

15 February 2018

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

Allocations

There is **no increase** in NSW Murray regulated river general security allocation at this time.

The Murray system has experienced a hot and relatively dry January, resulting in lower than average inflows. The small improvement in water availability has been offset by an interim hydrographic update (water meter readings) indicating lower water usage than forecast thus increasing expected commitments.

It should be noted that some inflows into Hume Dam have been released from the Snowy Scheme as River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF), part of the Snowy Water Initiative to return environmental flows to the Snowy and Murray Rivers.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	97%	49%	44%
Lower Darling	100%	100%	

Upper Murray storage levels (as at 14 February 2018)

- Dartmouth Dam is 89 per cent full – steady – holding 3,432,000 megalitres (ML).
- Hume Dam is 57 per cent full – falling – holding 1,735,000 megalitres (ML).

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook was issued on 25 January 2018 and is due for update on 15 February. It indicates that at least median rainfall conditions are likely in the valley over the three months February to April. Daytime temperatures are forecast to be cooler than average for much of the region and overnight temperatures are expected to be near average.

The weak La Niña in the Pacific Ocean continues to decline, with most models forecasting La Niña will end early in the southern hemisphere autumn. Typically, the strength of a La Niña event reflects the strength of its impact upon Australian climate. The current event is weak, and hence climate patterns have been significantly different from those observed in the last strong La Niña of 2010–12. Large parts of eastern Australia have been drier than average for the past two or three months, the opposite of what is typically expected during La Niña.

Trade

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah choke remains restricted to '**no net trade downstream**'. Downstream trade opens to the extent of the volume of any upstream trade.

The trade restriction helps to protect existing downstream entitlement holders from an increased risk of delivery shortfall caused by the limited physical capacity of the Barmah choke.

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www.water.nsw.gov.au

Water users are encouraged to monitor the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) website at - www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/water-markets-trade/interstate-water-trade/barmah-choke-trade-balance - for information about the trade balance and status of trade.

The Menindee Lakes system is below 480 GL, the threshold at which the Lower Darling becomes administratively separated from the Murray. Temporary trade with the Murray is therefore closed. Trade typically remains closed until the system recovers to above 640GL. Trade within the Lower Darling water source remains unaffected.

Trade **out** and **within** the Murrumbidgee Valley is open, but trade **into** the Murrumbidgee Valley is closed. Water users are encouraged to monitor the WaterNSW website at - www.watarnsw.com.au/customer-service/trading/murrumbidgee - for information about the Murrumbidgee inter-valley trade (IVT) account balance and status of trade.

Next announcements

At this time of the water year, past the peak irrigation season and before the main inflow season, Water Allocation Statements will be issued on a monthly basis, with the next statement to be issued on **Thursday 15 March 2018**.

The mid-March Statement will contain preliminary water availability outlook information for 2018-19 and will be updated each month until mid-May as the new water year (1 July 2018) approaches.

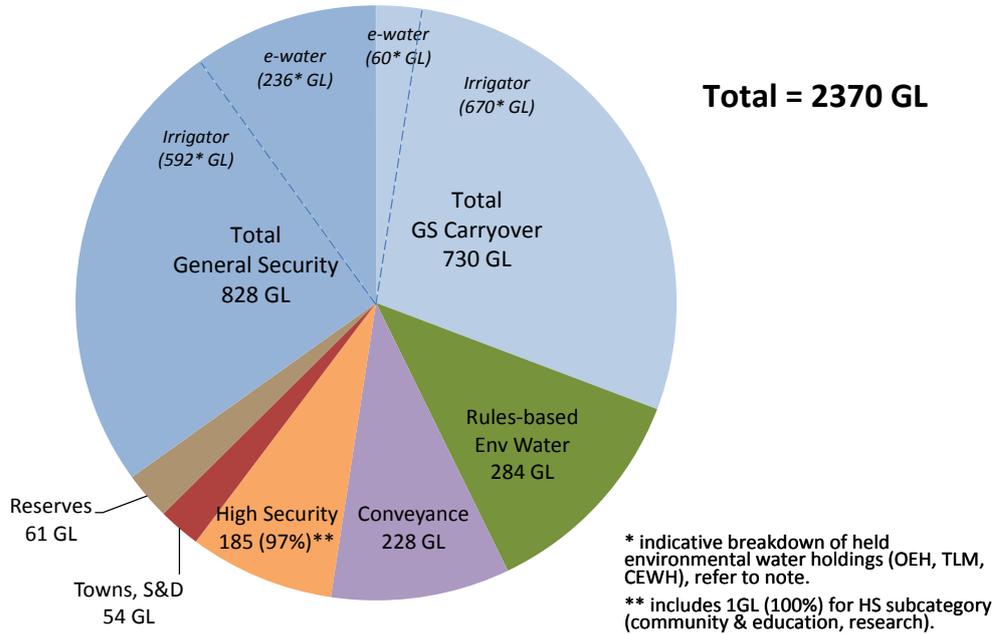
If there are any substantial weather systems or water availability changes significantly between scheduled announcements, then interim assessments and statements will be provided.

NSW Murray Resource Assessment Data Sheet

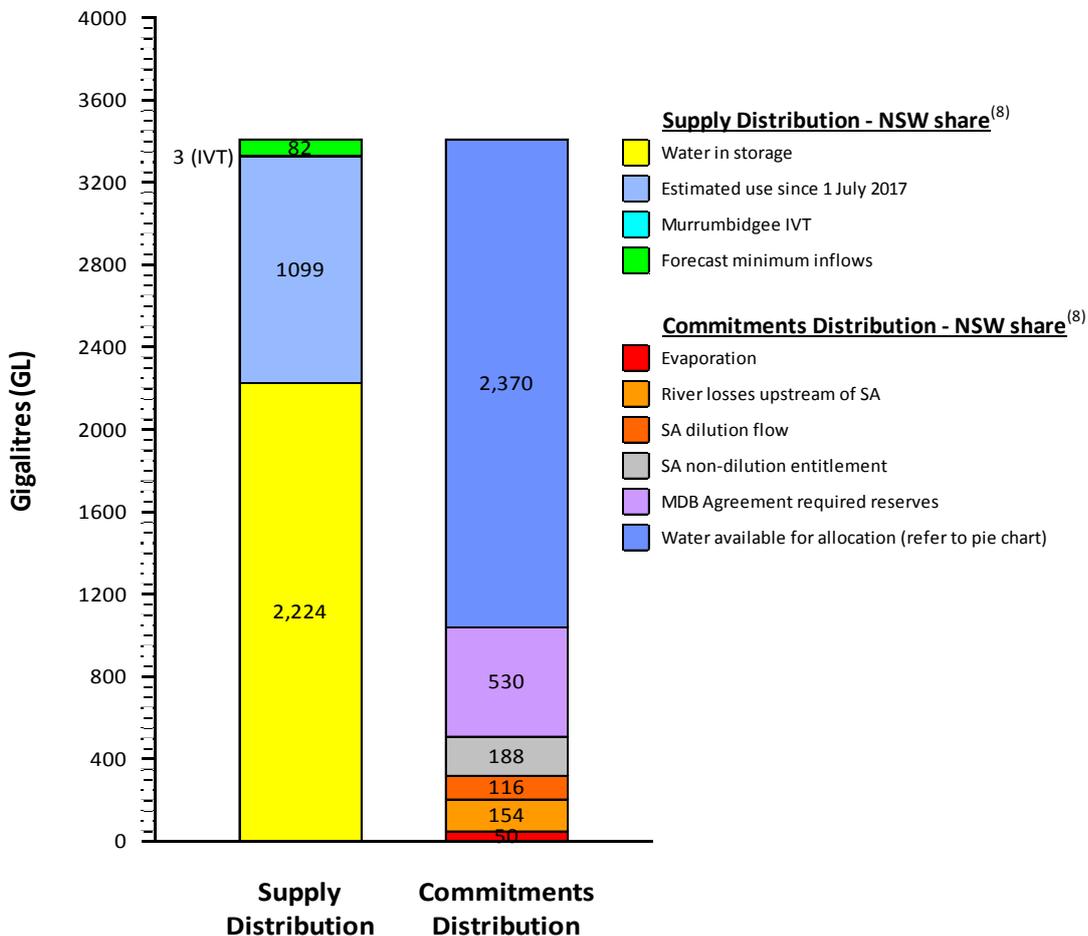
Resource Distribution (15 February) for 2017-18	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	2,370
less	
Carryover ^{(2), (7)}	730
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	284
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	54 (100%)
Announced High Security subcategory (education, research) ⁽⁴⁾	1 (100%)
Announced High Security ⁽⁴⁾	184 (97%)
Conveyance ⁽⁵⁾	228
Reserves ⁽⁶⁾	61
Announced General Security ⁽⁷⁾	828 (49%)

*See notes below.

Resource Distribution 2017-18 NSW Murray - 15 Feb 2018



NSW Murray Water Balance – 15 Feb 2018



Notes:

- (1) Total available resource - NSW's state share of active storage volume (Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee and Lake Victoria) as assessed and accounted for under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement at the time of the assessment plus any usable flows in transit plus assumed drought inflows for the rest of the year plus Snowy Hydro's assured Required Annual Release (RAR), as well as estimated usage to date. NSW is in Special Accounting with South Australia (SA) but this currently has no material impact on NSW allocations. Special accounting is triggered when NSW is forecast unable to meet the required reserve of 1,250 GL by the end of the water year to supply SA with its entitlement in the following water year. Details can be found in the MDB Agreement Clauses 123-129.

Note that the current trial providing a water balance diagram (distribution of supply and commitments in bar chart format) is currently provided on a mid-monthly basis, as the data is based on monthly modelling. These interim first-of-the-month assessments only incorporate observed changes in inflows and normally reflect little change. Therefore the water balance diagram values will next be updated and published in mid-February 2018.

- (2) Carryover – NSW Murray general security water users can carryover a maximum account balance of 50 per cent of their entitlement into the following water year. The account limit is 110 per cent of entitlement, which can consist of both allocation and carryover.
- (3) Primarily rules-based planned environmental water – water required to be set aside to provide for riverine environments, as per water sharing plan and other interjurisdictional agreements. In the NSW Murray this includes the Murray Additional Allowance (MAA) (about 6 GL), Wakool system requirements (up to 70 GL), and the Barmah-Millewa Allowance (B-MA) (188 GL). It also includes River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF) in Hume, accrued as part of the Snowy Water Initiative (currently about 20 GL). This commitment will decrease, and be reflected as such in the pie chart, as RMIF is released from Hume for use. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water also known as held environmental water (HEW).
- (4) The *Water Sharing Plan for the New South Wales Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2016* has subcategories of high security licenses in the Murray Water Source. High security subcategory licences under *Part 7 Division 2 Clause 46(2)* that are present in the Murray include community and education, research, and town water supply. At the commencement of each water year, these licences are to receive 100% allocation, while remaining high security licences are to receive 97% allocation. For the purposes of this water allocation statement, the high security town water supply allocation volume has been grouped as "Towns, S&D".
- (5) Conveyance entitlement – a category of access licence originally issued to Irrigation Corporations to facilitate delivery of water through their channel systems. Allocation to this category is prescribed in the water sharing plan and is a function of current high and general security allocation.
- (6) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans; set aside for emergency purposes and critical needs.
- (7) Held environmental water (HEW) – As a trial, reporting of held environmental water administered by environmental water holders is being reported here, with the associated portions of general security allocation and carryover also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting of held environmental water is limited to only NSW entitlements, reporting of credits to accounts (not usage or trade), and estimated to be 236 GL of GS, 24 GL of HS, 29 GL of conveyance allocation and 60 GL of GS carryover. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEHL), The Living Murray (TLM) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). For more details on environmental holdings please refer to individual Agency websites.
- (8) Supply Distribution and Remaining Commitments – as a trial, the distribution of supply and commitments is being provided on a monthly basis. The volumes in the categories shown are only those relating to NSW's share of the resource, at the time of the assessment. The categories include the following:

Water in storage: Volumes in the dams at the end of the previous month. (Excludes water in storage unavailable to NSW under the water sharing arrangements of the Murray Darling Basin Agreement).

Forecast inflows: NSW's share of forecast inflows into the River Murray System based on assumed extremely dry future conditions (includes Snowy Hydro's guaranteed inflows for the water year).

Estimated use since 1 July 2017: Estimated NSW usage to-date, reconciled periodically with hydrographic updates (meter readings).

Murrumbidgee IVT: Total Murrumbidgee system water bought by Murray system users that is yet to be delivered, as reported in the Murrumbidgee IVT account balance.

Evaporation: Water set aside for evaporation for the remainder of the year. This will reduce as the year progresses.

River losses upstream of SA: Water needed to account for losses from the River Murray upstream of the South Australian border for the remainder of the year. Generally reduces as the water year progresses.

SA non-dilution entitlement: Water to supply South Australia's entitlement flow, as required under the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Agreement. Reduces as water year progresses.

SA dilution flow: Water to provide South Australia's dilution component of flow, as required under the MDB Agreement. Reduces as the year progresses, unless Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) is required as per Agreement.

MDB Agreement required reserves: Includes conveyance reserve and minimum reserve to be set aside for use in the next water year, as required by the MDB Agreement in clause 102D and 103, respectively.

Water available for allocation: NSW's bulk share of the resource that can be assigned to NSW Murray entitlement holders based on the water sharing plan. This volume includes entitlement holder carryover. The allocation of this volume is provided in the above table and pie chart.