



15 April 2016

Murrumbidgee Valley

Water allocation update and outlook for 2016-17

Allocations

There is **no increase** in Murrumbidgee general security allocations at this time.

There was no significant rainfall in the assessment period and temperatures were warmer than average. Inflows to the storages continue to recede and catchments are drying.

Blowering storage levels have risen since the last assessment. Releases to Blowering Dam from the Snowy Scheme have now exceeded this year's Required Annual Release (RAR) meaning that Snowy Hydro Limited has begun to release next year's water early. As usual, this water will be held in storage and allocated on 1 July so as not to disrupt water availability in 2016-17.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murrumbidgee	95%	37%	23%

Storage levels (as at 14 April)

- Blowering Dam is 42 per cent full – rising - holding 690,000 megalitres (ML)
- Burrinjuck Dam is 35 per cent full - falling - holding 356,000 ML

Outlook

Climatic Outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for April to June indicates average to below average rainfall is likely across most of the region in April, transitioning to a greater chance of wetter conditions in May and June. Above average temperatures are also expected during the coming three months, particularly in April.

The current 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.

The approximately 50% chance of a La Niña developing in 2016 is about twice the normal likelihood. La Niña is often, but not always, associated with above-average winter-spring rainfall.

Trade

Water can currently be traded **into** the Murrumbidgee valley but trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee valley is closed. Trade within the valley remains open.

Water users are encouraged to monitor the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/customer-service/trading/Murrumbidgee to keep informed of the Murrumbidgee IVT account balance and status of trade.

Water users are reminded that season closing dates for inter-state and inter/intra-valley trade are approaching. Inter-state trade closes 30 April 2016, and inter/intra-valley trade in the region closes

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31 May 2016. Additional information on season closing dates can be viewed at <http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/trading>.

Next announcements

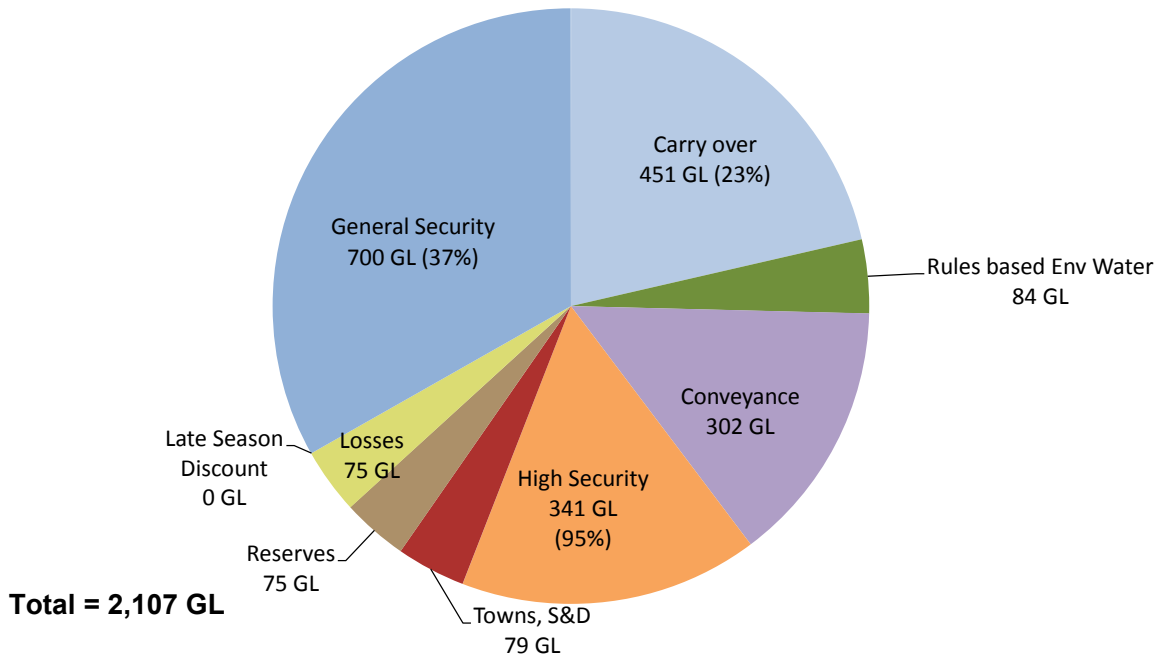
The next allocation update for the Murrumbidgee valley will be on Monday **16 May 2016**. It will provide the latest estimates of expected opening (1 July) allocations and the likelihood of water availability improvements into the new water year under different inflow scenarios.

Murrumbidgee Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (as at 15 April) for 2015-16	
	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	2,107
less	
Carryover (incl. Murrumbidgee IVT carryover)	451
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽²⁾	84
Towns, Stock, Domestic	79 (100%)
Reserves ⁽³⁾	75
Conveyance ⁽⁴⁾	302
Announced High Security	341 (95%)
Announced General Security	700 (37%)
Losses (transmission, evaporation, operational) ⁽⁵⁾	75
Late Season Discount ⁽⁶⁾	0

**See notes below.*

Resource Distribution 2015-16 Murrumbidgee Valley - 15 April 2016



Notes

- (1) Total available resource: total active storage volume (Blowering & Burrinjuck Dams) at the day of assessment plus any usable flows in transit plus drought inflows for rest of the year plus Snowy Hydro's assured Required Annual Release (RAR) plus usage to date. Snowy Hydro has now released into Blowering Dam more than the assured RAR for 2015-16. The pre-release (advance) of next year's RAR volume is reserved for allocation in 2016-17.
- (2) Rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. Includes end-of-system flow requirements and environmental water allowances (EWA1, EWA2 & EWA3). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water. This volume typically reduces as water is used during the year. The general security allocation plus carryover water from the previous year reached 60 per cent on 1 March 2016; in accordance with the water sharing plan, this led to the EWA1 being recently credited with 50 gigalitres (GL).
- (3) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans, and mainly used for emergency purposes and critical needs. Includes 25 GL for each storage as well as Murrumbidgee Provisional Storage Volumes (PSV1 & PSV2). The provisional storage volume (PSV1) has recently been credited with 25 GL in accordance with the water sharing plan.
- (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 high and general security allocations. (This category of licence in the Murrumbidgee valley, like general security, can carry over up to 30% of entitlement).
- (5) 'Losses' is the best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions to meet demands for the remainder of the year. This includes storage evaporation, transmission losses and operational loss. This estimate is regularly updated as the year unfolds.
- (6) Late season inflow is the estimated volume that will arrive into storage after the peak irrigation demand season (usually post-February). This Late Season Discount cannot be safely allocated at the start of the water year. It can consist of a proportion of the Required Annual Release from Snowy Hydro Limited (SHL) and/or the assumed drought inflow sequence for April, May and June. The full Late Season Discount volume for 2015-16 has been released.

Murrumbidgee resource availability outlook for 2016-17

15 April update

Indicative allocations on 1 July 2016

- Full allocation can be expected for all **towns**, and **domestic** and **stock** access licences.
- **High Security** access licences will receive an allocation of 95 per cent of entitlement.
- **Carry-over** water will be fully deliverable. While carry-over water is highly dependent on weather conditions over the next few months and individual decisions by water users, initial estimates indicate an average carry-over of 15-20 per cent is likely. Carry-over of 17 per cent is assumed in the table below.
- There will be no commencing **general security** allocation for 2016-17 under extreme dry inflow conditions, and probably four (4) per cent under very dry conditions.
- **Supplementary** access licence holders will receive a full allocation with extraction allowed only during periods of announced supplementary access.
- Sufficient water will be available for **conveyance** entitlements, commensurate with the expected opening allocations above.
- Murrumbidgee **IVT** account balance will carry forward from 30 June to 1 July and will be available for delivery in 2016-17.
- Forecast next year (2016-17) general security allocations have increased slightly since the mid-March prediction.

Chances of improvement

The chances of general security allocation improvements based on different inflow conditions for the remainder of this year and continuing for 2016-17 are as follows:

Forecast General Security allocation (per cent)[#]

Potential Inflow Conditions	1 July 2016	1 Sept 2016	1 Nov 2016
99 chances in 100 (extreme) (99%)	0	0	0
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	4	13	22
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%) [^]	7	23	38
1 chance in 2 (mean) (50%)	12	37	63
1 chance in 4 (wet) (25%)	26	60	100

[^] Tracking slightly drier than this level of inflow so far in 2015-16.

[#] Assumes an average carryover into 2016-17 of 17%.