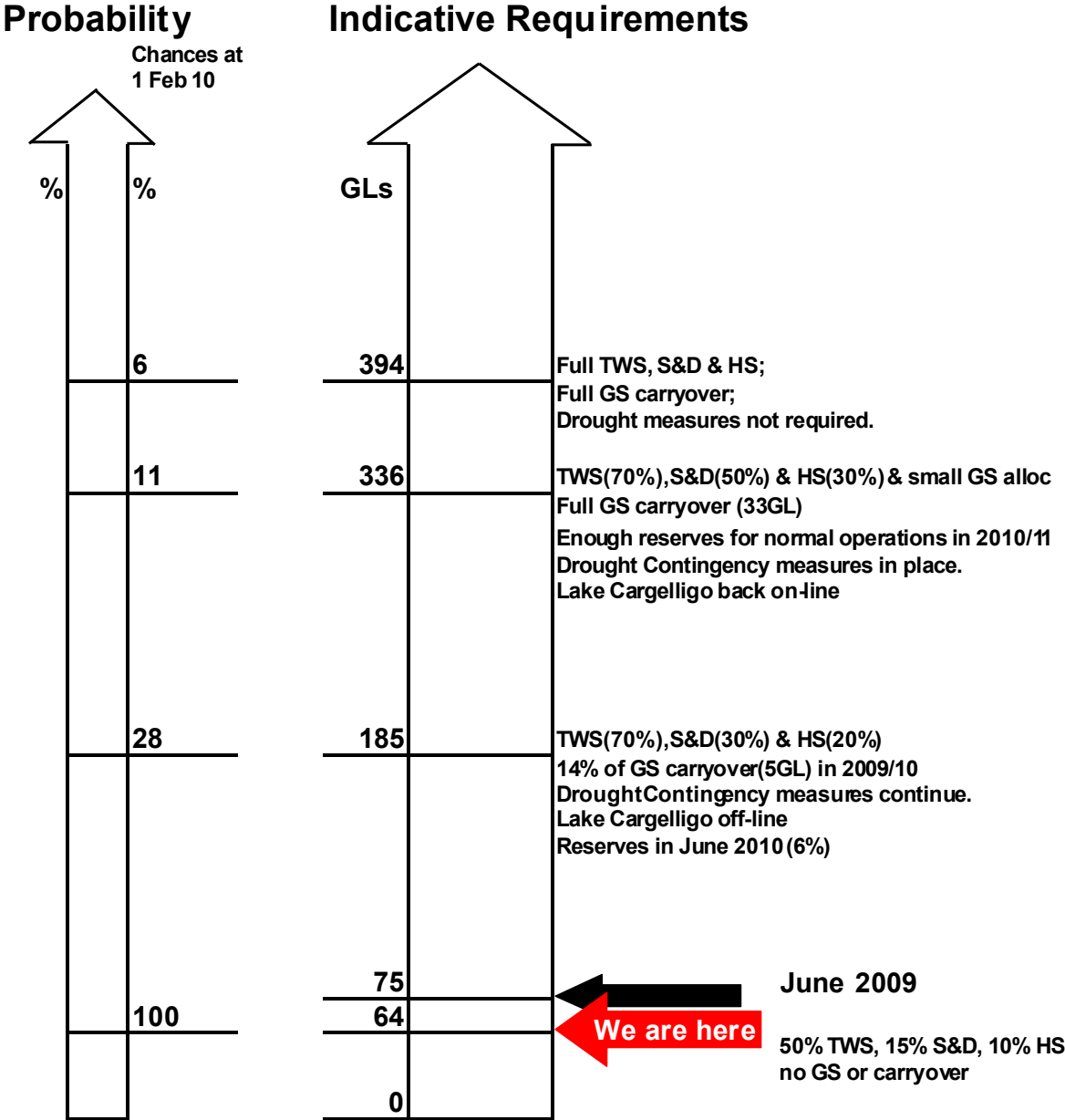
Compliance

The NSW Office of Water's Drought Contingency Planning Program will only work if **everyone** adheres to the restrictions and is careful with all water use. To ensure that the system is run fairly, the community should report any suspected breaches to the Office's Compliance Unit on **1800 633 362** or by email to **watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au**. All reports are confidential.

It is an offence, under section 336C of the *Water Management Act 2000*, to fail to comply with this direction. An individual found guilty of an offence under section 336C is liable to a penalty not exceeding \$247,500 and, in the case of a continuing offence, a further penalty not exceeding \$66,000 for each day the offence continues. A corporation found guilty of an offence under section 336C is liable to a penalty not exceeding \$1.1 million and, in the case of a continuing offence, a further penalty not exceeding \$132,000 for each day the offence continues.

Water availability outlook

Lachlan Valley Indicative Outlook



Key Contacts

Peter Christmas, Director Water Management and Implementation, NSW Office of Water
 Tamworth – 02 67019639

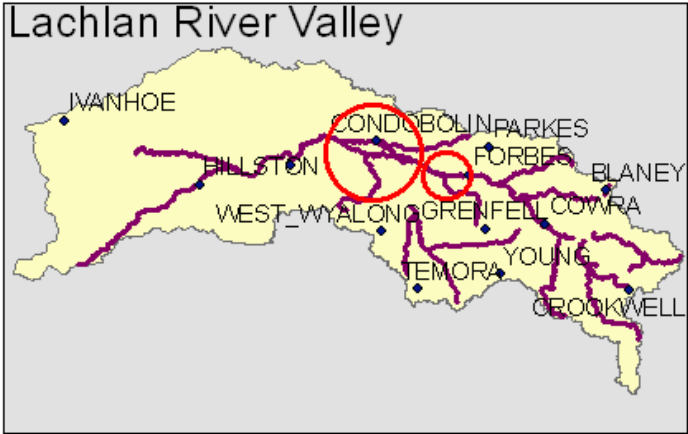
Viv Russell, Licensing Officer, NSW Office of Water Forbes – 02 6850 2801

Sri Sritharan, State Water Corporation Dubbo – 02 6841 2063

Adam Vey, Senior Conservation Manager, Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Unit, Industry &
 Investment NSW – 02 6042 4205

Allan Lugg, Senior Fisheries Conservation Manager, Aquatic Habitat Protection, Industry &
 Investment NSW – 02 4428 3401

Publication Contact: Anne Brook – 02 6701 9662, mobile 0419 120 527



MID LACHLAN RIVER

