

The Lower Broken Creek

Planning our Basin future together



The Victorian Government recognises that a healthy Murray-Darling river system benefits everyone. We remain committed to delivering positive outcomes for agriculture, the environment, Traditional Owners and regional communities through best practice water and waterway management.

Victoria is working with communities to find better ways to deliver further water recovery. We are seeking your feedback on how and when regional water recovery projects are developed.

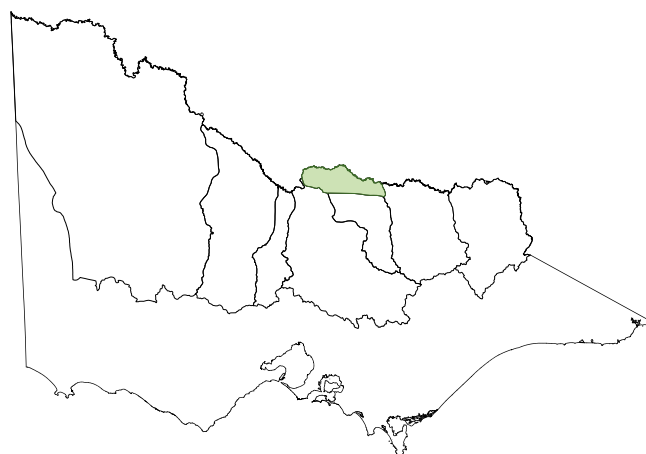
Irrigated agriculture

The Lower Broken Creek includes the Murray Valley and Shepparton areas of the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District Water entitlements, water use and trade information for the Lower Broken Creek is summarised in the box below.

Irrigated agriculture in the Lower Broken Creek contributes to approximately \$641 million of annual agricultural production value. The main irrigated land uses are cropping, dairy and livestock grazing (non-dairy)

Significant irrigation modernisation in this area has been achieved through the successful delivery of the

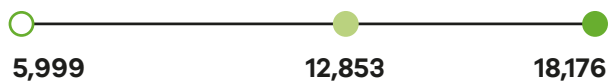
Goulburn Murray Water (GMW) Connections Project (completed 2020) which recovered 429 GL of water for irrigators, urban water users and the environment. An additional 15.9 GL of water recovery will be delivered through the GMW Water Efficiency Project.



Private water shares (ML)

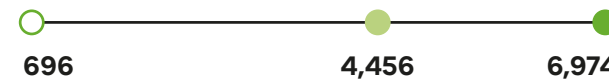
LRWS 11,735

HRWS 20,345



Low Average High

Annual private water use (ML)¹



Low Average High

Annual private trade out (ML)²

Notes:

1. Based on annual water use volumes for the past 10 years.
2. Based on annual net trade volumes between this zone and other zones for the past 10 years.

Positive numbers represent net trade out of this zone, while negative numbers represent net trade into the zone.

Environmental values

The Lower Broken Creek supports a diverse and abundant native fish community, including the threatened Murray cod, golden perch, silver perch and Murray-Darling rainbowfish. Sections of the Lower Broken Creek have been reserved as state park and natural feature reserves. The associated floodplain and wetland habitats support box-dominated grassy woodland communities and many species of state and national conservation significance, including river swamp wallaby grass and Australasian bittern.

The vegetation supported in the Lower Broken Creek floodplain wetlands is diverse, ranging from river red gum to cane grass, and includes threatened communities and species. The wetlands also provide food resources and breeding habitat for bird species of high conservation significance, including the eastern great egret, Latham's snipe, white-bellied sea eagle, Australasian bittern, brolga, royal spoonbill, yellow-billed spoonbill, Australasian shoveler and glossy ibis.

Responding to change

Changes made to the Basin Plan in December 2023 mean the Commonwealth Government has greater ability to purchase water entitlements. Up to one and a half Sydney Harbours (750 GL) could be recovered across the Basin. An open tender water purchase program will have negative impacts for communities that depend on irrigation.

The Victorian Government's focus is delivering its legislative requirements under the Basin Plan. We will continue to look at works and measures which achieve these outcomes and work with the Commonwealth to get them recognised.

We will also look to minimise the impact of Commonwealth purchases in Victoria by working with communities to find ways to recover water while improving environmental outcomes and the long-term sustainability of communities in these regions. You can read about this in the 'Planning our Basin future together' prospectus and fact sheet, available at www.water.vic.gov.au/our-programs/murray-darling-basin/planning-our-basin-future-together.

A system approach to water recovery

Victoria's long-term commitment to water recovery means that large-scale projects to increase water efficiency and modernise infrastructure have already been done in this region through the GMW Connections Project and the GMW Water Efficiency Project.

This means we need to take a system approach when considering options for further water recovery. This will allow us to minimise the impacts of water purchase, plan for the long-term sustainability of our irrigation communities and achieve better environmental outcomes.

Potential water recovery opportunities

Taking an integrated approach to water recovery in the Lower Broken Creek system could include:

- Reducing local delivery losses
- Water purchases that consider where people live, how they are supplied, the impact on other users and opportunities to get additional system savings
- Changes to system operations

These opportunities also have the potential to deliver better environmental outcomes:

- The change in irrigation supply to some reaches may support a more natural local flow
- Restoration of fish passage due to system changes

These ideas are a conversation starter with regional communities.

We will also be partnering with Traditional Owners to find opportunities to progress self-determination in water access and management.

Working together

In light of the Commonwealth Government's position on open tender water purchases, the Victorian Government will work with communities on how and when we will deliver water recovery, and the process to develop and deliver projects to support this.

This work will require extensive community engagement and planning and the Victorian Government will seek funding from the Commonwealth Government to support this.



Credit (above): Agriculture Victoria
Credit (in title): Agriculture Victoria

Having a say

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) alongside water corporations and catchment management authorities, will be talking to communities about Victoria's approach.

You are also welcome to make comments on the prospectus and approach. Submissions can be made via Engage Victoria: engage.vic.gov.au.

Contact us at rural.water@delwp.vic.gov.au.