

1 May 2020

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

This abbreviated statement updates water availability information and confirms that **general security** allocations in the **NSW Murray** regulated river water source **remains unchanged**.

Rainfall this week has not been included in the current assessment but will be reflected in the comprehensive mid-May update. In the NSW Murray, rainfall in April has been above average for most of the catchment, providing a further small improvement to the NSW Murray resource of 20,000 megalitres (ML). This will be used to minimise a potential shortfall to high priority commitments on 1 July 2020 should dry conditions eventuate for the remainder of this year.

The system is being managed to maintain deliverability of all account water and support full opening allocations to high priority needs in 2020-21, including general security carryover, as required by the statutory water sharing plan.

To provide greater insight and understanding of the inflow conditions of recent years and water availability situation for NSW Murray general security water users, a factsheet is being prepared and will be published soon. In addition, as we approach 1 July 2020, public information sessions using remote conferencing technology are being organised to update and expand on the information provided and respond to questions.

The Menindee Lakes system continues to improve from the arrival of northern basin inflows. It is currently nearing 19 per cent full, holding around 320,000 ML, and is expected to continue slowly rising in coming weeks as water in transit from the north arrives. The Lower Darling has been successfully re-started and safely reconnected to the Murray, and normal regulated river operations have resumed.

The improvements to the resource, including some future inflows, enable a **30 percent allocation** to be made to **general security** entitlements in the **Lower Darling** water source. The improvement means that the drought criticality can be eased from Stage 3 to Stage 2. Resource conditions are being closely monitored and, with the Menindee system still below 20 per cent full, the priority is on ensuring longevity of supply in the Lower Darling for critical human and high priority needs.

As allocations have now been issued for general security entitlements in the Lower Darling, groundwater users are reminded to check the conditions on their approval to ensure they comply with any groundwater access rules that are linked to surface water allocations.

In addition, Lower Darling water users are reminded that carryover of account balance is permitted for general security licence holders of up to 50 per cent of entitlement.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage
Murray	97%	0%	18%	 Stage 2
Lower Darling	100%	30%	19%	 Stage 2

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement will be published on **Friday 15 May 2020**. It will be the last statement for the current water year. Any resource improvement after then will be included in the 1 July 2020 allocation announcements, and fortnightly statements will resume on 15 July 2020.

The mid-May statement will provide a comprehensive look at the latest resource availability and the likely 1 July starting allocations for 2020/21.

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