



Unregulated Diversions Water Outlook for Melbourne

Image: Yarra River at Warburton

December 2023



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1. Executive Summary

As El Nino continues into summer, December to February rainfall is likely to be average to below-average. Minimum and maximum temperatures across the same period are likely to be above average. The seasons rainfall and temperature outlook, (www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary), suggest Melbourne Water's unregulated stream customers can expect to face periods of bans and restrictions for the coming irrigation period.

Streamflow in October across the country has been low and this is likely to continue into the summer irrigation period with a moderate-high level of accuracy (www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/).

Due to several years of extremely wet weather, soil conditions in most of the catchments maintain a high level of saturation which has led to continued runoff into catchment dams. With most catchment dams full, irrigators using this resource are in a strong position for the season with most off stream dams full. If significant, extended warm and dry periods are experienced, there will be increased stress on this resource.

2. Introduction

The Minister for Water has delegated Melbourne Water with the responsibility for managing surface water licensing within the waterways and major drainage systems of the Yarra River, the lower Maribyrnong River, Stony, Kororoit, Laverton and Skeleton Creek catchments.

Within these catchments we currently manage approximately 1300 licenses from waterways and administer approximately 500 farm dam registrations and licences relating to catchment dams. The total allocation issued under these licences is approximately 44,000 Megalitres (ML). Water use is primarily for agricultural, industrial, commercial, sporting grounds and domestic and stock purposes. We also manage stormwater harvesting licences for the whole of the Port Phillip and Western Port catchments associated with Melbourne Water drainage assets. We manage licensed surface water diversions in accordance with the Act, State Government policy and state-wide diversions management practices, on behalf of the Minister for Water.



Farming property in Wandin Yallock Creek catchment

3. Background

The *Water Act 1989* requires Melbourne Water, as the Minister's delegate, to protect the environment and consider the needs of water users. This is achieved through a number of different mechanisms that include a Drought Response Plan (DRP), Stream Flow Management Plans (SFMPs) and Local Management Rules/Plans (LMRs/LMPs).

During drought or low flow conditions, licenced diverters' access to water may be restricted or banned to protect the environment. Our Drought Response Plan is active at all times, and specifies how water is shared when there is not enough to meet all users' needs. It states river flow levels which trigger restrictions or bans, and how these are applied to different licence types. These trigger points have been developed together with stream flow management plans or local management rules/plans.

The status of restrictions and bans for individual catchments is posted daily on Melbourne Water's website at www.melbournewater.com.au/diverters and be available by calling Melbourne Water on 131 722 at any time or via an automated SMS services to subscribed customers. In addition the website provides catchment specific stream-flow data including daily and 7-day average stream flow.

Stream Flow Management Plans, Local Management Rules, Drought Response Plan and the Diversion's Customer Charter have been developed by Melbourne Water in consultation with customers and other stakeholders. These plans and rules define the amount of water available within a catchment, the conditions under which it can be taken and the level of service that will be achieved. Our compliance and enforcement approach is centred on adherence to these plans.

Below is a map of Melbourne Water's diversion catchments and related management plans is shown in Figure below.

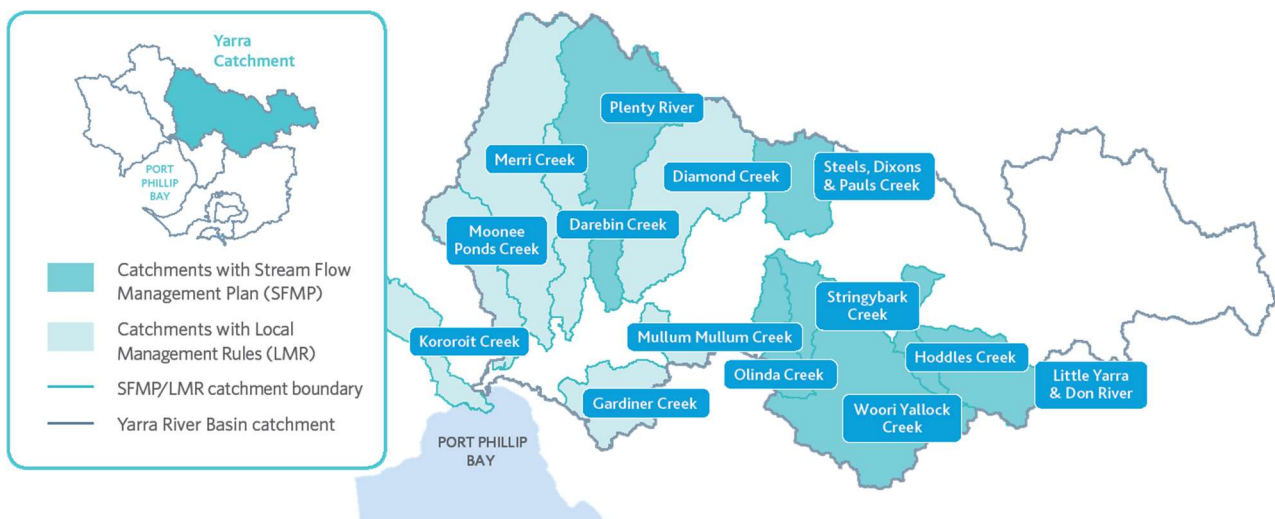


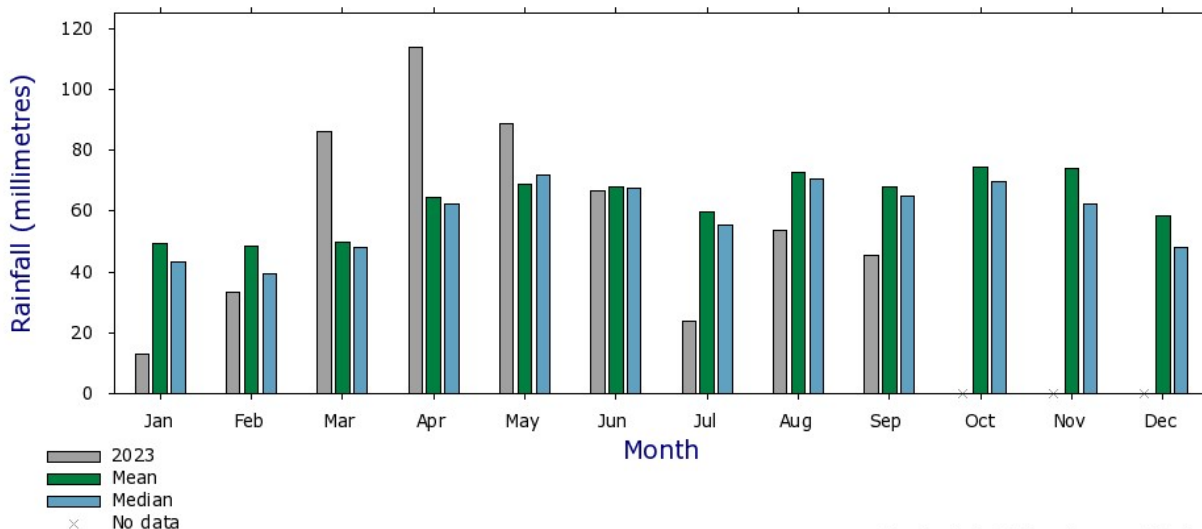
Figure 1. Catchments with Stream Flow Management Plans and Local Management Rules

For more information about Melbourne Water and its services are available on the Melbourne Water website: <https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water-data-and-education/waterway-diversions>

4. Season to Date

Rainfall across the Yarra Valley, where the majority of Melbourne Water licensed users are located, experienced a dry start to the year followed by an above average Autumn. Winter rainfall was at or below average (Figure 2). Rainfall across the metropolitan Melbourne and Yarra Valley region from January to September 2023 was above average to very much above average (Figure 2). Annual rainfall to the end of September 2023 has been 524.8 mm at Coldstream against a yearly mean of 756.9 mm (Table 1).

Coldstream (086383) 2023 Rainfall (millimetres)



Note: Data may not have completed quality control

Product Code: IDCJAC0009

Climate Data Online, Bureau of Meteorology
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Figure 2: Mean (1994-2023), median and average monthly (2023) rainfall (mm) at Coldstream (086383).

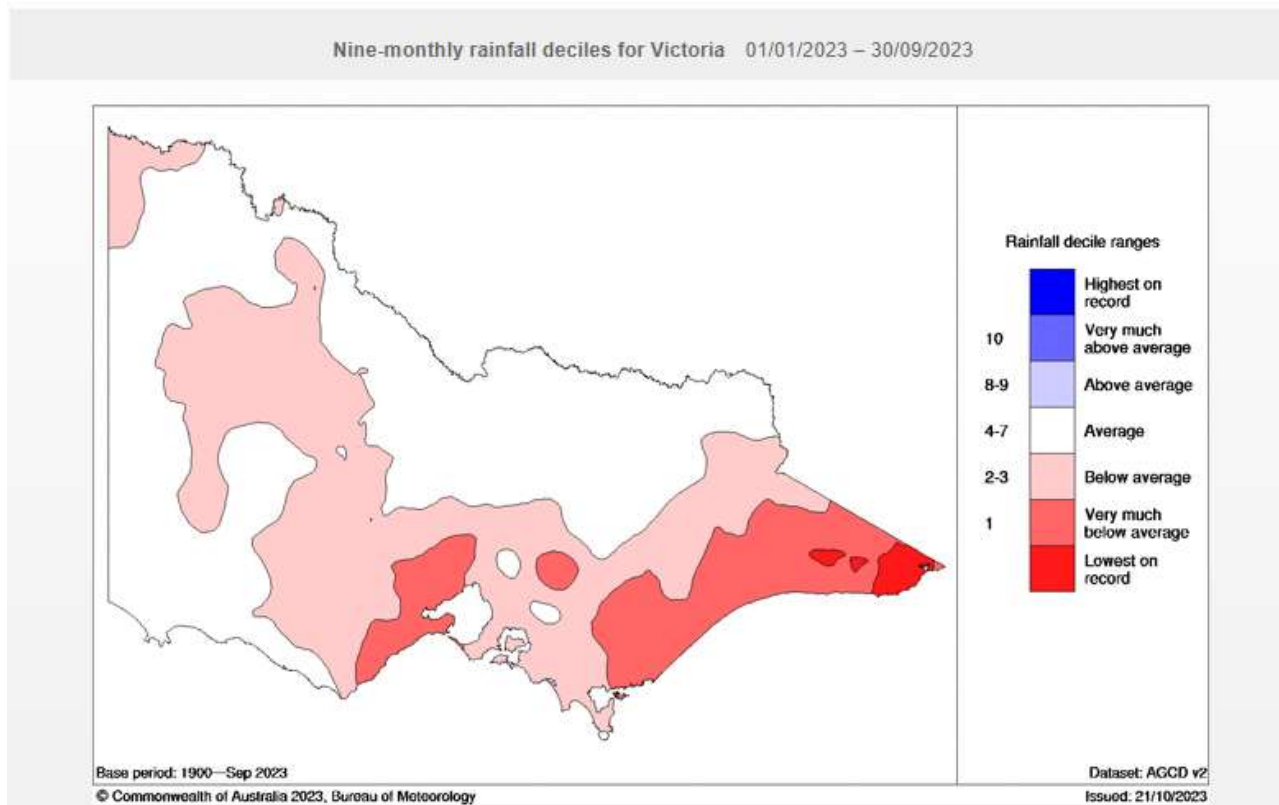


Figure 3: Decile rainfalls for Victoria for 2023 Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall

Table 1: Mean (1994-2023) and average monthly (2023) rainfall (mm) at Coldstream (site no. 086383)

Statistics	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Mean rainfall (mm) for years 1994 to 2023	49.4	48.7	49.6	64.5	68.9	68.2	59.7	72.8	68.2	74.5	74.1	58.3	756.9
Statistics	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Total Rainfall (mm) for year 2023	13.0	33.4	86.0	113.8	89.0	66.6	23.8	53.8	45.4	-	-	-	524.8

The period from March to May was particularly wet and translated to higher streamflow’s leading in to winter. In ephemeral systems such as the Steels Creek and Dixons Creek catchments around Yarra Glen, this resulted in these catchments being available for harvest across the start of the winter-fill period. Winter rainfall was average to well below average into September causing some systems to have bans implemented during the drier periods, often for extended periods. These areas which rely on off stream dams for irrigation water are in a good situation with most dams full as it has been an extended wet period for the last few years.



Nursery in the Yarra Valley

5. Summary of Current Streamflow

Streamflow conditions across all major catchments for October 2022 and October 2023 are summarised in Table 2. On the back of a wet winter to spring period, the majority of the systems have remained available during this time which was similar to last year.

Table 2: Instantaneous streamflow (ML) and restrictions/ban status on 23 October 2022 (post a significant rainfall event) and 23 October 2023, by Melbourne Water catchments.

Catchment	Instantaneous Flow 20th October 2022 (ML)	Status	Instantaneous Flow 20th October 2023(ML)	Status
Arundel Creek	14.3	Available	7.2	Available
Cockatoo and Shepherd	151.1	Available	105.9	Available
Darebin Creek	42.9	Available	8.8	Available
Diamond Creek	52.3	Available	25	Available
Dixons Creek	7.9	Available	3.9	Banned
Don River	52.3	Available	58.4	Available
Gardiners Creek	14.0	Available	6.7	Available
Hoddles Creek	23.2	Available	18.2	Available
Kororoit Creek	34.7	Available	12.1	Available
Little Yarra River	190.9	Available	178.8	Available
Maribyrnong River (all year)	951.4	Available	55.4	Available
Maribyrnong River (winter-fill)	951.4	Available	55.4	Available
McCrae Creek	57.9	Available	38.1	Available
Merri Creek	126.3	Available	18.4	Available
Moonee Ponds Creek	14.3	Available	7.2	Available
Mullum Mullum Creek	4.4	Available	341.1	Available
Olinda Creek (Lower)	60.1	Available	55.5	Available
Olinda Creek (Upper)	47.7	Available	22	Available
Pauls Creek	8.3	Available	6.5	Available
Plenty River	149.8	Available	24.1	Available
Steels Creek	4.9	Banned	6.8	Available
Stringybark Creek (Lower)	18.5	Available	10.9	Banned
Stringybark Creek (Upper)	42.0	Available	13.4	Available
Wandin Yallock Creek	39.5	Available	30.6	Available
Watsons Creek	5.3	Available	6.2	Available
Watts River	336.0	Available	251.8	Available
Woori Yallock Creek	347.0	Available	270.3	Available
Yarra River Lower	7,076.1	Available	3821.0	Available
Yarra River Upper	4,316.6	Available	2750.6	Available

Please note the data in the table is as at 20th October, for daily restrictions and bans please see: www.melbournewater.com.au/diverters



Flow gauge on waterway

6. Water availability for rest of 2023/24

6.1 Wetter than average forecast for the remainder of 2023

The Bureau of Meteorology’s seasonal climate outlook for the remainder of 2023 shows that for November to January, above median maximum temperatures are very likely (greater than 80%) for almost all of Australia. In the same period, rainfall across most of Australia is likely to be below average. For most of Australia, maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be 2.5 times normal to be unusually high.

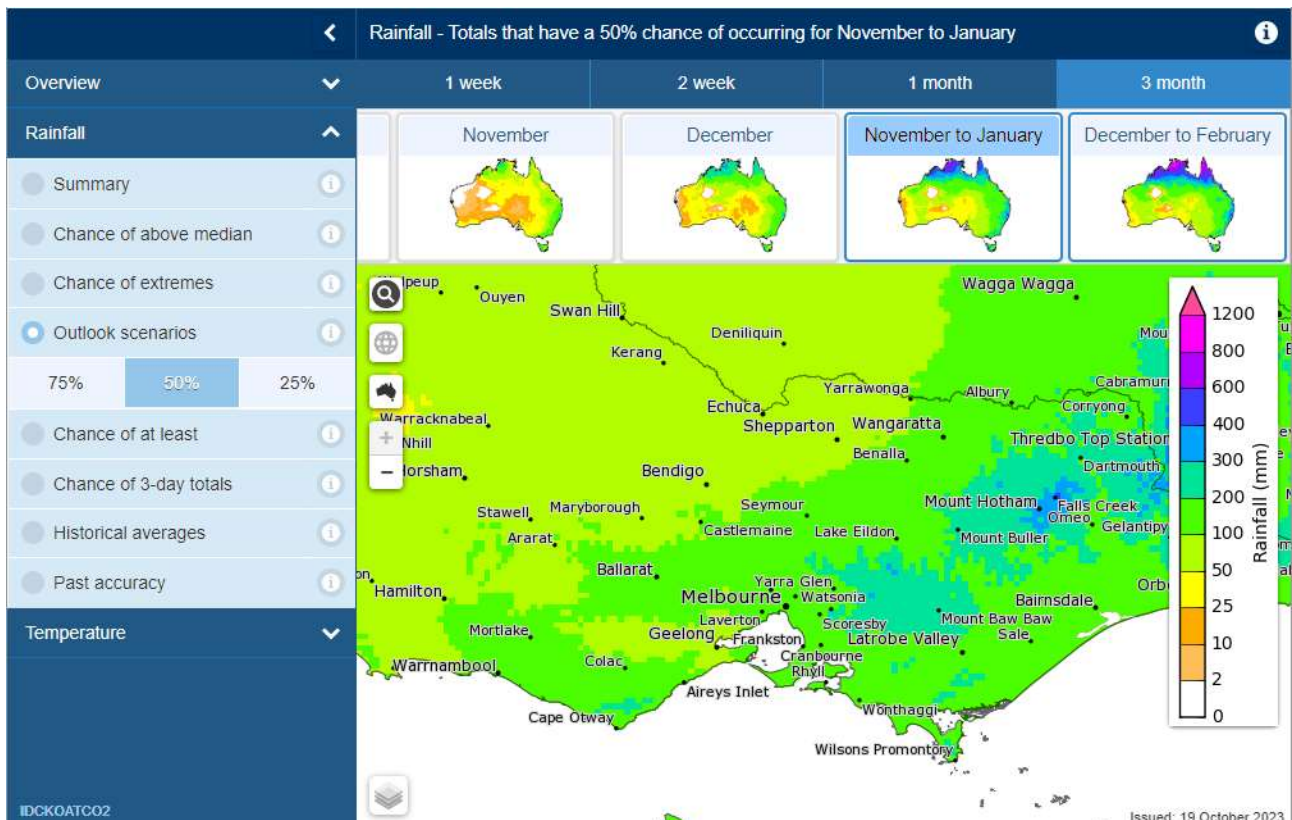
For more information on the Bureau’s ENSO Outlook please see their website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/outlook/>

Temperature and rainfall influence water use, especially during summer periods. Melbourne Water continually monitors flow conditions and the Bureau’s seasonal climate outlooks which are updated monthly.

6.1.1. Rainfall outlook

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology outlook for rainfall (issued on 19 October 2023) for the period from November 2023 to January 2024 indicates rainfall is likely (60% to 80% chance) to be below median for most of Australia, see Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Australian Bureau of Meteorology three month totals that have a 50% chance of occurring for November 2023 to January 2024, Victoria, Australia (Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).



6.1.2. Temperature outlook

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology outlook for temperature (issued on 13 October 2023) for the period from November 2023 to January 2024 indicates that:

- Above median maximum temperatures are very likely (greater than 80% chance) for almost all of Australia
- Most of Australia is at least twice as likely as normal to experience unusually high maximum temperatures.
- Above median minimum temperatures are very likely (80% chance) for most of Australia.
- Broad areas of Australia are at least 2 times more likely than normal to experience unusually high minimum temperatures.

The chance of above median maximum and minimum temperature for November 2023 to January 2024 for Australia and Victoria is shown in Figure 5 and 6, respectively.

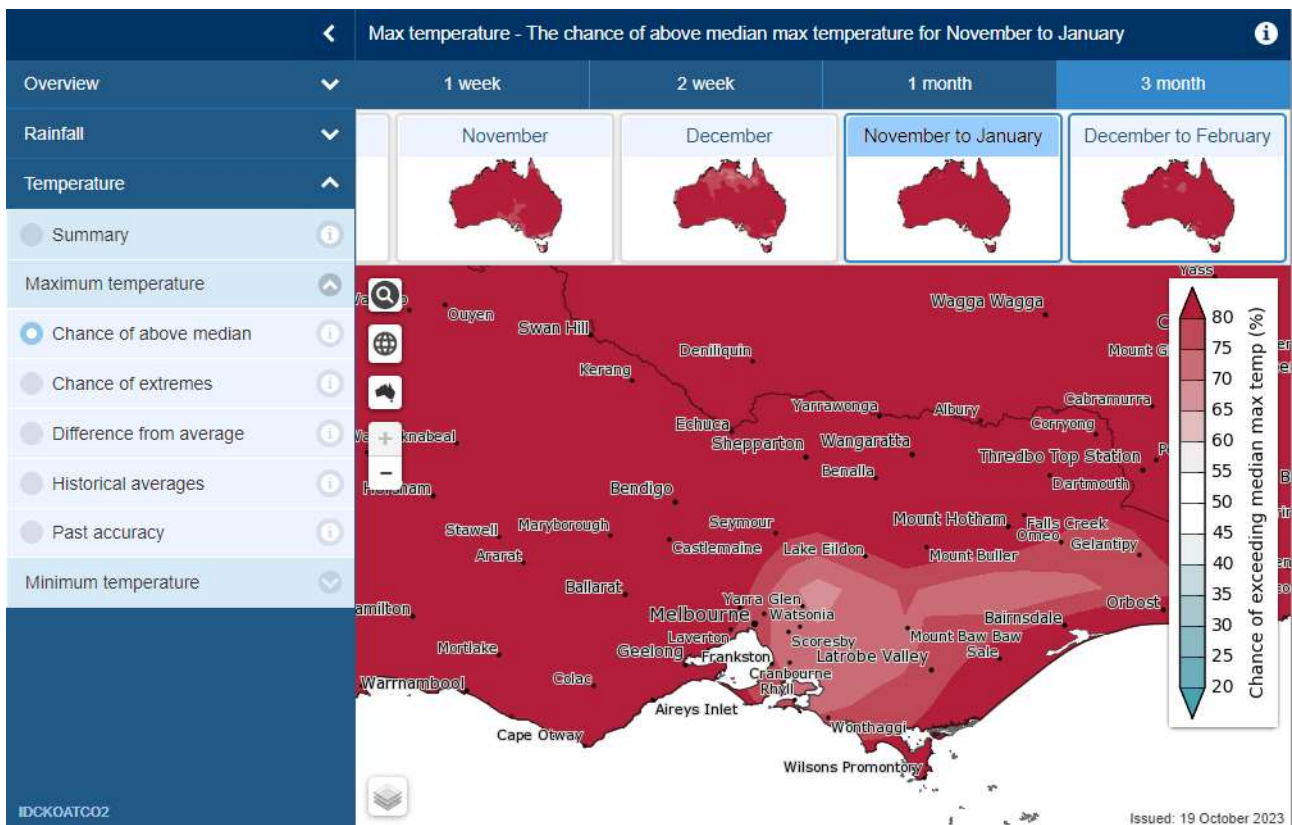


Figure 5: Australian Bureau of Meteorology three month (November 2023– January 2024) chance of exceeding median maximum temperature (%) outlook for Australia (Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).

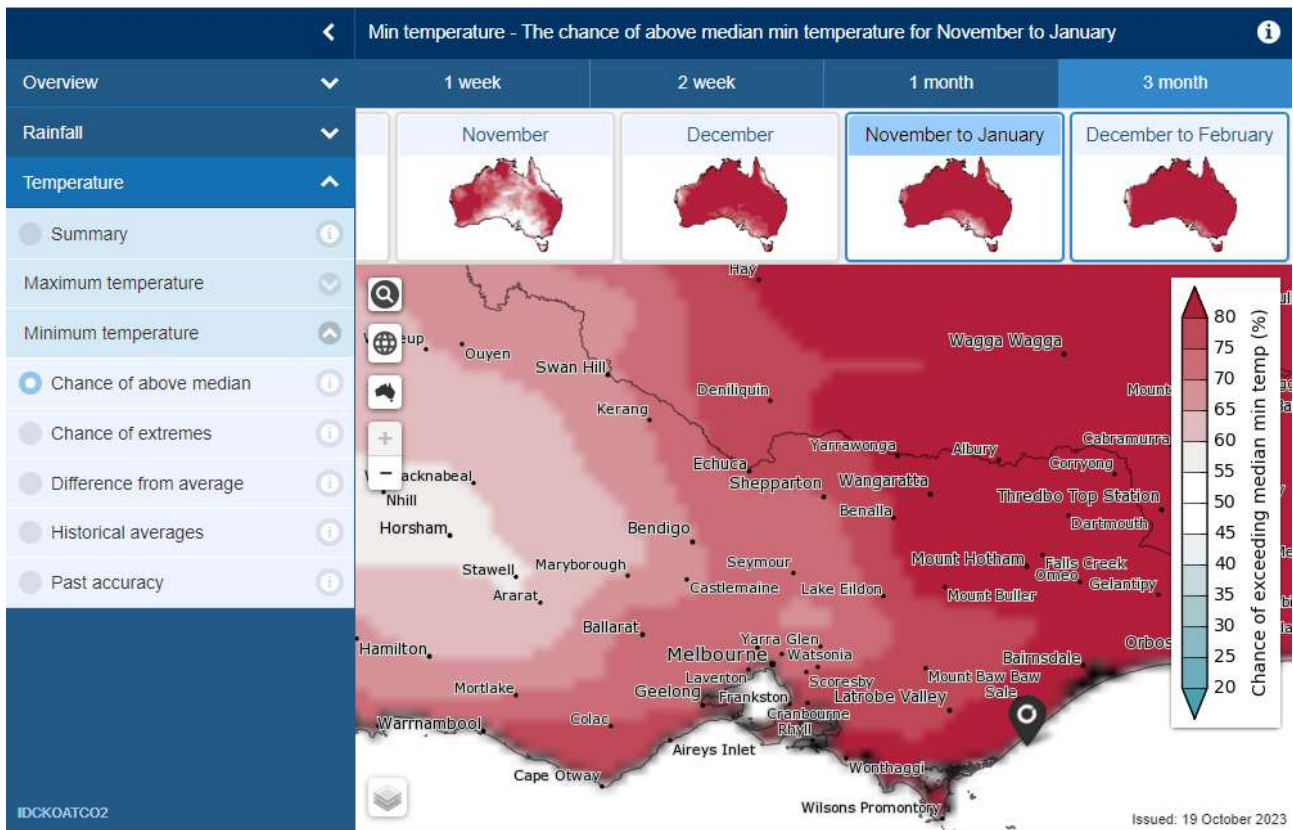


Figure 6: Australian Bureau of Meteorology three month (November 2023 – January 2024) chance of exceeding median maximum temperature (%) outlook for Victoria, Australia (Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).

6.2 Seasonal Streamflow Forecasts October to December 2023

Predicting Melbourne’s future streamflow levels is complex and uncertain.

This is primarily because it is not possible to accurately forecast the timing and extent of rainfall events and consequently the catchments’ runoff response to them up to one year ahead. Nevertheless the Bureau of Meteorology produces seasonal streamflow forecasts based on its climate data and flow conditions at 180 monitoring sites across Australia.

This information is available at: <http://www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/index.shtml>

The Bureau of Meteorology’s broad forecast summary for the October to December period is:

- Low streamflow’s are likely for October to December for almost all sites
- Flows were low at 63% of locations in September for sites in the southern two-thirds of the mainland
- Flows were near-median at 25% of locations in September, mainly in the south-east of the mainland.
- The current long-range forecast for October to December suggest dry and unusually warm conditions likely for most of Australia. This is consistent with the currently active El Nino and positive Indian Ocean Dipole events, and longer-term climate trends including record warm oceans globally.

Within Melbourne Water’s Yarra River basin, between October and December 2023, inflow into Graceburn Creek is very likely to be below streamflow volumes up to 1.0 GL, where all volumes are below the historical average (Figure 7).

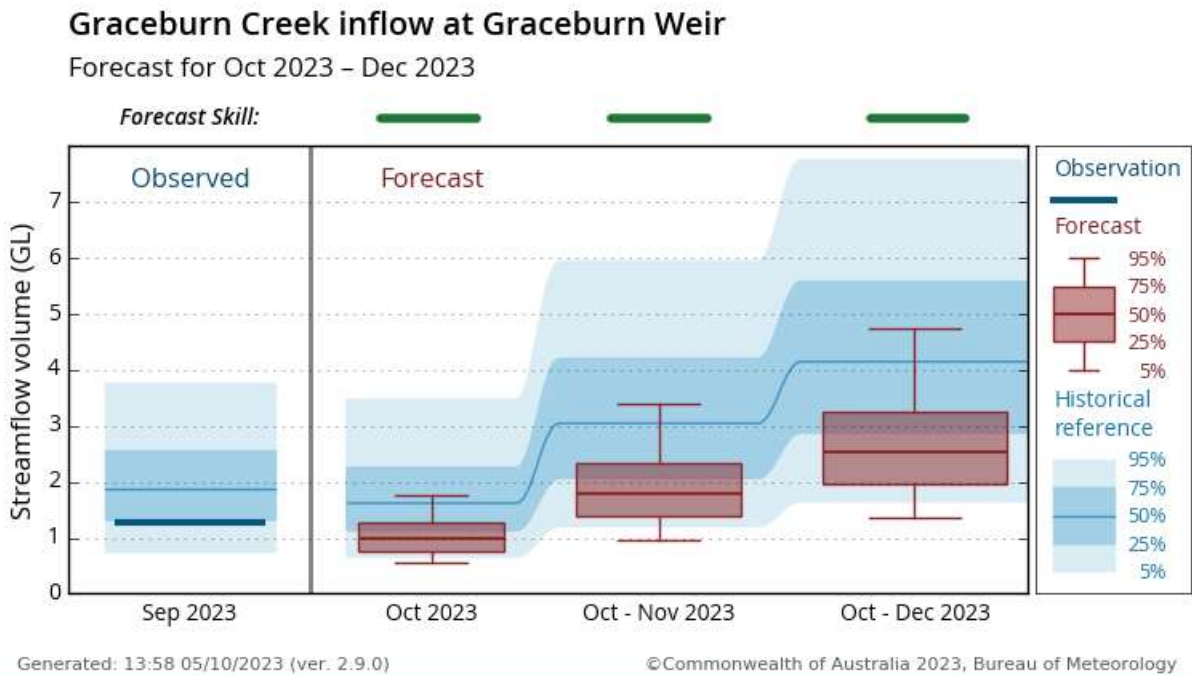


Figure 7: Australian Bureau of Meteorology 1-month (October 2023), 2-month (Oct-Nov 2023) and 3-month (Oct-Dec 2023) streamflow (GL) exceedance probability (%) outlook for Graceburn Creek at Graceburn Weir, Victoria, Australia. (Source: http://www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/?ref=ftr#id=GRACEBURN_TOT).

7. Forward outlook for 2023/24 summer season

If the predicted warmer and drier conditions being to develop into summer we will see a rapid drying of the catchment which will lead to a reduction in the availability of the resource and an increase in demand, which, when coupled, will likely lead to an increase in catchments being on ban. Licence holders need to ensure they have put appropriate measures in place to ensure they have water availability during these times.

Under average conditions unregulated licence holders around Melbourne are likely to see an early introduction of bans / restrictions starting in December and likely to extend until at least March. This may continue in autumn if warmer and drier conditions occur as predicted.

September 2023 was the driest on record in Australia. Under dry conditions, restrictions and/or bans will continue and expand across systems in December and continue through until May. Under worst on record conditions customers could see restriction and/or bans starting immediately and not lifting until winter rainfalls occur towards Autumn.

Access to water in unregulated systems in 2023/24 will remain highly dependent on weather conditions. The Melbourne Water region can be broken up into western and eastern areas when considering the impact of weather on streamflow’s, with the western region having a higher level of restrictions / bans in comparison to the eastern region (Table 3). This is due to significant differences in average rainfall totals across Melbourne as well as the eastern region catchments often benefitting from strong groundwater contribution.

Table 3: The impact of weather conditions (5th, 25th and 50th percentiles) on streamflow restrictions and ban status on river basins in Melbourne Water's western and eastern regions.

Region	Worst on record weather conditions (5th percentile)	Dry weather conditions (25th percentile)	Average weather conditions (50th percentile)
Western (Maribyrnong Basin)	All streams on bans.	All streams on bans.	Minor tributaries will be on bans.
Eastern (Yarra Basin)	All minor tributaries on bans in order to protect the environment Yarra River main stem will be on restrictions and/or bans.	All minor tributaries on bans in order to protect the environment Yarra River main stem will be on restrictions.	All minor tributaries on bans in order to protect the environment. Yarra River main stem will not have restrictions

In Melbourne Water's area of operation for diversions, when river levels are low, waterway diverters around may be restricted or banned from taking water in order to protect the environment. The impact of bans on licence holders is recognised as severe, however, the implementation of cease to divert within a catchment is necessary to protect base environmental flows and maintain where possible river health and associated flora and fauna.

8. Current climate and streamflow in the longer term context

Victoria's climate has shown a warming and drying trend over recent decades, and this trend is expected to continue over the longer-term future. In the last 30 years in Port Phillip and Westernport:

- Annual rainfall has decreased slightly
- Dry years have occurred 12 times and wet years seven times
- Rainfall has decreased in the autumn and spring months
- Rainfall is moderately reliable year round
- The autumn break usually occurs by mid-April in the region's north east around Warburton, through to late May in the south west of the region.
- There have been fewer frosts
- There have been more hot days, with more consecutive days above 35 °C
- Australia's climate has warmed on average by 1.44 ± 0.24 °C since national records began in 1910, leading to an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events

Some of the rainfall decline in late autumn and winter can be attributed to global warming and changes in the weather systems that deliver rainfall to Victoria. The cause of the reduction in streamflow response to rainfall is not yet fully known and is the subject of continuing research.

Over the longer term, Australia is projected to experience:

- Continued increases in air temperatures, more heat extremes and fewer cold extremes.
- Continued warming, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cool days.
- A decrease in cool season rainfall across many regions of the south and east, likely leading to more time spent in drought.
- More intense short-duration heavy rainfall events throughout the country.
- Fewer east coast lows particularly during the cooler months of the year. For events that do occur, sea level rise will increase the severity of some coastal impacts.

Even if there is an increase in summer rainfall, it is unlikely to offset the streamflow impact of rainfall reductions in winter because most of the runoff in Victorian catchments occurs over winter and spring. In the warmer months, catchments are drier and more rainfall soaks into the ground, is used by vegetation or evaporates.

Although there will still be a lot of variability in Victoria's climate and streamflow, the chances of experiencing warmer conditions and less streamflow is now higher than in past decades.

More information on the observed changes and longer-term future climate and water projections can be found at <https://www.water.vic.gov.au/climate-change>

The Victorian Government is investing in further research to better understand how Victoria's climate is changing and the water resource implications, as part of implementing Water for Victoria.

9. Environmental Water and Streamflow Management

9.1 Water for the environment

As delegated delivery partner, Melbourne Water delivers environmental water on behalf of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) in accordance with their [Seasonal Watering Plan 2023-24](#). This includes managing Environmental Water in the Yarra, Tarago/Bunyip, Werribee and Maribyrnong rivers and wetlands.

We do this because climate change and human activity have altered rivers and creeks, including their natural patterns. This affects animal habitats, breeding and migration, and can upset the balance of entire plant and animal communities. Our environmental water flow releases help to restore the balance and meet need of the environmental values to maintain a healthy river. It also provides a range of shared benefits including recreational, cultural and economic benefits.

With wet conditions experienced across most of Melbourne Water's region during 2022-23, many environmental watering actions were met with unregulated flows and reservoir spills in the Yarra, Tarago, Maribyrnong and Werribee systems. The high inflows into reservoirs also meant that there was limited storage space for environmental water and allocation volumes were reduced in the Werribee and Yarra systems as a result. This is the first-time insufficient storage volume has led to a loss of environmental water since the entitlements were created.

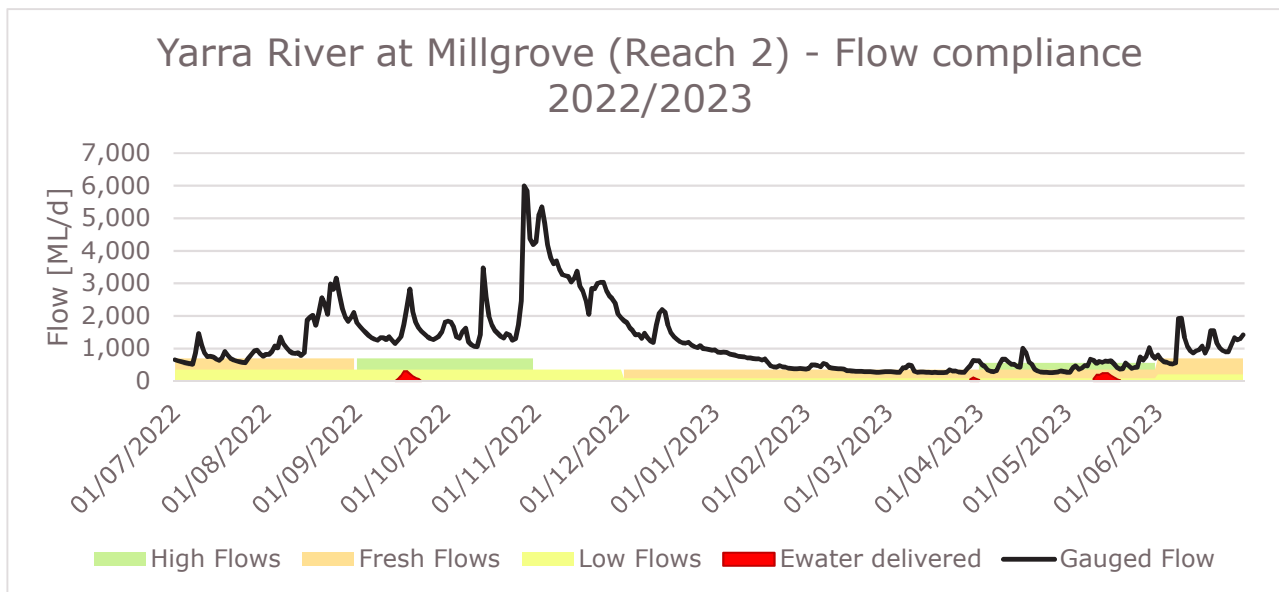
As conditions returned to normal over summer and autumn environmental water was used to deliver 18 environmental watering actions using 9.7 gigalitres of environmental water as shown in the table below:

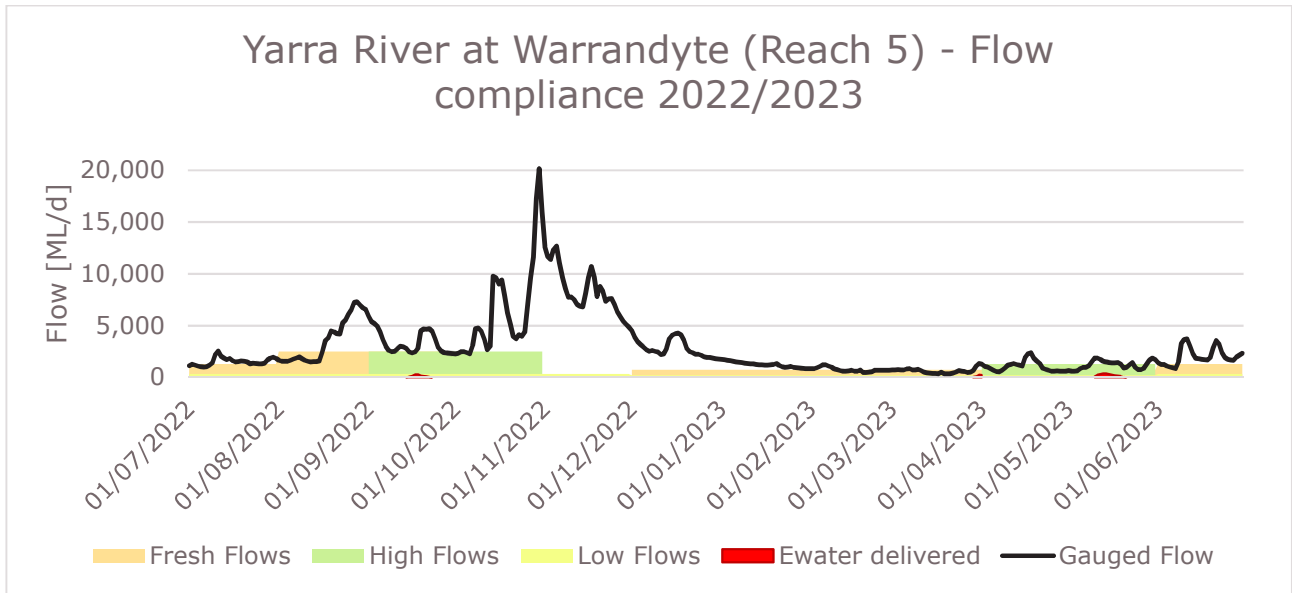
Environmental water delivered for 2022-23

River	Volume delivered	Outcomes
Yarra (<i>Birrarung</i>)	7,008 ML	<p>The Yarra River (<i>Birrarung</i>) has experienced wet conditions for much of the 2022-23 year resulting in achievement of many environmental watering actions with unregulated catchment flows. This has included inundation of Yering Backswamp and the lower Yarra Billabongs.</p> <p>One spring high for reach one; one summer/autumn fresh for reaches two and five, and one autumn high for reaches two and five have been delivered with water for the environment. The environmental water release for summer/autumn freshes and autumn high flow aimed to improve aquatic habitat and channel form, maintain bank vegetation and provide opportunities for fish movement.</p> <p>Water for the environment was also delivered to Yering Backswamp and Annulus Billabong on the lower Yarra floodplain to improve wetland vegetation and provide habitat for frogs and birds. All of the billabongs in the lower Yarra (<i>Birrarung</i>) floodplain were engaged naturally.</p>
Tarago and Bunyip rivers	151 ML	<p>Tarago Reservoir spilled all year (except two days in March 2023). As a result, the Entitlement remained at 3000ML for most of the year. Spills and unregulated catchment flows have helped to achieve most environmental water demands. One summer/autumn fresh was achieved utilising water for the environment.</p> <p>These releases help to enhance habitats, maintain vegetation communities and facilitate movement and spawning of various fish species including the endangered Australian Grayling.</p>
Werribee (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>)	2,248 ML	<p>Werribee River (<i>Wirribi Yaluk</i>) experienced wet conditions with unregulated catchment flows contributing to the achievement of low flow targets throughout the year. The lower Werribee also benefited from enhanced releases through Southern Rural Water’s Bulk Entitlement - 15 ML/d from Melton Reservoir (May to Aug 2023) and 10 ML/d from Werribee Diversion Weir (January to June 2023).</p> <p>Water for the environment was delivered to Pyrites Creek (Reach 6) two spring/summer freshes and two spring/summer high flow events. These flows maintain channel form, habitat and vegetation, and allow for fish movement between pools.</p> <p>In the lower Werribee River, below Melton Reservoir (reach 8 and 9) and into the estuary, water for the environment was delivered to achieve five summer/autumn freshes, and one winter low flow</p>

		event. Freshes and high flows improve habitat, maintain vegetation and support fish and frog populations. The winter low flow event was delivered during June to trigger the downstream migration of Tupong (a native fish species).
Maribyrnong (<i>Mirrangbamurn</i>)	321.9 ML	321.9ML of environmental water was secured through temporary trade of unused irrigation allocations. This water purchase was concluded in May 2023. A winter low flow event using water for the environment was actively delivered during June, targeting improved water quality and connectivity between in-stream habitats. Catchment rainfall and unregulated flows helped partially achieve winter/spring high flow and summer/autumn low flow targets. Water purchase timing and operational constraints limiting the maximum release from the reservoir meant full achievement of all targets was not possible, yet enhanced water quality and flow variability was recorded during the winter low flow release.

In 2022-23, as storage operator and delivery partner, Melbourne Water delivered 18,960ML from Thomson Reservoir to the Thomson river as water for the environment. This was in partnership with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and on behalf of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder.




























Yarra River at Millgrove and Warrandyte environmental flow compliance 2022/23






In 2023/24, Melbourne Water will monitor the catchment conditions in line with the Seasonal watering Proposal and manage the system to a 'wet' scenario.

Potential environmental watering action	Expected watering effects	Environmental objectives
<p>Birrarung (Yarra River) The highest-priority reaches for <i>Birrarung</i> (Yarra River) are reaches 2 (upper <i>Birrarung</i>) and 5 (lower <i>Birrarung</i>); water delivered to these reaches generally benefits other reaches</p>		
Winter/spring low flow (June to November) Reach 2: 80-350 ML/day Reach 5: 350-750 ML/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically mix pools to minimise the risk of stratification and low oxygen Maintain access to habitats for fish, water bugs and platypus Wet bank vegetation to promote growth 	
Winter/spring freshes (two freshes for three to seven days during June to November) Reach 2: 700 ML/day Reach 5: 2,500 ML/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scour sediment and biofilm from gravel in riffles to improve spawning opportunities for Macquarie perch Wet native streamside vegetation on the banks of the river to promote growth Provide cues for upstream migration of juvenile migratory fish (e.g. Australian grayling and tupong) 	
Winter/spring high flow (one high flow for 14 days during June to September) Reach 2: 700 ML/day Reach 5: 2,500 ML/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scour sediment and biofilm from gravel in riffles Provide prolonged wetting to favour flood-tolerant native vegetation in the streamside zone Provide cues for upstream migration of juvenile migratory fish (e.g. Australian grayling and tupong) Trigger spawning of Macquarie perch 	
Summer/autumn low flow (December to May) Reach 2: 80 ML/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physically mix pools to minimise the risk of stratification and low oxygen Maintain access to habitats for fish, water bugs and platypus 	

Reach 5: 200 ML/day Reach 6: 300-450 ML/day		 
Summer/autumn freshes (three freshes for two days during December to May) Reach 2: 350 ML/day Reach 5: 750 ML/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flush pools to prevent a decline in water quality Scour sediment and biofilm from gravel in riffles and pools to maintain habitat quality for fish and water bugs Provide opportunities for the localised movement of fish and platypus Wet the banks of the river to maintain flood-tolerant vegetation on the banks 	     
Autumn high flow (one high flow for seven to 14 days during April to May) Reach 2: 560 ML/day Reach 5: 1,300 ML/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cue the migration of Australian grayling Scour sediment and biofilm from gravel in riffles and pools to maintain habitat quality for fish and water bugs 	 
Yarra billabongs		
Bolin Bolin Billabong (fill in spring/summer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill the wetland to full supply level to engage the inlet/outlet channel to the Yarra River as an exit strategy for eels Allow to draw down to support the growth of threatened wetland plant species and encourage the regeneration of spreading aquatic herbs Maintain a permanent pool to provide habitat for frogs, waterbugs and any remaining eels 	   
Yering Backswamp (fill in autumn/winter/spring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wet the deepest parts of the wetland to about 80 cm to provide habitat for fish, frogs and water bugs Wet remaining areas of the wetland to about 40-60 cm to support the growth of threatened wetland plant species and encourage the regeneration of spreading aquatic herbs 	   

Potential environmental watering actions, expected watering effects and associated environmental objectives for the Yarra system (VEWH, 2023)

Icon	Environmental objectives in the Yarra system
	Protect and increase populations of native fish, including threatened species (such as the Australian grayling, Macquarie perch and river blackfish)
	Maintain the population of frogs, particularly on the mid-Birrarung (Yarra River) floodplain
	Maintain the form of the river channel Scour silt from riffles and clean cobbles
	Maintain the population of resident platypus

	Maintain native streamside and aquatic vegetation on the riverbank and in the channels
	Increase the growth of threatened wetland plant species to rehabilitate shallow marsh, deep marsh and freshwater meadows on the floodplain and billabongs
	Provide wetted habitat area for water birds
	Maintain the diversity and increase the abundance of water bugs to support aquatic food webs
	Improve water quality in river pools, ensuring adequate oxygen concentration in the water to support fish, crustaceans and water bugs
Icon	Cultural values and uses in the Yarra system
	Watering planned and/or delivered in partnership with Traditional Owners to support cultural values and uses

9.2 Streamflow Management Plans

Melbourne Water manages seven (7) Stream Flow Management Plans (SFMP) in the Yarra catchment, through regular condition monitoring and ensuring water diverters comply with their licence conditions.

Following reviews in 2019/20, Melbourne Water is recommitting to the Steels, Pauls and Dixons Creeks, Hoddles Creek and Stringybark Creek SFMP unamended for a further five years. Following assessment that the Plenty River would be more adequately serviced with a non-statutory Local Management Plan (LMP), Melbourne Water, in consultation with the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, is beginning the consultation process to repeal this SFMP and replace it with an LMP.

Melbourne Water continues to review each SFMP on a cyclical basis as outlined in each plan's prescriptions to ensure that it is meeting current catchment requirements and takes in to account changing catchment conditions and the effects a climate variations.

10. Further information

While these water outlooks are produced only annually by Melbourne Water, information around rainfall and river levels is available on our website for over 200 monitoring sites across Melbourne. <https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water/rainfall-and-river-levels#/>

In addition our catchment ban and restriction status is updated daily on the website at 5am. <https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water/waterway-diversions/restriction-and-ban-status>

Monitoring of both of these sources of information can provide useful insights to likely changes in catchment conditions.

Other useful information around what the application of bans and restrictions means to your licence can be found in Melbourne Water's Drought Response Plan for Licensed Water Users: <https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water/waterway-diversions/stream-flow-management>