

3 May 2021

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

There is **no increase to general security allocations in the NSW Murray regulated river water source**. Total general security allocation in the NSW Murray remains at 50% of entitlement.

All **Lower Darling** regulated river entitlements, including **general security**, have reached their maximum allocation (100%) for this (2020/21) water year.

Higher than minimum inflows have improved resources in the NSW Murray by about 20,000 megalitres (ML) since the last assessment. This improvement is assigned to the payback of the borrowed Barmah Millewa Environmental Water Allowance (BMEWA), in accordance with the water sharing plan. The total borrowed water was 344,000 ML and 145,000 ML has been repaid. Any future resource improvements this water year must be assigned to the BMEWA until the balance is fully repaid.

The BMEWA account balance will be re-borrowed on 1 July to underpin water allocations, however, if the forest does not receive a natural watering (flood) by October, BMEWA account will likely be needed for forest survival, being the fifth consecutive year that water has been borrowed.

The Menindee system is currently filling and when it holds more than 640,000 ML, the resource (above 480,00 ML) becomes part of the shared Murray system under the Murray Darling Basin Agreement, meaning NSW Murray water availability can expect a boost in coming weeks.

Resource managers must also establish resources to assure high priority commitments in 2021-22.

2020-21	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage	
Murray	97%	50%	21%		Stage 1
Lower Darling	100%	100%#	48%		Stage 1

Availability of allocation on individual licences is subject to account limits as per the rules in the Water Sharing Plan

Murray storage levels (as at 30 April 2021)*

- Dartmouth Dam is 64% full – steady – holding 2,460,000 ML.
- Hume Dam is 42% full – falling – holding 1,265,000 ML.
- Lake Victoria is 27% full – steady – holding 185,000 ML.

* The NSW share of this water is approximately 37%, 48% and 48% for these storages respectively, or 41% in total.

State sharing of the Murray resource

The bulk accounts assessment indicates that 3,720 gigalitres (GL) of total shared Murray resource is available in the extreme dry (99th percentile) case, of which about 470 GL is needed to run the system (incorporating South Australia's 'operational' (dilution and loss) entitlement and any shared resource which cannot be regulated). The NSW portion of the regulated shared resource is 1,520

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 in a volume of **Murray resource for NSW to allocate of 1,990 GL**.

The bulk resource assessed by MDBA includes supplementary and uncontrolled flow diversion in the NSW usage. Therefore the 2,110 GL assessed share of Murray resource must be reduced by 120 GL to 1,990 GL to account for water used from unregulated water sources. Note, the unregulated water usage does not adversely impact regulated allocations.

NSW is looking to collate publicly available resource information from other Murray jurisdictions and present it in future statements to assist NSW water users.

Menindee

The Menindee Lakes system is currently 30% full, holding around 520,000 ML, and rising. Strong inflows are currently accruing in the system and the trigger where it becomes part of the shared Murray resource (640,000 ML) is expected to be reached in the next week or two. The Menindee system will then remain a shared Murray resource until it next falls below 480,000 ML.

This resource improvement has allowed full allocation to all Lower Darling regulated river water entitlements, without risk to the security of high priority commitments next year. The total expected inflows this water year are forecast to exceed about 800,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for May to July indicates that rainfall is likely to be around or above average across the catchment. Daytime and overnight temperatures are likely to be warmer than average.

The Bureau's ENSO indicator has returned to inactive, with the El Niño–Southern Oscillation thresholds in a neutral phase. Other major climate indicators are also neutral.

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. There is no plan to change this long-standing trade arrangement despite challenges to river operations. Water users are advised 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 April 2021). Trade **into** the Murrumbidgee valley is **open**.

Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.com.au) for daily information about the IVT account balance, the status of trade, and end of year trade closure dates. The IVT account balance at the end of the water year carries forward into the new water year.

Next announcements

The next water allocation statement will be published on **Monday 17 May 2021** and will be the last allocation statement for this water year. It will be a comprehensive statement, including 2021-22 opening allocations outlook.

The water availability outlook for next year aims to help water users with their end of year water management decisions. Forecast conditions are best estimates only and not guaranteed water availability. They should be used with caution, particularly when projecting many months ahead.

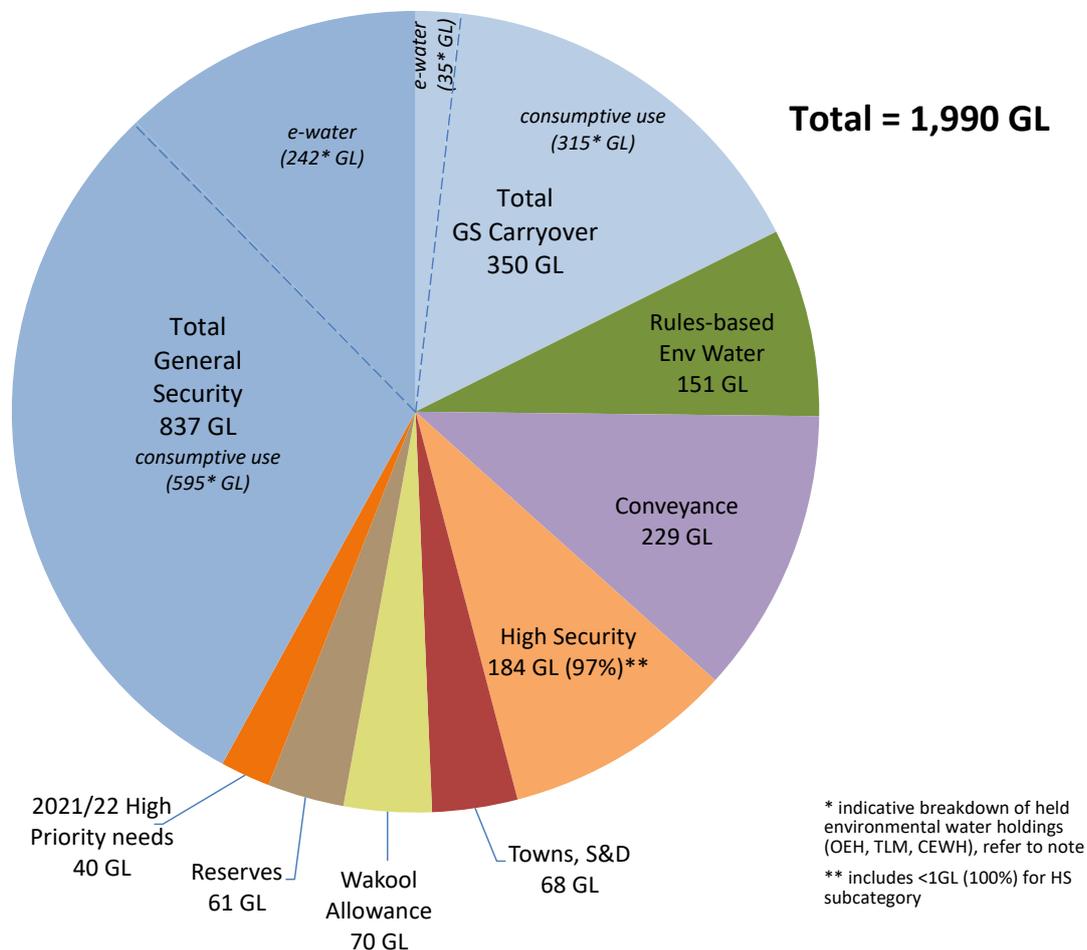
NSW Murray resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution* (3 May) for 2020-21	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	1,990 [#]
less	
Carryover ^{(2), (8)}	350
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	151
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	68 (100%)
Announced High Security subcategory ⁽⁴⁾	<1 (100%)
Announced High Security ⁽⁴⁾	184 (97%)
Conveyance ⁽⁵⁾	229 (69%)
Wakool Allowance ⁽⁶⁾	70
Reserves ⁽⁷⁾	61
Announced General Security ⁽⁸⁾	837 (50%)
Year 2 (2021-22) high priority needs ⁽⁹⁾	40

*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 – 3 May 2021



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 880 GL. NSW has moved out of Special Accounting with South Australia (SA). The details of Special Accounting can be found in the MDB Agreement clauses 123-129. Special Accounting is triggered when forecasts indicate that NSW will have an end of year reserve of less than 1,250 GL.
- (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 the 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 344GL – currently 145 GL paid back, 199 GL remains 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 (SPAL) 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 242 GL of GS, 24 GL of HS, 35 GL of conveyance allocation and 35 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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