

18 May 2022

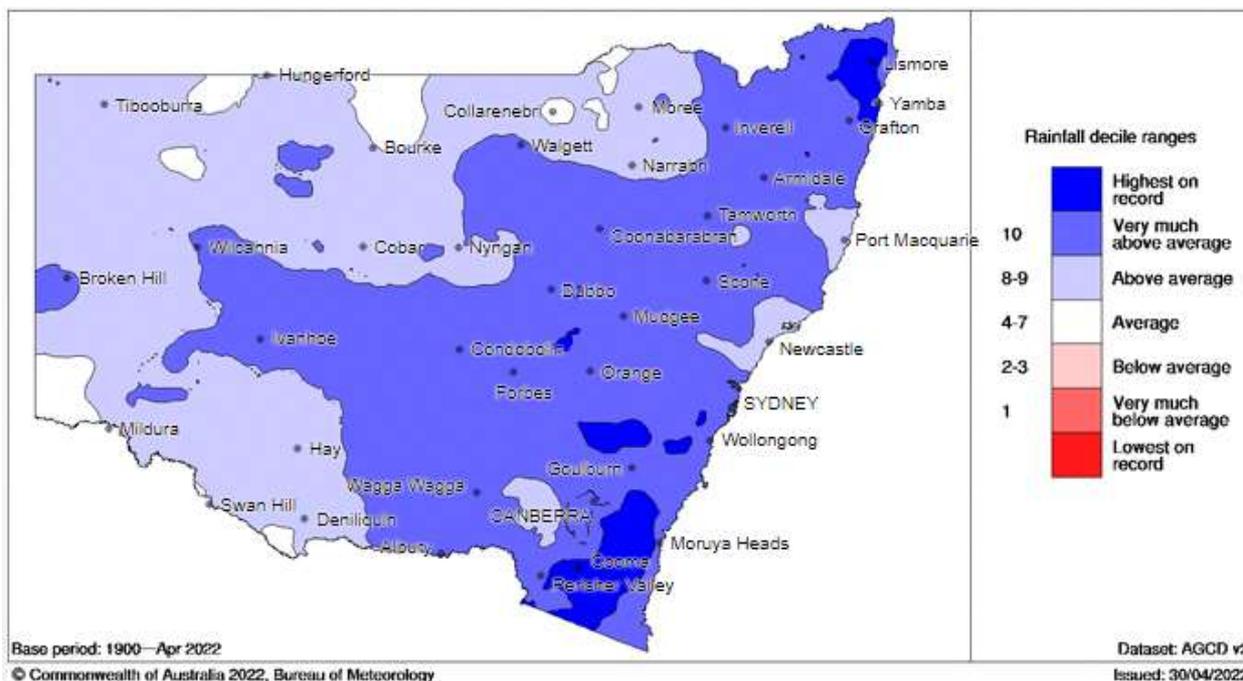
NSW Groundwater Allocation Statement

Water allocation update and outlook

This statement reflects on current conditions and anticipates water allocations for 1 July and the 2022/23 water year. The outlooks are not a guarantee of future allocation, therefore water users should apply the information with caution and at their own risk.

Current indications are that, due to exceptional water availability including low levels of extraction and likely good river flows associated with highly connected systems, **all groundwater licence categories, across all ground water sources, are likely to receive full allocations on 1 July 2022 for the water year 2022/23.**

Since February 2021 there has been good rainfall across much of the state. The rainfall deciles map below shows large areas have received greater than above average rainfall for the 12 months to the end of April 2022. This rainfall has alleviated pumping pressures on groundwater.



Water sharing plans allow groundwater to be temporarily pumped for some years at higher volumes than the annual limit, provided long term average annual extractions are not exceeded. This provides users operational flexibility around seasonal variations including droughts.

The plans set limits on the years that this higher level of extraction can continue. Once the compliance trigger is reached, groundwater allocations may be reduced until extraction is back within the long-term plan limit to prevent resource depletion.

As groundwater pumping volumes have significantly declined in 2020/21 and 2021/22 water years, in response to wetter conditions, the annual average extraction over the water sharing plan compliance period has also declined.

The department's online dashboard provides information to water users on the likelihood of reduced groundwater access. Licence holders and interested stakeholders are encouraged to monitor the status of groundwater extraction through the department's dashboard at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/tracking-groundwater

Licence holders are strongly encouraged to enter their meter readings into the WaterNSW's Water Accounting System (iWAS). This usage data is incorporated into the calculation of future allocation.

All licence holders in the northern inland "at risk" groundwater sources have been required to submit monthly meter reads since December 2021 under the rollout of the non-urban water metering rules.

More information on the metering requirements can be found at: water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/320199/non-urban-water-metering-in-NSW-what-water-users-need-to-know.pdf

The calculations for compliance with extraction limits, and the requirement to reduce allocation, are based on the volumes pumped in the current and previous years to determine the average annual extraction over the five-year compliance period. The plans have varying exceedance levels, typically 5% or 10% above the extraction limit.

However, as indicated above, recent exceptional water availability including low levels of extraction and likely good river flows associated with highly connected systems, mean all groundwater licence categories across all ground water sources are likely to receive full allocations for the water year 2022/23.

Further information

Information on available water determinations and water sharing plans is available on the Department of Planning and Environment's website at: water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/home

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