

## Agribusiness Yarra Valley

Department of  
Sustainability and  
Environment

# Advances in surface water policy in Victoria

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Our Water  
Our Future 

## General principles in advancing unregulated surface water management

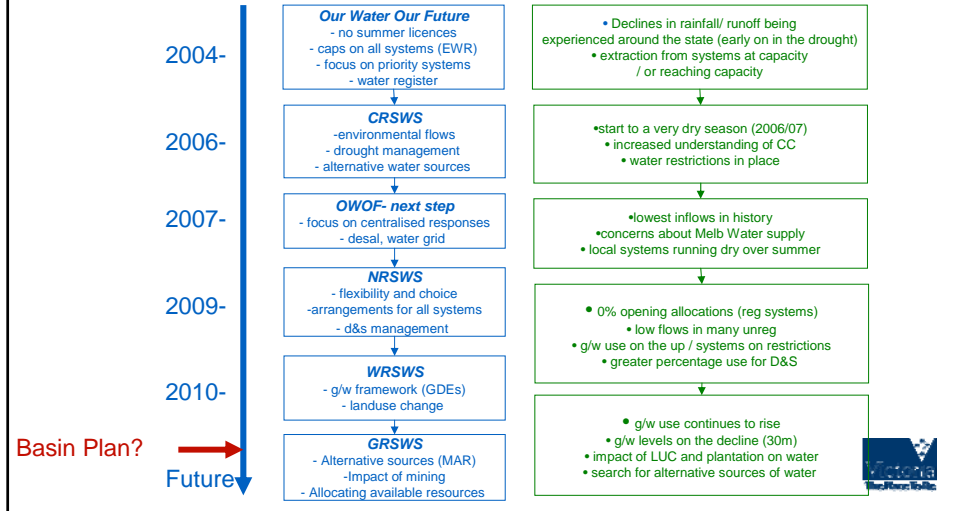
1. Recognise existing rights to water- licensing, bulk entitlements and private rights
2. Respond to changing resource availability
  - > Decreasing supplies
  - > Changes in use and demand
3. Recognise the need to tailor response to local conditions
  - > No two unregulated rivers are the same
4. Maximise the opportunity for individuals to make business decisions



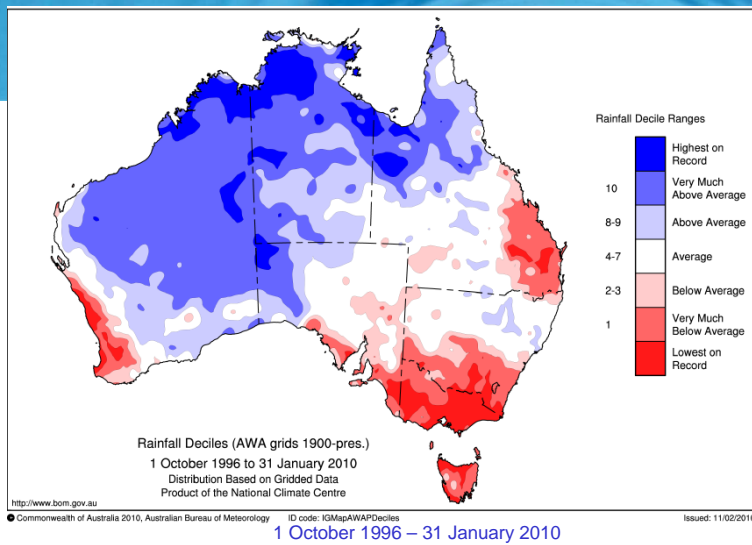
# Advancing licence management

## Policy Focus

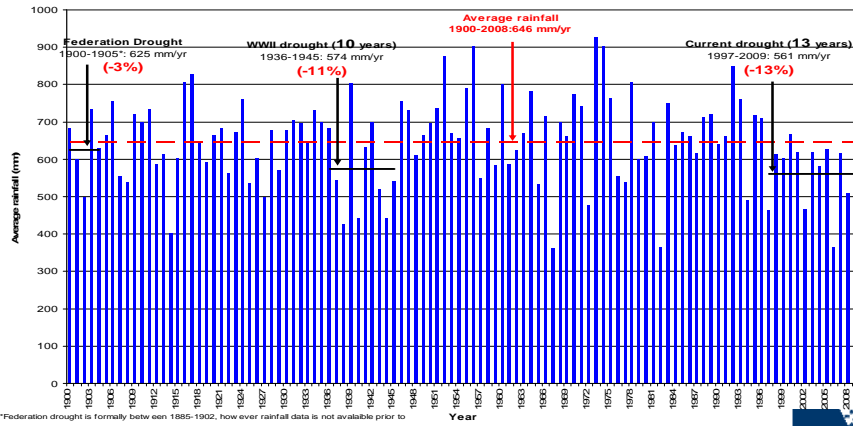
## Resource conditions/trends



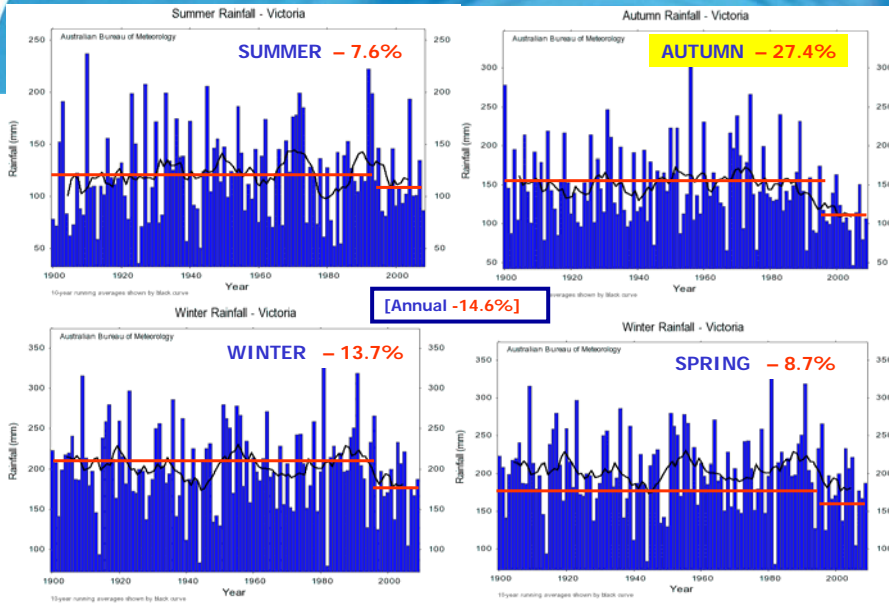
## 13 Year Totals lowest on record for ~2/3 of Victoria

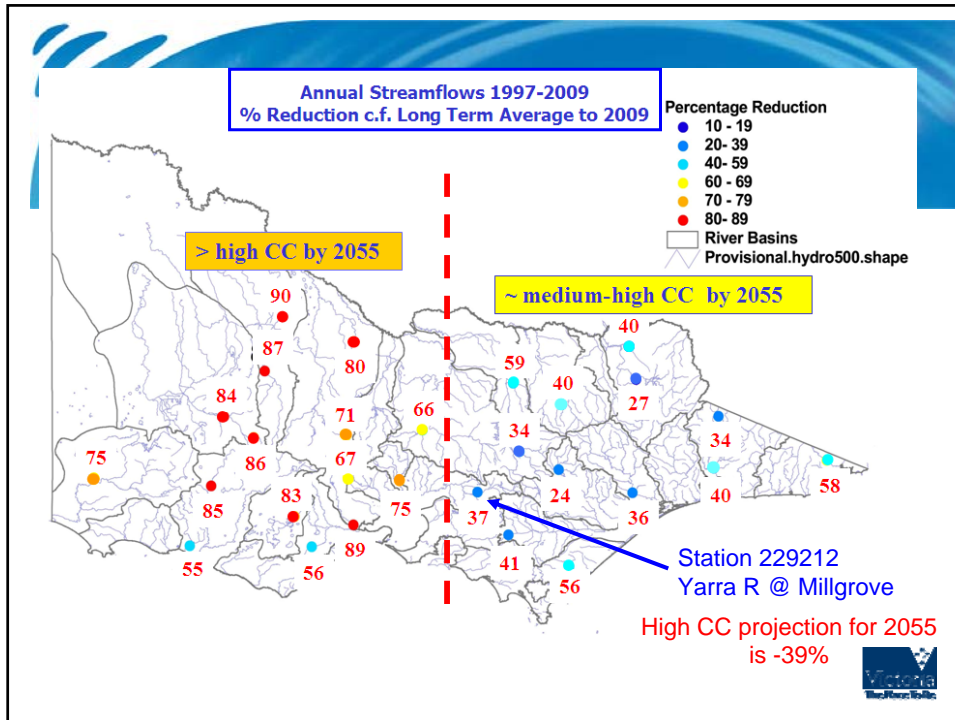


## Victorian Annual Rainfall 1900-2009



## Seasonal Rainfalls for Victoria 1997-2009 cf 1900-1996





## Current resource condition

Lessons from the past 13 years of low inflows:

Are we in climate change?

- If so, we are tracking against high CC expected at 2055 NOW

Is it a drought?

- Longer, larger and more intense than any in history
- Seasonal variability needs to be managed
- Need to plan for more into the future

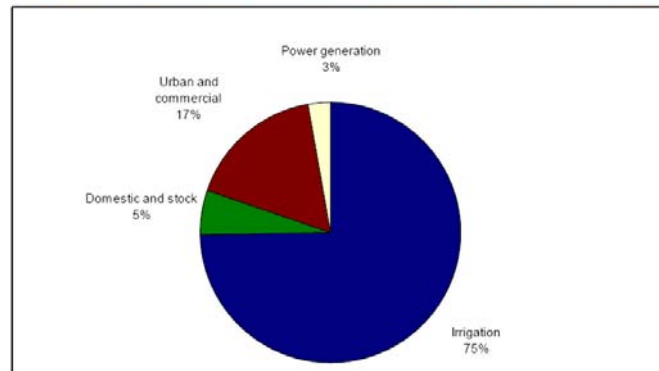
*We need to plan for a range of future climates and water availability scenarios*



## Domestic and stock management

Growing concern regarding the impact on growth in domestic and stock water use on the resource

Figure 3-1 Total surface water diversions for consumptive purposes in Victoria, 2007/0



## Domestic and stock management

### Localised impacts

Figure 4.2 Domestic and stock dams in the Mt Ida sub-catchments, Campaspe Basin (aerial photograph)

a) As a rural setting in 1982



b) As a peri-urban subdivision in 2008



Source: Coordinated Imagery Program, Department of Sustainability and Environment



## Domestic and stock management

The challenge is to manage the risk of domestic and stock use when required, without imposing significant costs or preventing regional growth

The Victorian Government has announced new statewide policy that improves the management of domestic and stock water use through:

1. requiring the registration with the local rural water corporation of all new or altered domestic and stock dams within rural residential areas
2. promoting sustainable use in accordance with 'guidelines for reasonable domestic and stock use'
3. committing to further review Victoria's approach to domestic and stock management after the release of the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan in late 2010.

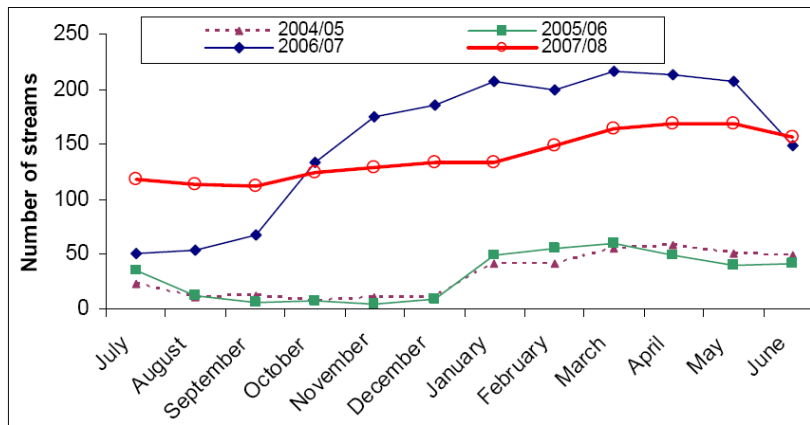


## Surface water management

- Recognition of existing rights-
  - > Importance of caps- protecting reliability of users
  - > Sleeper licences
- Clearer sharing arrangements in droughts- LMRs and SFMPS
  - > Focus on providing certainty around bans and restrictions
  - > Need to manage these systems in real time (monitoring)
  - > This approach is already actively occurring within this region (2003/04)
- Use of the water markets to redistribute water
  - > Low demand for trade in unregulated rivers- driven by demand or the rules
  - > water register

## Unregulated rivers on restrictions

Figure 2-3 Number of Victorian unregulated streams on restrictions



## Surface water management

Certainty will mean that businesses can make appropriate decisions:

- work with industry experts to get more with less
- Business decisions to secure supplies
  - Off-stream dams
  - Option to access groundwater- but must consider capacity of the resource and interaction with surface water systems.





## Future work programs- your views

- Should we be looking at options to expand the water market?
- As a business group are you looking into options to access alternative source of water?
- How would you like to see domestic and stock managed into the future?
- Is landuse change an issue you are worried about?

