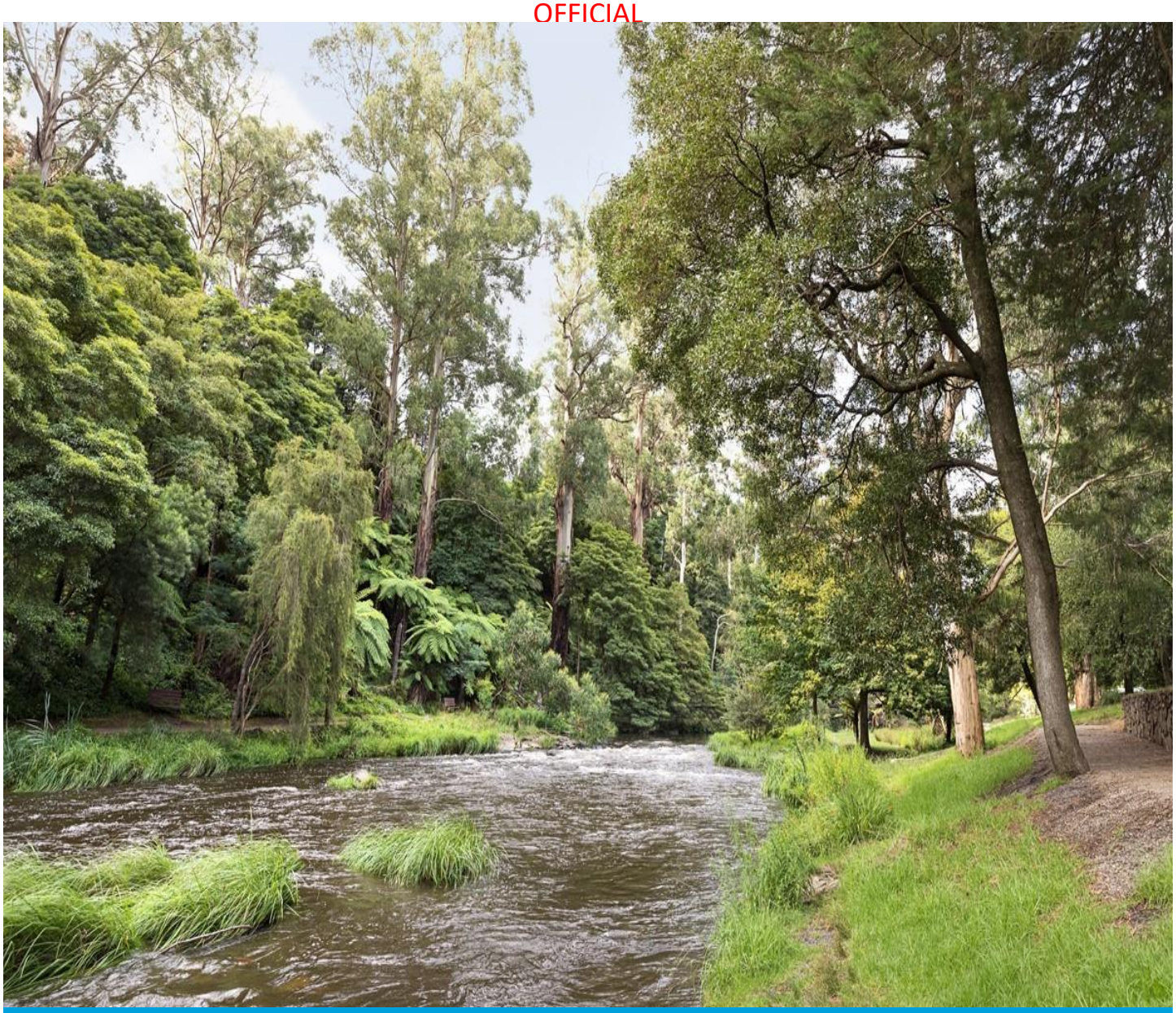


Unregulated Diversions Water Outlook for Melbourne

Image: Yarra River at Warburton

December 2025

VICTORIA State Government

Melbourne Water is owned by the Victorian Government. We manage Melbourne's water supply catchments, remove and treat most of Melbourne's sewage, and manage rivers and creeks and major drainage systems throughout the Port Phillip and Westernport region.

Melbourne Water
Enhancing Life and Liveability

Table of contents

1. Executive Summary

As the El Nino Index remains neutral with models saying it is likely to remain that way until February 2026, rainfall is likely (60 to 80% chance) to be above average for much of southern and eastern Australia. Current modelling suggests that La Nina is possible in November and December 2025, moving back to neutral in the new year. Since July 2024, sea surface temperatures in the Australian region have been the warmest or second warmest on record for each month, with September 2025 the third warmest on record. Above average maximum temperatures are likely to very likely (60% to greater than 80% chance) across most of Australia with an increased chance of unusually high maximum and minimum temperatures for most of Australia. The seasons rainfall and temperature outlook, (www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary), suggest Melbourne Water's unregulated stream customers can expect a higher level of bans and/or restrictions for the coming irrigation period due to extended dry winter and spring of 2025.

In 2024, Victoria had its driest winter since 2006, 30.2% below the 1961-1990 average. In September 2025, streamflow was below average at many sites across southern Australia, with some locations recording their lowest September streamflow and rainfall on record across parts of Victoria. For October to December, low streamflow is likely to continue in the south east of the country. (www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/).

Whilst there had been several years of unusually high rainfall and wet catchment conditions, recent conditions over the last 18 months have returned to average conditions with a rapid drying of many catchments across Melbourne Water's operating area. Many dams have not yet filled from catchment runoff. 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 and licence conditions.

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

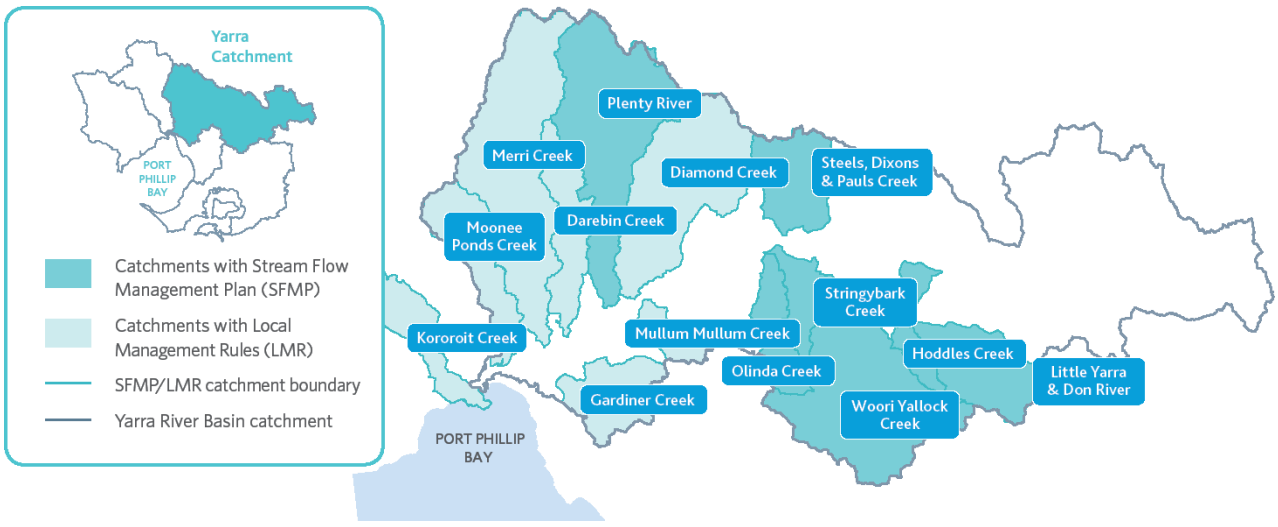


Figure 1. Catchments with Stream Flow Management Plans and Local Management Rules

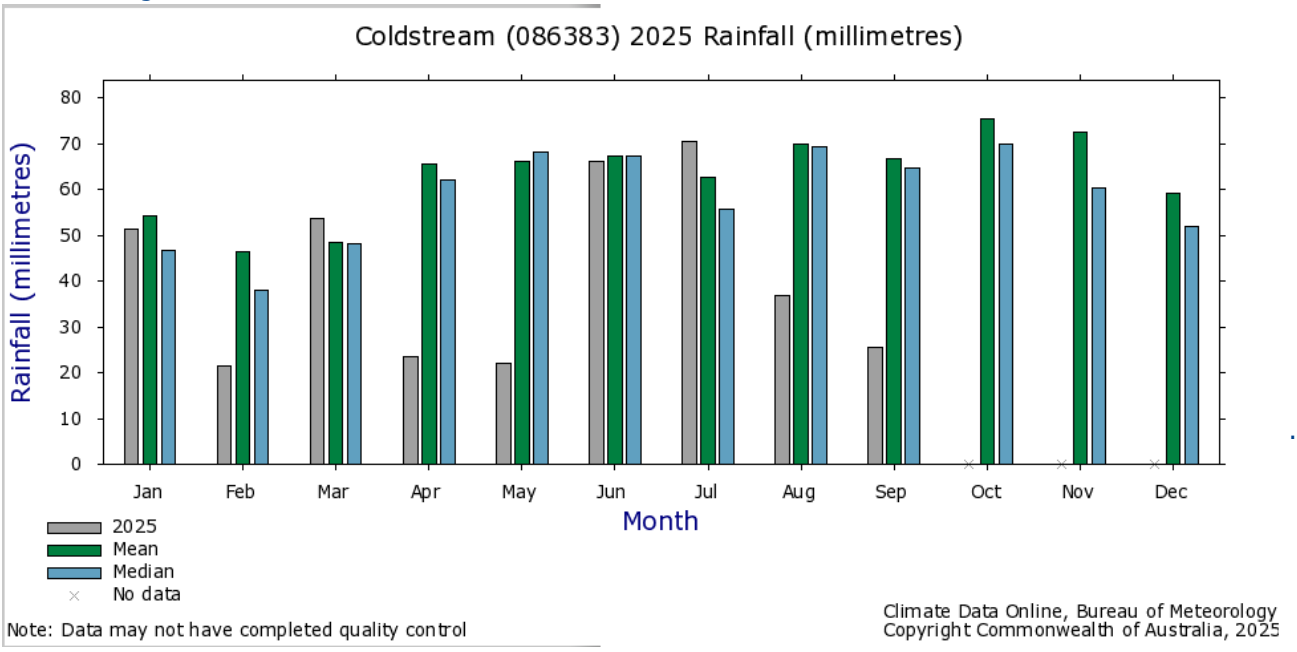
For more information about Melbourne Water and its services are available on the Melbourne Water website: https://www.melbournewater.com.au/water-data-and-education/waterway-diversions

4. Season to Date

Across Victoria, averaged rainfall for winter 2025 was 30% lower than average and the lowest since 2006. Mean maximum temperatures for winter were very much above average with many sites in August reaching their highest winter temperature on record.

Rainfall across the Yarra Valley, where the majority of Melbourne Water licensed users are located, experienced a very start to the year followed by very dry end of summer and early autumn. Winter rainfall was variable but tended to be below to well below average (Figure 2). Rainfall across the from January to September 2025 was in the majority below to very well below average (Figure 3). Some portions of the state recorded lowest rainfall on record. Annual rainfall to the end of September 2025 has been 371.1 mm at Coldstream against a yearly mean of 759.4mm (Table 1).

Figure 2: 2025 Monthly Rainfall compared to mean/median for Coldstream (086383)
www.bom.gov.au/climate/data



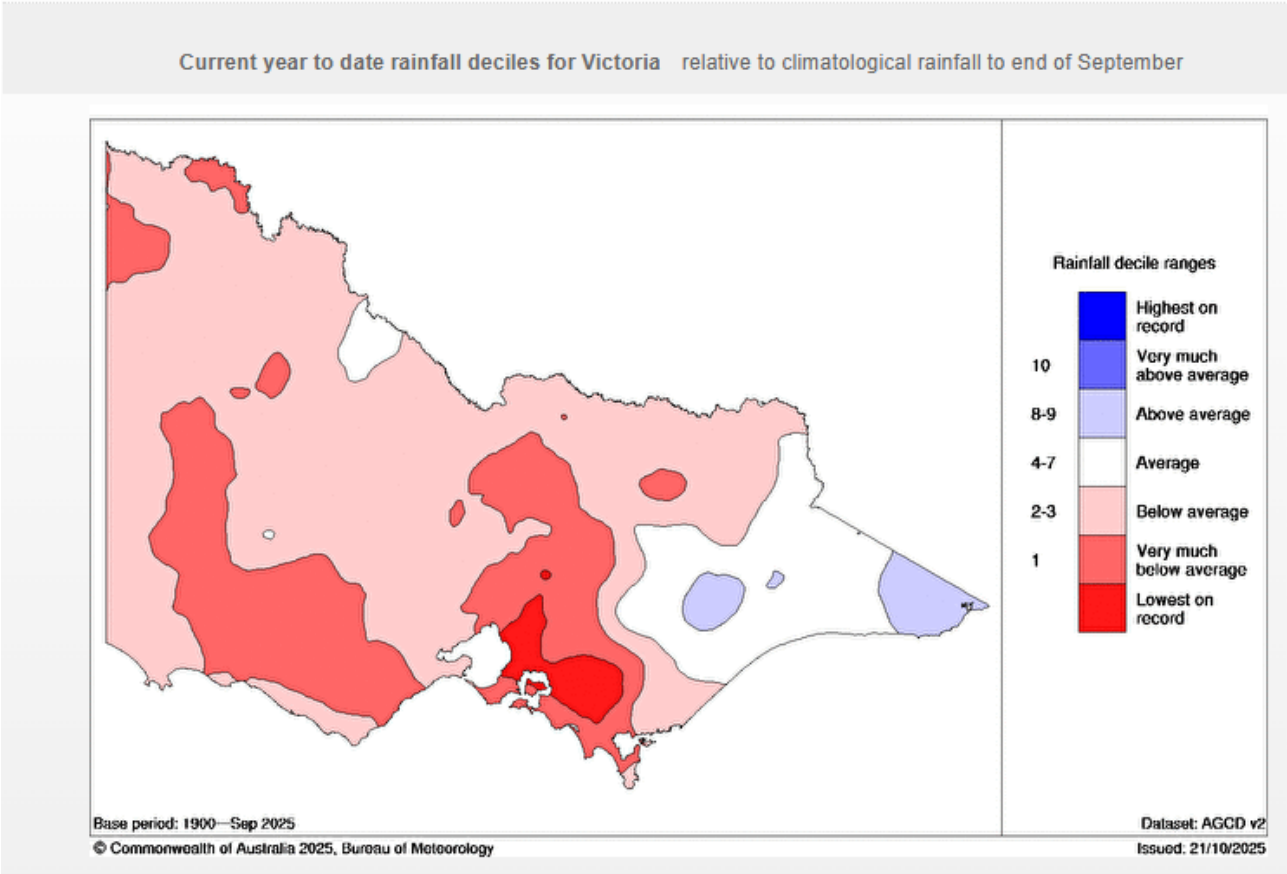


Figure 3: Decile rainfalls for Victoria for 2025 Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/maps/rainfall

Table 1: Mean (1994-2025) and monthly (2025) rainfall (mm) at Coldstream (site no. 086383) and Melbourne Airport (086252)

Statistics	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Mean rainfall (mm) for years 1994 to 2025 Coldstream	54.1	46.5	48.3	65.6	66.1	67.3	62.7	69.8	66.7	75.4	72.5	59.1	759.4
Statistics	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Annual**
Total Rainfall (mm) for year 2025 Coldstream	51.4	21.6	53.8	23.4	22.3	66.0	70.4	36.8	25.4	-	-	-	371.1
Statistics	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Total**
Mean rainfall (mm) for years 1994 to 2025 Melbourne Airport	43.2	38.6	36.9	45.3	39.7	39.7	35.0	43.6	45.2	55.9	61.4	54.1	535.9
Statistics	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Annual**
Total Rainfall (mm) for year 2025 Melbourne Airport	42.2	20.8	23.6	37.0	23.8	39.0	-	35.6	15.6	-	-	-	237.6

From the start of 2025, Melbourne and surrounding areas experienced several months of very dry weather, including extended periods of no rain at all. This, combined with high temperatures across this time meant that many of the waterways in Melbourne Water's operating area experienced bans and restrictions for extended periods and licenced take from these waterways increased. A very dry start to Autumn meant that many licence holders were unable to fill dams either via catchment runoff or pumping from waterways to fill off stream dams with many catchments, particularly in the north of the Yarra Valley, remaining on total irrigation bans for long periods. The Yarra River main stem provided high reliability but did experience several weeks of restrictions through the winterfill period. Anecdotally, there has been a significant uptick in sleeper licences becoming active that have not pumped for over five years, showing signs of low dam levels and dry conditions.

Nursery in the Yarra Valley

5. Summary of Current Streamflow

Streamflow conditions across all major catchments for October 2024 and October 2025 are summarised in Table 2. Off the back of a dry winter and average to dry start to spring period, there is great variance in the availability of systems. Major rivers remain available however smaller tributaries are experiencing extended ban or restriction periods.

Table 2: Instantaneous streamflow (ML) and restrictions/ban status on 15 October 2024 and 15 October 2025, by Melbourne Water catchments.

Catchment	Instantaneous Flow 15th October 2024(ML)	Status	Instantaneous Flow 15th October 2025(ML)	Status
Arundel Creek	7.8	Available	8.6	Available
Cockatoo and Shepherd	65.4	Available	44.3	Restricted
Darebin Creek	3.1	Banned	2.7	Banned
Diamond Creek	3.7	Banned	0.4	Banned
Dixons Creek	0.0	Banned	0	Banned
Don River	10.3	Available	3.7	Banned
Gardiners Creek	6.7	Available	10.1	Available
Hoddles Creek	15.5	Available	5.7	Banned
Kororoit Creek	8.2	Available	14.6	Available
Little Yarra River	110.5	Available	77.3	Available
Maribyrnong River (all year)	23.4	Available	17.2	Available
Maribyrnong River (winter-fill)	23.4	Banned	17.2	Banned
McCrae Creek	18.7	Available	11	Banned
Merri Creek	9.3	Available	3.7	Available
Moonee Ponds Creek	7.8	Available	8.6	Available
Mullum Mullum Creek	2.3	Available	3.6	Available
Olinda Creek (Lower)	24.3	Available	17.8	Available
Olinda Creek (Upper)	14.5	Available	6.8	Banned
Pauls Creek	0	Banned	0	Banned
Plenty River	3.1	Available	1.6	Banned
Steels Creek	0.4	Banned	0	Banned
Stringybark Creek (Lower)	0.8	Banned	6.8	Banned
Stringybark Creek (Upper)	3.2	Banned	7.1	Available
Wandin Yallock Creek	9.6	Available	6.1	Banned
Watsons Creek	1.9	Available	4.4	Available
Watts River	82.2	Available	12.3	Available

Catchment	Instantaneous Flow 15th October 2024(ML)	Status	Instantaneous Flow 15th October 2025(ML)	Status
Woori Yallock Creek	164.7	Available	91.6	Banned
Yarra River Lower	809.7	Available	619.9	Available
Yarra River Upper	804.3	Available	1005.1	Available

Please note the data in the table is as at 15th October 2025, for daily restrictions and bans please see: www.melbournewater.com.au/diverters

Flow gauge on waterway

6. Water availability for rest of 2025/26

6.1 Wetter than average forecast for the remainder of 2025

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal climate outlook for the remainder of 2025 shows that for November to January, above average maximum and minimum temperatures are very likely (greater than 60%) for parts of Australia. In the same period, rainfall across most of eastern Australia is likely to be above average (60% to 80%). For most of Australia, daytime temperatures are likely to be above average for most of the country and overnight temperatures are very likely to be above average across most of the country.

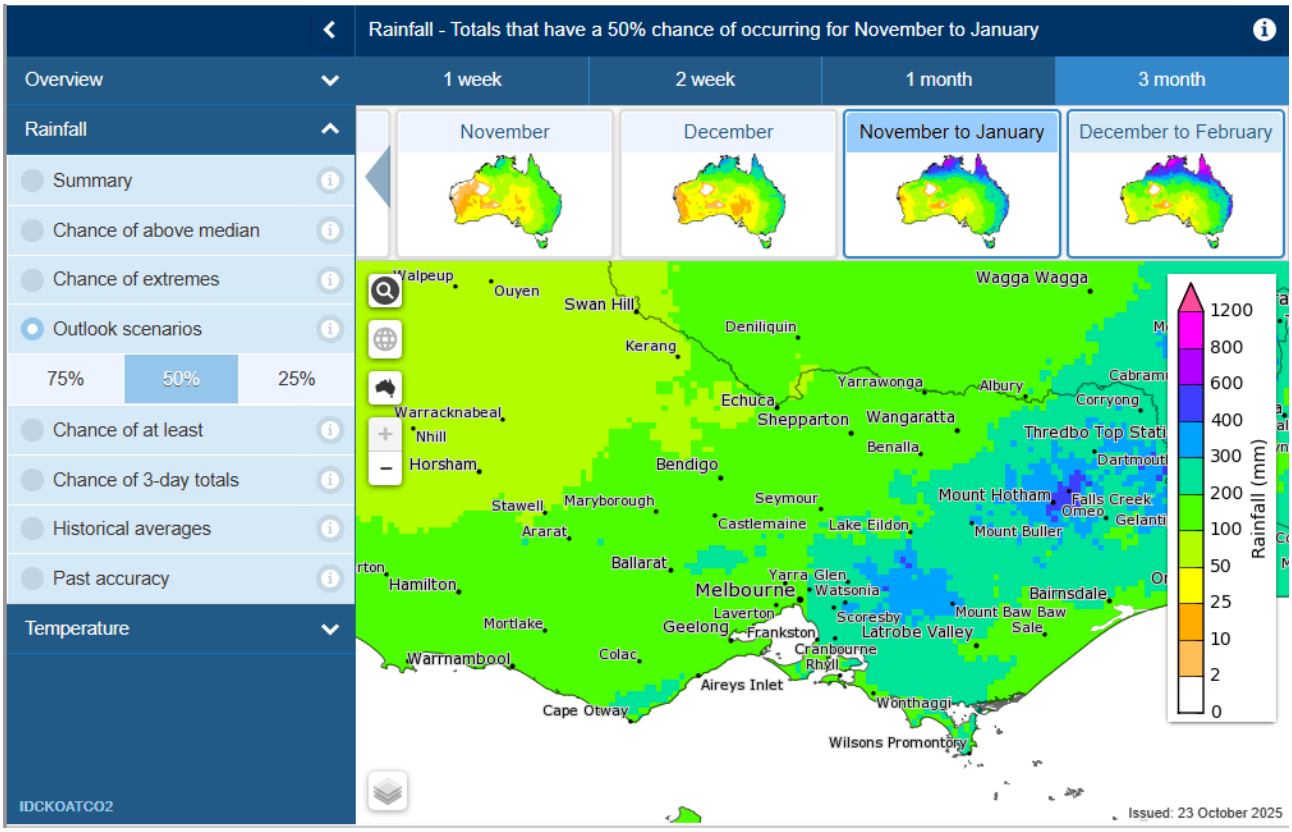
For more information on the Bureau's ENSO Outlook please see their website:
http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/outlook/

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 13 October 2025) for the period from November 2025 to January 2026 indicates rainfall is likely (60% to 80% chance) to be above average central and northern part of Victoria but has equal chances elsewhere in the state, including in Melbourne Water's area. November has strong signal forecast with rainfall likely to be above average for most of the country, see Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Australian Bureau of Meteorology three month totals that have a 50% chance of occurring for November 2025 to January 2026, Victoria, Australia (Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).



6.1.2. Temperature outlook

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology outlook for temperature (issued on 23 October 2025) for the period from November 2025 to January 2026 indicates that:

- Above average maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to very likely (60% to greater than 80%) across most of Australia.
- There is an increased chance of unusually high maximum temperatures for in parts of Victoria
- There is an increased chance of unusually high minimum temperatures across south-eastern Australia

The chance of above median maximum and minimum temperature for November 2025 to January 2026 for Australia and Victoria is shown in Figure 5 and 6, respectively.

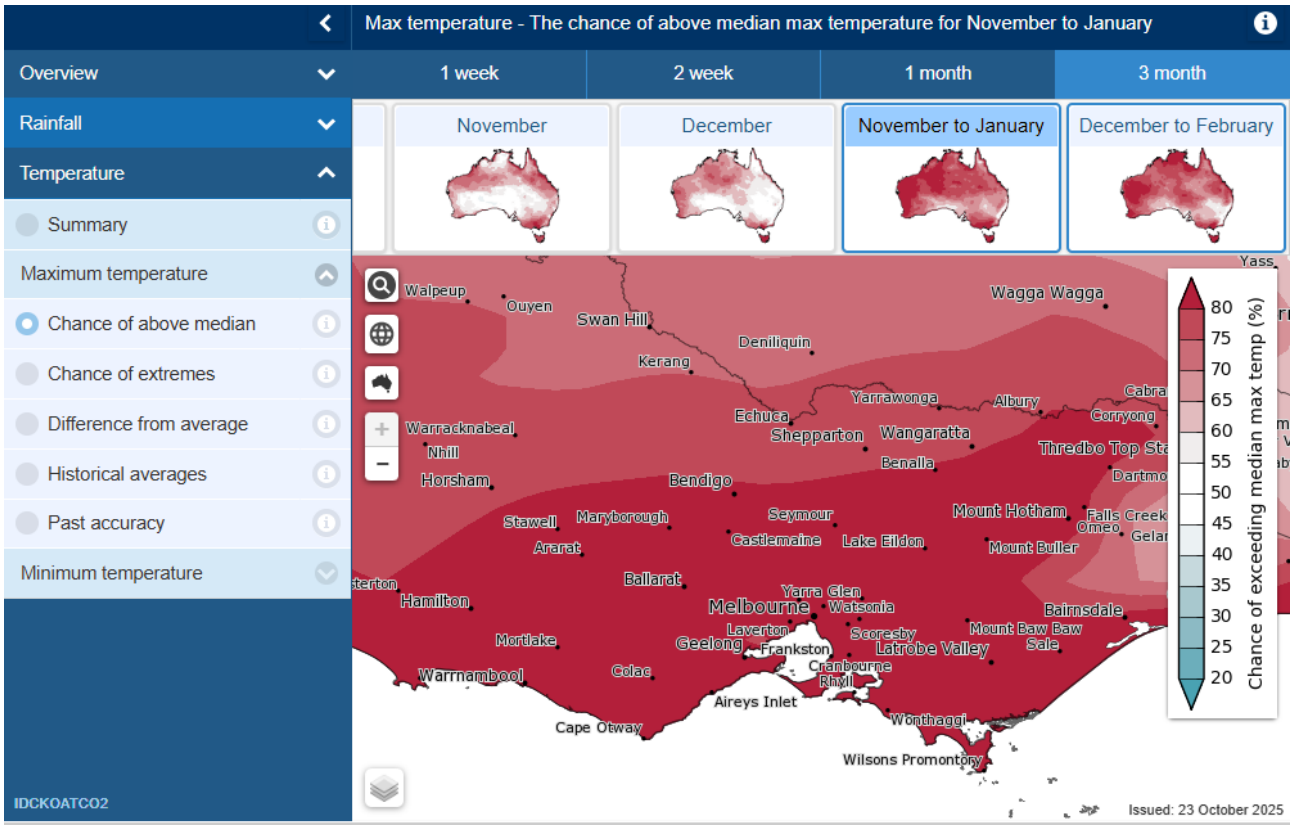


Figure 5: Australian Bureau of Meteorology three month (November 2025– January 2026) chance of exceeding median maximum temperature (%) outlook for Australia (Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).

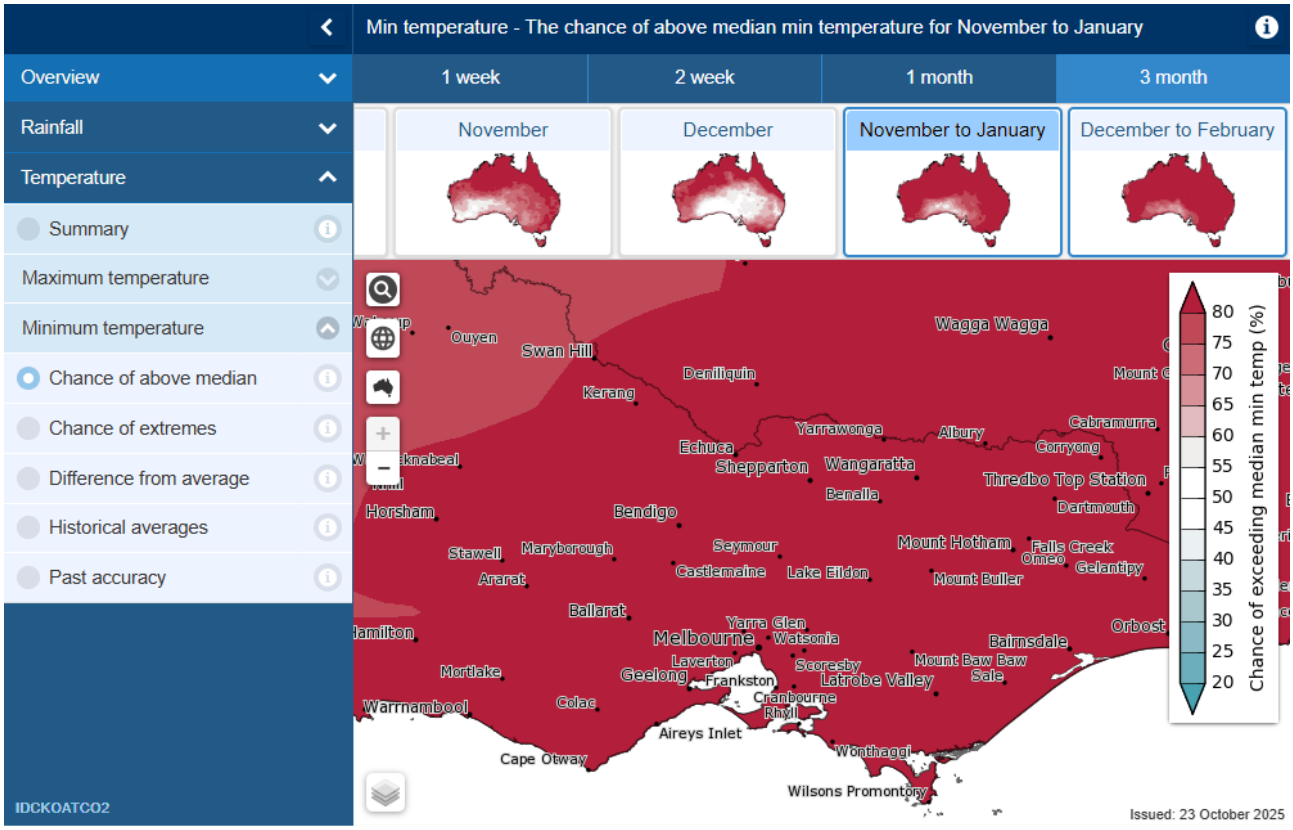


Figure 6: Australian Bureau of Meteorology three month (November 2025 – January 2026) chance of exceeding median maximum temperature (%) outlook for Victoria, Australia (Source: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks).

6.2 Seasonal Streamflow Forecasts October to December 2024

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:

- High flow and near median flow is likely at most locations along the east coast
- Flows were high at 44% of sites in September, mainly in the east
- Flows were near median at 26% of sites in September
- Flows were low at 30% of sites in September mainly in the south east
- The long range forecast for October to December issued 2nd October 2025, shows an increased change of above average rainfall for the eastern half of Australia. Warmer then average days are likely for most of Australia with warmer than average nights very likely.

Within Melbourne Water's Yarra River basin, for the period October and December 2025, models show a reduction in inflows compared to historical reference. 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).

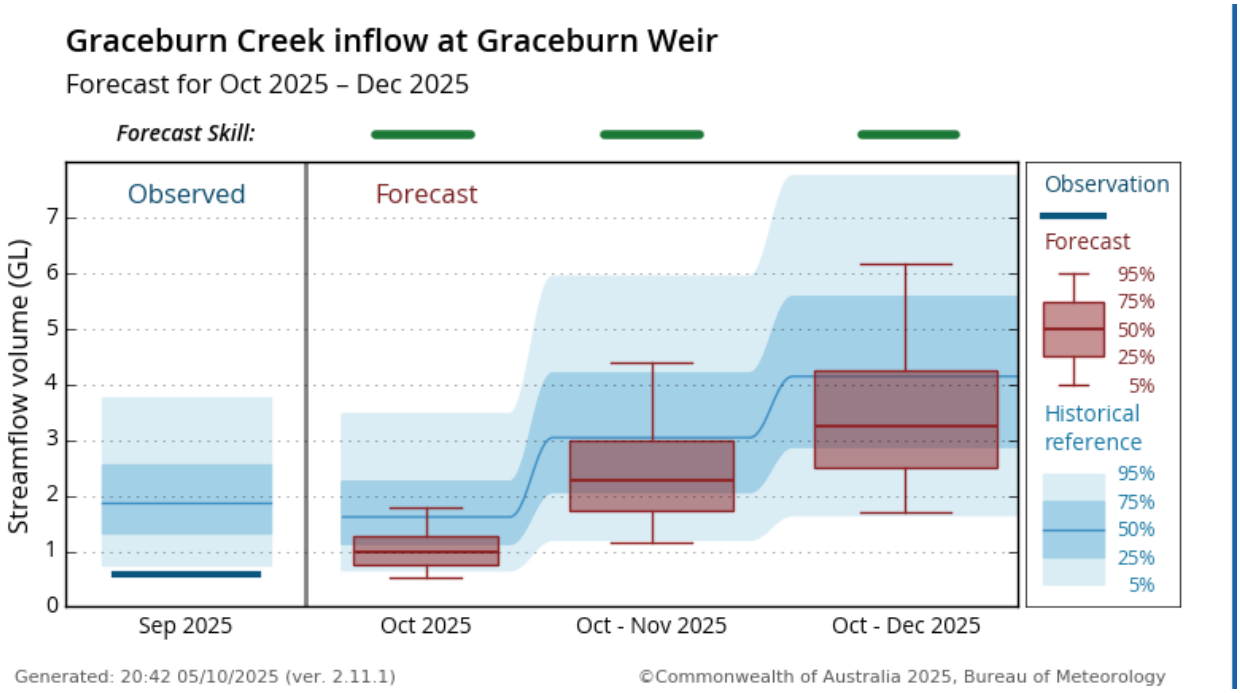


Figure 7: Australian Bureau of Meteorology 1-month (October 2025), 2-month (Oct-Nov 2025) and 3-month (Oct-Dec 2025) streamflow (GL) exceedance probability (%) outlook for Graceburn Creek at Graceburn Weir, Victoria, Australia. (Source: http://www.bom.gov.au/water/ssf/?ref=ftr#id=GRACEBURN_TOT).

7.Forward outlook for 2025/26 summer season

Coming in to the dry period 2025/26 Melbourne Water's operating area has been experiencing a year of below average rainfall for most months and high temperatures. This has caused a rapid drying of the general catchment, meaning that farm dam levels are lower then expected for this time of year and there is an increase in extraction from waterways earlier then normal. The long range forecast predicts above average rainfall combined with higher temperatures. If these predicted conditions develop into summer, there may be less reliance on extraction from waterways for farming use but only significantly above average rainfall would offset the currently very dry catchment conditions leading to increased runoff into storages.

Once warmer temperatures begin in mid-late summer, this 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 and/or restrictions. 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 Spring and likely to extend until at least early-Autumn. This may continue in autumn if warmer and drier conditions occur as predicted.

In 2024, Victoria had its driest winter since 2006. Autumn and Winter 2025 were well below average in terms of rainfall. 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 Autumn break, traditionally at the end of April.

Access to water in unregulated systems in 2025/26 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.

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 https://www.water.vic.gov.au/water-and-climate

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*. This includes managing Environmental Water in the Yarra, Tarago/Bunyip, Werribee and Maribyrnong rivers and wetlands.

We do this because climate change and human activities 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 the needs of waterway environmental values to

maintain a healthy river. It also provides a range of shared benefits including recreational, cultural and economic benefits.

A change to operations under the *dry* scenario (*Seasonal Watering Plan 2024-25*) was formally adopted for summer/autumn 2024/25 to align with the protracted dry and warmer than average conditions experienced.

Adoption of the *dry* scenario resulted in changed deliverables compared to operations under the previous *average* scenario. Protracted dry and warm conditions also meant a reduced contribution of unregulated flows toward achievement of watering targets, compared to the preceding 3 wetter years. In the Yarra system, a lack of inflows into Maroondah and low storage levels in Sugarloaf reservoir limited delivery options across the network.

Environmental water was used to deliver 31 environmental watering actions using 15 gigalitres of environmental water as shown in Table 3.

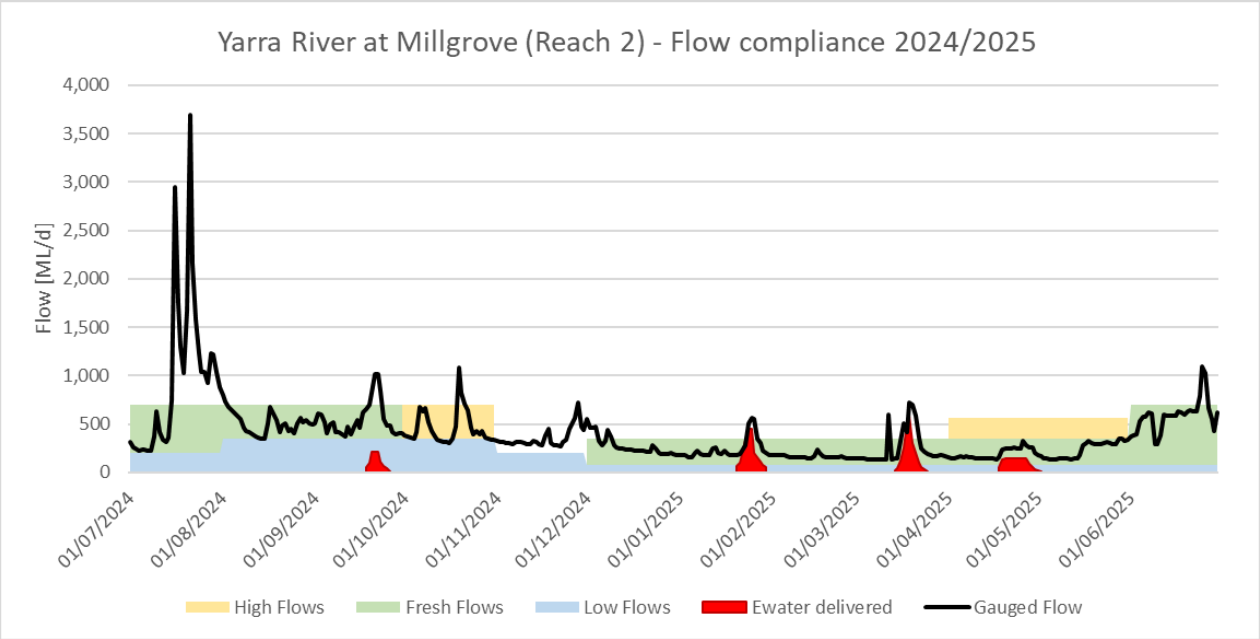
See the Victorian Environmental Water Holder website[12] for more information on the terminology used to describe the types of flows in environmental watering.

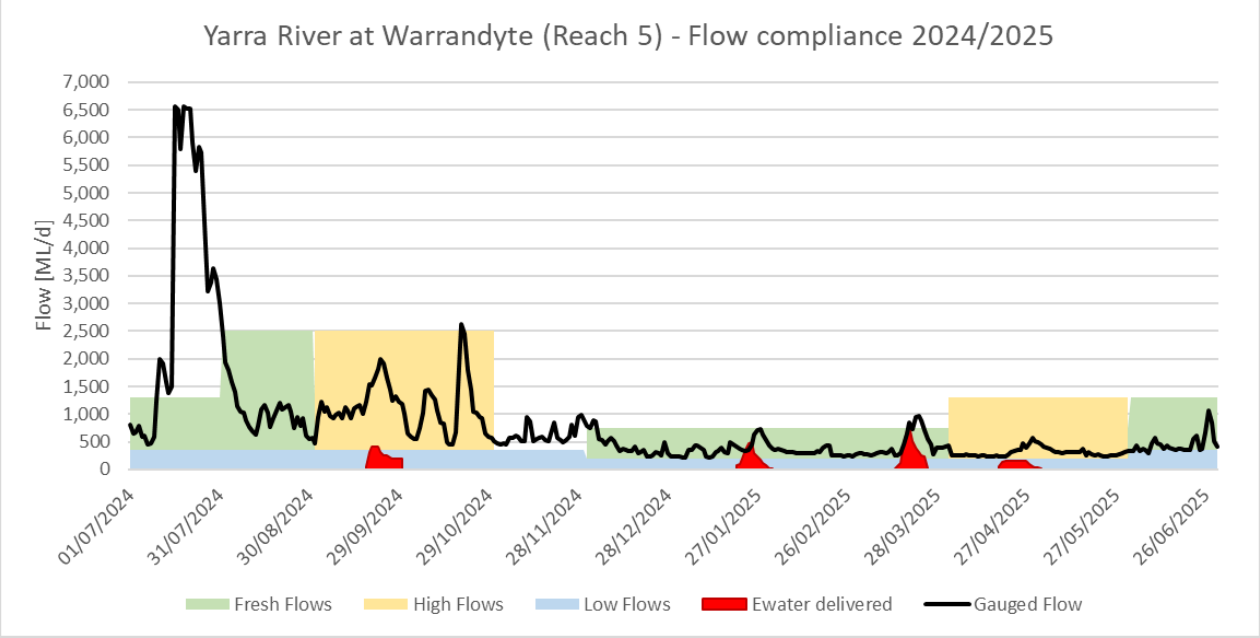
Table 3: Environmental water delivered for 2024-25

River	Volume delivered (ML)	Outcomes
Yarra *(Birrarung)*	11,602ML	Water for the environment was actively delivered to achieve one winter/spring fresh and two summer/autumn freshes. Two periods of low flow supplementation were also delivered during summer/autumn to support reach 6. This was necessary to support the health of the reach in light of declining water quality and the need to mitigate flow stress impacts on aquatic fauna. Low flow achievement would have been significantly lower in the absence of these deliveries. The environmental water release for the winter/spring fresh and summer/autumn freshes aimed to improve aquatic habitat and channel form, maintain bank vegetation and provide opportunities for fish movement. Water for the environment was delivered to Yering Backswamp July – November to support wetland vegetation and provide habitat for frogs and birds. Catchment rainfall and unregulated flows helped to achieve some watering actions, including one winter/spring fresh.
Tarago and Bunyip	2062ML	Water for the environment was actively delivered to achieve three summer/autumn freshes, and one autumn high. These releases helped to enhance habitats, maintain vegetation communities and facilitate movement and spawning of various fish species, including the endangered Australian Grayling. 2 periods of low flow supplementation were delivered during summer/autumn. This was necessary to support the health of reach 2 in light of declining water quality and the need to mitigate flow stress impacts on aquatic fauna (Australian Grayling). Low

		flow achievement would have been significantly lower in the absence of these deliveries. Catchment rainfall and unregulated flows helped to achieve some watering actions, including two winter/spring freshes and three spring high events.
Werribee *(Wirribi Yaluk)*	618.3ML EE 485ML Shares Total released: 1103.3ML	Water for the environment was actively delivered to Pyrites Creek (Reach 6) to achieve a spring continuous low flow, four spring/summer freshes and one spring high flow event. These flows maintain channel form, habitat and vegetation, and allow for fish movement between pools. In the lower Werribee River, below Melton Reservoir (Reach 8 and 9) and into the estuary, water for the environment was actively delivered to achieve four summer/autumn freshes. Delivery of these freshes improves habitat, maintains vegetation, mitigates blue-green algal bloom, and supports fish and frog populations. The lower Werribee also benefited from enhanced releases through Southern Rural Water's bulk entitlement – 10 megalitres per day from Werribee Diversion Weir (January to June 2025). Catchment rainfall and unregulated flows helped to achieve some watering actions, including one summer/autumn fresh for the lower Werribee, and some limited achievement of low flow targets.
Maribyrnong *(Mirrangbamurn)*	305ML	In 2024-25, 305 megalitres of environmental water was secured by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder through temporary trade of unused irrigation allocations. Water for the environment was actively delivered from Rosslynne reservoir to Jacksons Creek (Reach 6 and 7) to achieve five summer/autumn freshes and summer/autumn low flows targeting improved water quality and connectivity between in-stream habitats. Available water volumes and operational constraints limiting the maximum release from the reservoir meant full achievement of all targets (other than summer/autumn freshes) was not possible. Catchment rainfall and unregulated flows helped to achieve some watering actions, including two summer/autumn freshes for Reach 7 and partial achievement of summer/autumn low flow targets.

As storage operator and delivery partner, Melbourne Water delivered 18,503 megalitres from Thomson Reservoir to the Thomson River as water for the environment in 2024-25. This was achieved in partnership with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and on behalf of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder.

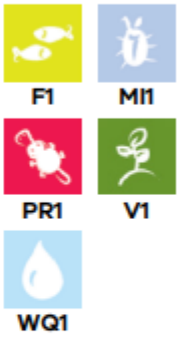
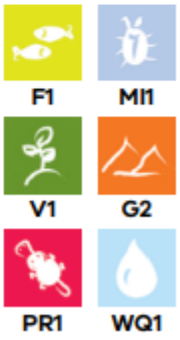




Yarra River at Millgrove and Warrandyte environmental flow compliance 2024/25

In 2025-26, Melbourne Water will monitor the catchment conditions in line with the Seasonal Watering Plan and manage the system to a 'dry scenario.

Potential environmental watering actions, expected watering effects and associated environmental objectives for the Yarra system (VEWH, 2025):

Potential environmental watering action	Expected watering effects	Environmental objectives
Yarra River – reaches 2, 5 and 6		
Winter/spring low flow (June to November) reach 2: 80-350 ML/day; reach 5: 350-750 ML/day	• Physically mix pools to minimise the risk of stratification and low oxygen • Maintain access to habitats for fish, waterbugs and platypus • Wet bank vegetation to promote growth	
Winter/spring freshes (two freshes for three to seven days during June to September) reach 2: 700 ML/day; reach 5: 1,300-2,500 ML/day	• 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) and spawning of Macquarie perch • Entrain organic material to support carbon cycling	
Spring high flow (one high flow for 14 days during September to October) reach 2: 700 ML/day; reach 5: 2,500 ML/day	• 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) • Improve spawning opportunities of Macquarie perch • Entrain organic material to support carbon cycling	
Summer/autumn low flow (December to May) reach 2: 80 ML/day; reach 5: 200 ML/day; reach 6: 300-450 ML/day	• Physically mix pools to minimise the risk of stratification and low oxygen • Maintain riffle and pool habitats for fish, waterbugs and platypus	
Summer/autumn freshes (three freshes for two days during December to May) reach 2: 350 ML/day; reach 5: 750 ML/day	• 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 waterbugs • Provide opportunities for the localised movement of fish and platypus • Wet the banks of the river to maintain flood-tolerant vegetation on the banks	

Potential environmental watering action	Expected watering effects	Environmental objectives
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	• Cue the migration of Australian grayling • Scour sediment and biofilm from gravel in riffles and pools to maintain habitat quality for fish and waterbugs	F1, G2
Yarra billabongs		
Bolin Bolin Billabong (fill in spring)	• Fill the wetland to the full supply level to engage the inlet/outlet channel to the Yarra River as an exit strategy for eels • Allow to draw down over summer and autumn 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	A1, F1, MI1, V2
Yering Backswamp (fill in autumn/winter/spring)	• Wet the deepest parts of the wetland to about 80 cm to provide habitat for frogs • 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	A2, V2

Environmental objectives in the Yarra system

A1 – Maintain the frog population, particularly on the mid-Yarra River floodplain

CN1 – Provide sufficient rates of carbon and nutrient production and processing to support native fish and waterbug communities

F1 – Protect and increase the native fish population, including threatened species (such as the Australian grayling, Macquarie perch and river blackfish)

G1 – Maintain the form of the river channel

G2 – Scour silt from riffles and clean cobbles

M1 – Maintain the diversity and increase the abundance of waterbugs to support aquatic food webs

PR1 – Maintain the resident platypus population

V1 – Maintain native streamside and aquatic vegetation on the riverbank and in the channels

V2 – Increase the growth of threatened wetland plant species to rehabilitate shallow marsh, deep marsh and freshwater meadows on the floodplain and billabongs

WQ1 – Improve water quality in river pools, ensuring adequate oxygen concentration in the water to support fish, crustaceans and waterbugs

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 2024/25, Melbourne Water will continue to implement the Steels, Pauls and Dixons Creeks, Woori Yallock Creek, Olinda Creek and the Little Yarra & Don Rivers SFMPs. 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.

There are no reviews planned for 2025/26, however the Stringybark Creek and Hoddles Creek SFMP's are due for review in 2026/27.

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

The Melbourne Water Diversions Team can be contacted on 131 722 or emailing diversions@melbournewater.com.au