

1 April 2016

## NSW Murray and Lower Darling

### Water allocation update

#### Allocations

In the NSW Murray, there is **no increase** in general security allocation at this time. Only one significant rain event occurred across the Murray system in the assessment period and given the dry antecedent conditions, this has had little impact on inflows.

In the Lower Darling, **Domestic and Stock** access licences have **increased by 5 per cent to 80 per cent** of entitlement. **High Security** allocation has **increased by 5 per cent to 80 per cent** of entitlement to allow for watering of permanent plantings from remaining pools.

Without significant rainfall and inflows in coming months it will be difficult for general security allocations to accrue further this year, as the water sharing plan requires that high priority commitments (towns, stock, domestic, conveyance, high security and carryover) are first ensured for the new water year (1 July 2016).

For this reason, announcements for the final months of the current water year will be mid-month only, unless there is a major weather system that improves resource availability significantly.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	97%	23%	30%
Lower Darling	80%	0%	Restricted access

#### Upper Murray storage levels (as at 31 March 2016)

- Dartmouth Dam is currently 42 per cent full, holding 1,680,000 megalitres (ML)
- Hume Dam is 25 per cent full, holding 774,000 ML

#### Outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for April to June 2016 indicates average to below average rainfall in various parts of the Murray catchment in April, transitioning to greater chance of wetter conditions in May to June. Above average temperatures are also expected during the coming three months, particularly in April.

April is likely to be drier than average across northern Australia, suggesting a dry end to the northern wet season.

The current BoM outlook reflects a combination of a weakening El Niño, very warm Indian Ocean temperatures and warm sea surface temperatures around much of the Australian coast. Climate models indicate neutral conditions and La Niña are equally likely in the second half of 2016.

In the Lower Darling, flows from January rainfall in the northern Basin are now entering Lake Wetherell; however, despite 26,000 ML passing Bourke in February and March, less than 5,000 ML will reach Menindee, due mainly to the massive transmission losses associated with wetting

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hundreds of kilometres of dry Darling River channel. Despite the critical conditions in the Lower Darling, this inflow volume is too small to provide a viable release. It will be retained in storage in the hope that more can be added in future to make a difference in the Lower Darling.

The likelihood of future Menindee inflows has been examined and, based on modelled flows for the last 120 years of historical climate data, by 1 October 2016 there is a 90 per cent chance that inflows into Menindee Lakes will sum to (an additional) 55 gigalitres (GL), a 75 per cent chance of 110 GL, and a 50 per cent chance of 390 GL. Similarly, by 1 February 2017, there is a 90 per cent chance of 110 GL of inflow, 75 per cent chance of 190 GL, and 50 per cent chance of 585 GL.

## Trade

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah choke is restricted to 'no net trade downstream'; however, there is currently capacity for downstream trade (by virtue of upstream trades).

Trade is permitted within the Lower Darling water source, but inter-valley trade is closed due to the severe water shortage.

Murray water users can trade **into** the Murrumbidgee Valley. As at 31 March, trade **out** of the valley is also open, though nearing the account balance closure trigger. Water users are encouraged to monitor the WaterNSW website at [www.watersw.com.au/customer-service/trading/murrumbidgee](http://www.watersw.com.au/customer-service/trading/murrumbidgee) to keep informed of the Murrumbidgee IVT account balance and status of trade. Updated trade procedures have been in place since 9 February 2016, and are explained on the WaterNSW website.

## Next announcements

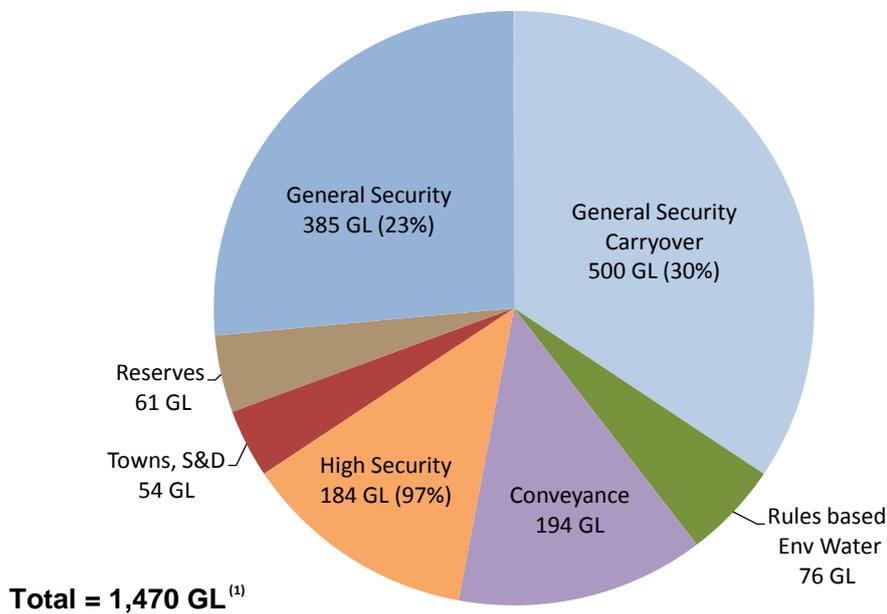
The next allocation update for the NSW Murray will be on Friday **15 April 2016**, and it will include an update of the water availability outlook for 2016-17.

## NSW Murray Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (as at 1 April) for 2015-16	
	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource	1,470 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>less</b>	
Carryover	500
Rules based Environmental Water <sup>(2)</sup>	76
Towns, Stock, Domestic	54 (100%)
Reserves <sup>(3)</sup>	61
Conveyance <sup>(4)</sup>	194
Announced High Security	184 (97%)
Announced General Security	385 (23%)

*\*See notes below.*

## Resource Distribution 2015-16 NSW Murray - 1 April 2016



### Notes:

- (1) Includes 16 GL of uncommitted water. This water will assist a potential shortfall in high priority commitments on 1 July 2016.
- (2) Primarily rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. In the NSW Murray this includes Additional Environmental Allowance (AEA) (6 GL), the Barmah Millewa Allowance (B-MA) (which is currently 100 per cent borrowed) and Wakool system requirements (70 GL). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water.
- (3) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans; used for emergency purposes and critical needs.
- (4) 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 plans and is a function of current high and general security allocation.