

Ovens River Basin

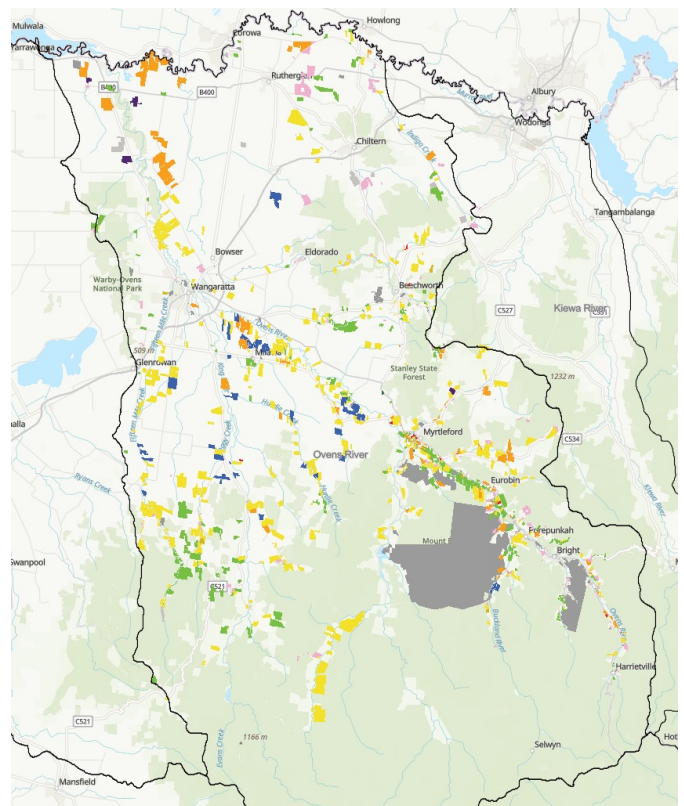
Unregulated and Groundwater Diversions 2023/24

The Ovens River basin runs from the steep forested mountains of the Victorian Alps, through valleys and open plans to join the Murray River near Lake Mulwala, covering 772,386 ha. The main tributaries are the King, Ovens and Buffalo Rivers. There are small two storages, Lake Buffalo (24 gigalitres (GL)) and Lake William Hovell (14 GL) at the top of the catchment. The catchment is largely unregulated except for these two dams that are used to supplement flows for irrigation in summer and urban water supply. Lake William Hovell also generates 1.6 MW of hydro-electricity when water is being released.

Throughout the catchment, there are landowners that divert water from the unregulated sections of the rivers and streams and from the groundwater system.

As part of the Land and water use mapping project, assessment of these unregulated water users was undertaken to determine the amount of water used, what industry the water was used in and the number of Take and Use Licences within the catchment. Future data collection will provide an opportunity to then analyse changes in these criteria and inform future decision making across the basin for both land use and water use as well as industry types. The industry types are consistent with the Regulated Diversion project and the GMID project.

FIGURE 1: OVENS RIVER BASIN



INDUSTRY TYPES:

- 
Cropping
- 
Dairy (Combined)
- 
Energy
- 
Glasshouse Plant / Vegetable
- 
Horses
- 
Horticulture Annual
- 
Horticulture Perennial
- 
Intensive Animals
- 
Livestock Non Dairy
- 
Rural Lifestyle/ Residential
- 
Other
- 
Not Irrigated

Ovens River Basin Results 2023/24

The results of the inaugural data collection provides an excellent basis to build on into the future.

For the Ovens River basin, there were 1,201 Take and Use Licences covering almost 99,000 ha, where just over 13.4 GL of water was used. Further details are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF AREA, WATER USE AND TAKE AND USE LICENCES

OVENS RIVER BASIN LAND USE	AREA (ha)	WATER USAGE (ML)	TAKE AND USE LICENCES
Cropping	7,133	3,466	101
Dairy (Combined)	3,828	1,298	40
Energy	—	—	—
Glasshouse Plant/Vegetable Production	30	19	3
Horses	220	13	8
Horticulture – Annual	158	155	17
Horticulture – Perennial	12,912	4,016	232
Intensive Animals	409	7	4
Livestock – Non Dairy	22,398	2,676	362
Rural Lifestyle/Residential	3,910	757	328
Other	46,762	988	94
Not irrigated	935	54	12
TOTAL	98,696	13,448	1,201

Please note: Licence area represents the parcels of land/title to which the licenced is attached and not the irrigation footprint.

Area (ha)

The total area with a Take and Use Licence for the Unregulated diversions and Groundwater users in the Ovens River basin was 98,696 ha, with Other and Livestock – Non Dairy representing the largest areas at 46,762 ha and 22,398 ha respectively which represents 70% of the Take and Use Licence area. Included in the “other” category are the Mt Buffalo National Park covering almost 30,500 ha and a large gold mine holding of 2,700 ha.

The total licence area represents the parcels of land/ title to which the licenced is attached and not the irrigation footprint.

Water Use (ML)

The total water use for the Unregulated diversions and groundwater users in the Ovens River basin was 13.4 GL, with Horticulture – Perennial and Cropping enterprises using most of the water at almost 7.5 GL, representing 56% of the total water used.

Take and Use Licences

The total number of Take and Use Licences for the Unregulated diversions and Groundwater users was 1,201. Livestock – Non Dairy and Rural Lifestyle/Residential enterprises held the highest number of licences at 362 and 328 respectively, representing 57% of Take and Use Licence holders.