

1 March 2019

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

Current water allocations in the NSW Murray and Lower Darling regulated river water sources **remain unchanged**.

The allocation statements at this time of the water year are typically provided mid-monthly, however; given the water shortage conditions, this abbreviated statement will be issued at the start of each month to confirm conditions and keep water users updated.

Limited rainfall in February, combined with very dry catchment conditions, has resulted in inflows continuing to track well below average. There has been just 5,000 megalitres (ML) of improvement in the NSW Murray system which has been set aside for future high priority needs. By similarly assigning improvements through the remainder of the water year, it is likely that high priority commitments, including general security carryover, can be met in 2019-20. However, the situation is being closely monitored.

The Menindee Lakes system remains critically low at 1.6 per cent full, holding just 28,210 ML. Remaining supplies are restricted to critical needs only. Operational updates on Lower Darling drought measures can be found in WaterNSW's state-wide weekly water availability reports at: <https://www.waternsw.com.au/supply/regional-nsw/availability>.

| 2018-19 | High Security | General Security | Average Carryover | Drought Stage |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|---|
| Murray | 97% | 0% | 31% |  Stage 1 |
| Lower Darling | 100% | 0% | 15% |  Stage 4 |

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the NSW Murray and Lower Darling valleys will be issued on **Friday 15 March 2019**.

The comprehensive mid-month statements will continue to provide indicative future (1 July 2019) water availability conditions under a range of potential inflows scenarios, to assist water users in their business decisions as the new water year approaches. However, forecast conditions are 'best estimates' only and do not guarantee water availability. They should be used with caution, particularly when projecting many months ahead.