

1 December 2020

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

There is a **1% increase to all general security water users in the NSW Murray regulated river water source**. This brings the total allocation to general security to 40% of entitlement for this water year. Allocations in the **Lower Darling remain unchanged**.

Rainfall in November has been below average, leading to a drying of the catchment and inflows receding to baseflow levels. Consequently, the NSW Murray resource has experienced only a minor improvement of about 25,000 megalitres (ML) since the last assessment. The improvement has been mostly allocated to general security entitlements, with a commensurate increase to Conveyance entitlements, in accordance with the water sharing plan.

As the 'exceptional circumstances' trigger under the Barmah Millewa EWA rules has been claimed by NSW, payback of the borrowed water will commence when announced general security allocation reaches 50% of entitlement. Exceptional circumstances cannot be claimed in successive years. Once the 321,000 ML borrow is fully repaid, further resource improvement can then accrue to general security entitlements.

The Menindee Lakes system is currently 23% full, holding around 400,000 ML. No flow is occurring upstream at this stage, meaning the system will likely draw down significantly through the heat of summer unless the northern wet season delivers new inflows. The Menindee resource becomes shared with other States when the system next holds more than 640,000 ML.

Further significant inflows are required into the Menindee system before the current 30% general security allocation for Lower Darling water users can be increased.

2020-21	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage
Murray	97%	40%	21%	 Stage 1
Lower Darling	100%	30%	48%	 Stage 2

Drought stage

The **NSW Murray** regulated river water source is in Stage 1 drought criticality, meaning normal river operations are able to deliver water orders. The **Lower Darling** regulated river water source remains in Stage 2 because, while there was some recovery, further inflow is needed.

Further information on critical valleys in drought can be found at:
www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought

Murray storage levels (as at 26 November 2020)*

- Dartmouth Dam is 62% full – steady – holding 2,375,000 ML.
- Hume Dam is 75% full – falling – holding 2,255,000 ML.
- Lake Victoria is 84% full – falling – holding 570,000 ML.

* The NSW share of this water is approximately 37%, 52% and 38% for these storages respectively, or 44% in total.

State sharing of the Murray resource

The bulk accounts assessment indicates that 5,760 gigalitres (GL) of total shared Murray resource is available in the extreme dry (99th percentile) case, of which about 1,640 GL is needed to run the system (incorporating South Australia's dilution entitlement and any shared resource which cannot be regulated). The NSW portion of the regulated shared resource is 1,9100 GL based on rules in the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. Following adjustments including South Australia's non-dilution entitlement, trade, tributary inflows and usage to date, the assessment results a volume of **Murray resource for NSW to allocate of 1,705 GL**.

The bulk resource assessed by MDBA includes supplementary and uncontrolled flow diversion in the NSW usage. Therefore, the 1,825 GL assessed share of Murray resource must be reduced by 120 GL to 1,705 GL to account for water used from unregulated water sources. Note: that the unregulated water usage does not adversely impact regulated allocations.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for December 2020 to February 2021 indicates likely wetter than average conditions across the catchment. Daytime temperatures are likely to be near or above the long-term average, while overnight they are very likely to be above long-term average.

The Bureau has declared La Niña conditions, with models indicating that La Niña conditions will likely persist through at least summer. Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is neutral, with most models indicating that the IOD will remain neutral over the coming months. The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) is neutral but is forecast to return to more positive values over the next week. La Niña conditions and positive SAM are supporting the likelihood of above average rainfall.

For further details: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

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 address the physical constraint at the choke and protect existing downstream entitlement holders from an increased risk of delivery shortfall. Water users are encouraged to monitor the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) website (www.mdba.gov.au) for information about the trade balance and status of trade across the Barmah choke.

Temporary trade between the Lower Darling and the Murray is closed and typically remains closed until the system recovers to hold more than 640 GL of water and the Menindee Lakes become part of the shared Murray system. Trade within the Lower Darling water source is allowed.

The normal operating range for the Murrumbidgee IVT account is between 0 GL and 100 GL. Trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee Valley is **closed** (as at 30 November 2020) with the IVT balance at its upper limit. Trade **into** the Murrumbidgee Valley is **open**. Water users should check the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.com.au) for daily information about the IVT account balance and the status of trade.

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement will be published on **Tuesday 15 December 2020**. It will be a comprehensive statement, including indicative improvements in general security allocations under various possible inflow scenarios.

With peak irrigation season setting in and watering commitments firming, the next statement will be the last for this water year that includes information on improvements to general security allocation.

From March 2021, the mid-monthly statements will start to focus on the potential water availability on 1 July 2021 to start the 2021-22 water year. It will be updated monthly. This should help water users with their end of year water management decisions.

No statement will be published on 1 January 2021, with fortnightly statements resuming on 15 January 2021. Nevertheless, conditions will be monitored closely over the holiday season and if heavy rainfall occurs, and water availability improves significantly, an interim allocation announcement will be provided.

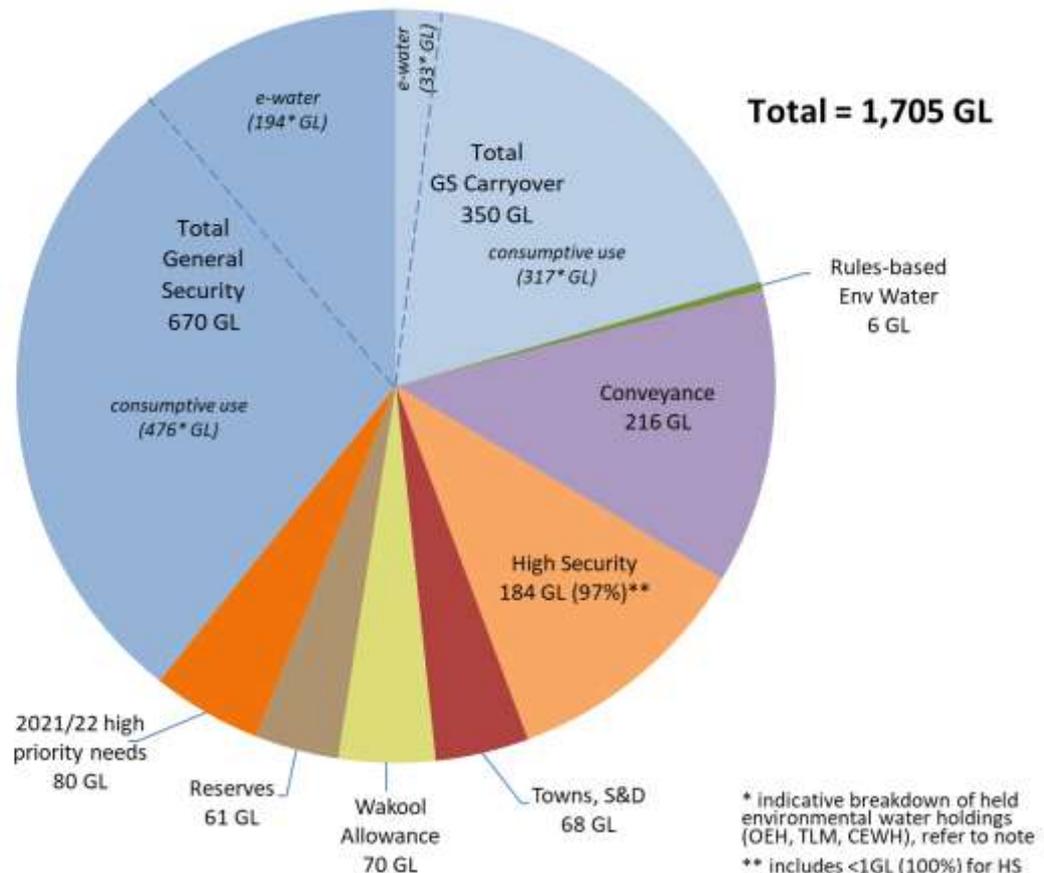
NSW Murray resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution* (1 December) for 2020-21	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	1,705 [#]
less	
Carryover ^{(2), (8)}	350
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	6
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	68 (100%)
Announced High Security subcategory ⁽⁴⁾	<1 (100%)
Announced High Security ⁽⁴⁾	184 (97%)
Conveyance ⁽⁵⁾	216 (66%)
Wakool Allowance ⁽⁶⁾	70
Reserves ⁽⁷⁾	61
Announced General Security ⁽⁸⁾	670 (40%)
Year 2 (2021-22) high priority needs ⁽⁹⁾	80

*See notes below

[#]Resource adjusted by supplementary and uncontrolled flow usage (refer above to State sharing of the Murray resource)

NSW Murray resource distribution 2020-21 – 1 December 2020



Data sheet 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 (99%ile) inflows for the rest of the year plus Snowy Hydro's assured Required Annual Release (RAR) (including any flex (pre-release) from the prior year), as well as estimated usage to date. Snowy Hydro's M1 releases to date for this water year (2020-21) is estimated to be about 690GL. NSW is in Special Accounting with South Australia (SA), details of which can be found in the MDB Agreement clauses 123-129. Special accounting is triggered when forecasts indicate that NSW is unable to meet the required reserve of 1,250GL by the end of the water year to supply SA with its entitlement in the following year.
- (2) Carryover – NSW Murray General Security water users can carryover a maximum account balance of 50% of their entitlement into the following water year. The account limit is 110% of entitlement, meaning that account credits from allocation and/or carryover cannot exceed 110% of entitlement in any water year. The limit does not include allocation trade.
- (3) Primarily rules-based planned environmental water (PEW) – water required to be set aside to provide for riverine environments, as per water sharing plan and other inter-jurisdictional agreements. In the NSW Murray this includes the Murray Additional Allowance (MAA) (about 6GL) and the Barmah-Millewa Allowance (B-MA) (about 321GL – currently 100% borrowed). It also includes River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF) in Hume, accrued as part of the Snowy Water Initiative (currently 0GL). The total commitments to B-MA and RMIF will decrease over the water year as they are released from Hume for use. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water, 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". Drought critical conveyance water allocated under Special Purpose Access Licences to small irrigation districts for running

- channels to supply high priority entitlements has been included in this category, totalling about 6GL.
- (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) Wakool Allowance – a conveyance volume necessary for NSW to operate the Edward-Wakool system. Typically up to 70 GL.
 - (7) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans, up to 61GL; set aside for critical human needs in accordance with Clause 11.03 of the Basin Plan.
 - (8) Held environmental water (HEW) – water administered by environmental water holders is 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 194 GL of GS, 25 GL of HS, 33 GL of conveyance allocation and 33 GL of GS carryover. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), The Living Murray (TLM) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on environmental holdings can be found on individual agency websites.
 - (9) 2021-2022 high priority needs on 1 July 2021 - volume set aside to cover high priority needs on 1 July 2021, for 'Year 2', including potential carryover.

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