

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police

Minister for Water



Wednesday, 1 December 2021

POSITIVE SHORT TERM WATER OUTLOOK FOR VICTORIA

Following good rains across parts of the State, Victoria's storages are at the highest levels they have been in nine years.

Melbourne's storages are also healthy at ninety per cent – supported by water from the desalination plant, which has contributed to more than twenty per cent of the water supply.

The state-wide storage levels are at 88 per cent, with the wetter-than-average outlook meaning no water restrictions are expected for any Victorian city or town over the next 12 months.

The desalination plant provides water security for Melbourne, Barwon and South Gippsland. Without it Melbourne's water demand would outstrip supply by 70 billion litres per year.

Murray and Goulburn storages are at 95 per cent and 88 per cent. In each of these systems irrigators have received 100 per cent allocations for their high-reliability water shares with limited or no restrictions expected for licence holders. Goulburn-Murray Water is now building reserves for seasonal determinations in 2022-23.

Conditions in Gippsland have improved for the second consecutive season after several years of drought. However, after another year of significantly below average rainfall, the Mallee will need sustained rainfall for local farms and communities to fully recover.

There are strong storage levels in most catchments with South Gippsland at 97 per cent up from 95 per cent in 2019, Geelong storages are at 97 per cent compared to 70 per cent in 2019 and Bendigo is at 100 per cent compared to 78 per cent in 2019.

Severe weather events can cause water storages to fall quickly, and storms and bushfires can potentially affect water quality – demonstrating the need for a flexible and resilient water system.

The Andrews Labor Government has launched the draft Gippsland and Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy, which seeks the community's views on options to meet increasing demand in a drying climate. Victorians can have their say at engage.vic.gov.au/central-and-gippsland-region-sustainable-water-strategy.

To see the full Victorian Water Outlook visit: water.vic.gov.au/water-reporting/outlook

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"As Melbourne continues to grow so too does the need for water and this means planning for future demand to help protect our precious drinking water supplies."

"Thanks to the desalination plant our water storages are currently healthy, but we know we have to do more into the future – including saving water and providing extra supply through recycling water and using stormwater."

"The Andrews Labor Government is maximising available water with record investment in stormwater and water recycling projects and new innovative technology to improve water efficiency."