



## Murrumbidgee Valley

The Murrumbidgee Valley, in southern NSW, stretches from Cooma in the east to Balranald in the west, north to Temora and south to Henty. The Murrumbidgee catchment is highly diverse, with the Alpine areas of Kosciuszko National Park and the Monaro plains, the grazing and grain belts of the south west slopes and plains and the shrublands and grasslands of the semi-arid western Riverina.

Agriculture in the valley is as diverse as the landscape. Irrigation is concentrated, but not isolated to the areas of Murrumbidgee and Coleambally Irrigation Corporations. The Murrumbidgee is the major rice growing valley in Australia and is renowned for its horticultural produce and wines. Irrigated agriculture covers just 4% of the area of the catchment but contributes 41.2% of the total production. Across the valley, agriculture is the second largest employer after retail, providing jobs for nearly 12% of the working population.

### The Murrumbidgee at a glance



*Major Streams:* Tumut River, Yass River, Tarcutta Creek, Adelong Creek, Murrumbidgee and Goobarragandra River

*Major Aquifers:* Lower Murrumbidgee

- Catchment Size = 84,000 sq km
- River length = 1600km
- Catchment Population = 520 000 (including Canberra)
- Major Towns = Canberra, Wagga, Cooma, Tumut, Narrandera, Leeton, Griffith, Coleambally, Hay, Balranald, Junee.
- Major Dams:
  - Burrinjuck (near Yass)
  - Blowering (near Tumut)
- Average annual natural flows (post Snowy) = 4,400,000ML<sup>1</sup>
- Average annual yearly diversion = 2,200,000ML (about 50%)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources

### Productivity of the Murrumbidgee Catchment (2000)

Irrigated agriculture in the Murrumbidgee produces<sup>1</sup>:

- 25% of NSW total fruit and vegetables
- 90% of NSW potatoes
- 80% of NSW carrots
- 42% of NSW grapes
- 50% of Australia's rice

The total value of irrigated production in the Catchment is in the order of<sup>1</sup>:

- \$200 million for rice
- \$150 million for fruit
- \$80 million for grapes
- \$60 million for vegetables
- \$10 million for dairy

The "farm-gate" value of irrigated production in the Catchment is in the order of<sup>2</sup>:

- \$98 million for rice
- \$190 million for horticultural and other crops
- \$20 million for livestock products

<sup>1</sup> Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Board

<sup>2</sup> Murrumbidgee Regulated River Draft Water Sharing Plan, 2002.

### Where can I get more info?

- Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area Map [www.MurrumbidgeeIrrigationAreaMap](http://www.MurrumbidgeeIrrigationAreaMap)
- Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources [www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au)
- Ricegrowers' Association of Australia [www.rga.org.au](http://www.rga.org.au)
- MIA Council of Horticultural Associations [www.murrumbidgeehort.org.au/](http://www.murrumbidgeehort.org.au/)
- Coleambally Irrigation [www.colyirr.com.au](http://www.colyirr.com.au)
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation Limited [www.mirrigation.com.au](http://www.mirrigation.com.au)