

## Upcoming Operational Changes to the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages

From 1 July 2026, the start of the 2026-27 water year, Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) will be changing how the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages are operated. The following Frequently Asked Question (FAQs) provide more information about the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages and the upcoming changes.

### What are the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages?

The Victorian Mid-Murray Storages are a key water storage system in the north-west of Victoria which GMW operates and manages. The storages made up of various waterways and waterbodies, all of which play a vital role in managing water in Victoria. The four lakes which make up the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages are Lake Boga, Kangaroo Lake, Lake Charm and Ghow Swamp.

For more information about the lakes of the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages, please visit: [gmwater.com.au/water-operations/storages/murray](https://gmwater.com.au/water-operations/storages/murray)



Kangaroo Lake

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### Why were the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages created?

The Victorian Mid-Murray Storages were created in 2010, after the closure of Lake Mokoan, to manage extra water flows from Victorian Rivers. They help Victoria meet its commitment to managing the flow of water for the Murray River and supporting a reliable water supply for entitlement holders.

Water from the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages supports a wide range of essential uses, both in North-west Victoria and across the state. It helps:

- Farmers and food producers grow crops and raise livestock.
- Towns and businesses get the water they need to operate.
- Other water authorities, including urban water authorities, manage their own supplies.
- Environmental efforts, like improving water quality in rivers and wetlands.
- Support all types of water entitlement holders, ensuring fair and reliable access.

### What else are the lakes of the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages used for?

In addition to the primary purpose of the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages as a water management system, the lakes are used by local communities for various other purposes and are highly valued for many reasons, including because:

- They provide a habitat for native plants and animals.
- They are places of cultural significance for Traditional Owners and First Peoples.
- They are places where people connect, relax, and enjoy nature.
- They offer recreational opportunities like boating, fishing, and water sports.
- They attract tourists and visitors to the region, supporting local businesses and economies.

### What is changing?

From July 1 2026, GMW will be changing how the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages are operated. Going forward, we will be changing how and when we store and release water from Lake Boga, Kangaroo Lake and Lake Charm. Noting, the operation of Ghow Swamp is being reviewed as part of a separate process.

As a result of these changes, there will likely be impacts on the water levels and salinity concentrations (salt levels) of the four lakes. At times, these changing water levels are likely to impact recreational activities at the lakes.

The operational changes are especially likely to impact the recreational use of Lake Boga. This is because the water levels in the lake might be lowered or might fluctuate more often. Fluctuations in water levels might occur periodically, but are more likely during the summer months, due to increased irrigation and downstream demands for water.

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Lake Boga

### When will the changes occur?

The changes are likely to occur from 1 July 2026.

### Why are the changes necessary?

The Victorian Mid-Murray Storages play a role in reducing the risk of water delivery shortfalls by helping to store and release water more flexibly. However, this will require operational changes to how the lakes of the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages are managed.

In recent years, GMW has been able to keep water levels within the lakes of the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages at levels suitable for recreational use. This has been possible due to several factors, including favourable weather conditions. More recently, several external factors have increased pressures on the Murray River and the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages.

These pressures include:

- Spikes in demand for water, especially during hot and dry periods.
- Population growth and changes in where and how water is used.
- Climate change, leading to more frequent and severe periods of dry conditions.
- Shifts in customer needs and land use, such as more permanent crops that require year-round water.

Because of these pressures, the **Murray-Darling Basin Authority** has identified an **increasing risk of future water delivery shortfalls**.

A water delivery shortfall is when actual water usage is higher than what was expected or planned for, especially during heatwaves or peak irrigation periods. If a shortfall occurs, it could lead to:

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- Delays or limits in the delivery of water to communities, agricultural industries, or other users.
- Rationing of available water, based on delivery entitlements.
- Economic impacts on the agriculture sector and local communities.
- Increased environmental stress on rivers, wetlands, and wildlife.

### What is GMW's commitment to you and to those in our communities?

GMW is committed to upholding the recreational usage of the lakes in the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages as much as possible, noting that we must also manage the lakes within the limitations of our operating requirements. This is because we need to make sure that we maintain a reliable and secure source of water for our water entitlement holders.

GMW recognises how important the lakes of the Victorian Mid-Murray Storages and their surrounds are as places of community recreation. We also understand how important the lakes are for supporting local tourism and for general community wellbeing.

We are committed to:

- Maintaining recreational usage of the lakes as much as possible.
- Balancing community needs with the need to deliver water to entitlement holders.
- Keeping you informed before changes happen and as they occur.
- Listening to your concerns and working with you to manage the impact.

We will work with you to keep you informed before the changes occur and as they come into effect, and we will provide you with regular updates about what to expect. We also want to understand how we can best support you with navigating these changes, including any concerns or suggestions you might have.

### How can I contact the project team?

For further information, to ask a question, or share your feedback, please contact the project team by calling 1800 013 357. Alternatively, please visit [yoursay.gmwater.com.au/vmms](https://yoursay.gmwater.com.au/vmms)