

RE: Proposed Constraints on Goulburn Valley IVT

As I write this an environmental flow is heading down the Goulburn from Goulburn weir. From April 24, 6000ML a day will raise the river height to 4.1m at Shepparton, reducing to 1000ML per day, 2.7m high, by May 12. This flow is well below the major flood level of 9.5m at Shepparton.

This flow is to provide moisture to vegetation along the riverbank so it will survive the winter that will stabilise the bank during high flow periods in summer.

As a working river there is a responsibility to balance the environment needs with human needs. Option 1 is the ideal situation that science indicates is best for the environment. Option 2 supplies higher flows that would be appreciated by those downstream while the Darling/Baaka flow is unreliable.

An approach that begins with Option 2 and reduces to Option 1 over say 5 years could be a way to balance the two, keep flows for downstream users up and giving time to sort out regular flows from Darling/Baaka to compensate for reduced volume of flow from Murray

The delay in meeting the submission deadline allowed time to see the outcome of a NSW debate on floodplain harvesting on May 6th. This discussion is likely to continue as powerful farming interests push for access to this seemingly free floodwater to fill their new holding dams. It was of concern to those in lower catchment who want to see the floodwaters providing enough water to fill the Menindee Lakes, put water into the Great Darling Anabranch and send flows to the Murray. If NSW and Qld do not want to allow water to maintain flows down the Darling Baaka River then Victoria has to make it clear it will not be providing the full allocation of water for the lower catchment.

Making it clear now that Victoria will not be providing high flows of water to meet urgent water needs after 5 years will hopefully encourage the smarter decision makers in NSW and Qld to plan water flows better and give those interests in lower catchment time to prepare their case to influence those decision makers. We don't want a scenario where current irrigation regions in lower basin region suddenly go dry because those in upper catchment areas claim the water first. Victoria will supply a flow of water, let's see the other states do the same.

The climate trend that this region is becoming drier is becoming clearer with each passing year. Over the past 20 years the area around the Murray Goulburn has

become drier in the cooler months with only 3 years experiencing above average rainfall in that time. Less water falling as rain, flowing into rivers, into dams, into water table translates to less water for farmers. The volumes of environmental water has to be maintained, climate change is not the fault of nature, it is human needs that must adapt as it is humans creating the new world we are facing.

Dropping to the lower flow volume will also fit in with the lower volumes of water available to be shared with farmers throughout the catchment.

Also

Work with Environment flow cycles and environmental flow science.

If there is an environment flow due that matches with a water transfer flow then the transfer flow will play the role of the environmental flow allowing the environmental water to be saved for another time or purpose.

Likewise if a transfer flow of a lower rate is needed but a higher flow would be of value to the environment, then some environment water can be added to the transfer flow. This would have the effect of helping the environment and providing a larger volume for users downstream.

Thanks for your time,

Kevin L'Huillier

