

15 January 2016

Murrumbidgee Valley:

Water availability and allocation update

Allocations

There is **no increase** in the Murrumbidgee general security allocations at this time.

The continuing dry and hot conditions across the Murrumbidgee catchment have resulted in very low inflows into storages and increased transmission losses below the dams to Wagga Wagga.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murrumbidgee	95%	32%	23%

Dam levels (as at 14 January)

- Blowering Dam is 28 per cent full, falling, holding 474,000 megalitres (ML)
- Burrinjuck Dam is 55 per cent full, falling, holding 565,000 ML

Outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for January to March indicates below average rainfall is likely in the eastern parts of the region and roughly even chance of median rainfall conditions in the western parts. Temperatures similarly are predicted to be above average in the east, with average temperatures likely in the rest of the region.

The Bureau of Meteorology has advised the 2015-16 El Niño is likely past its peak and likely to decline during the coming months. The climate models also currently suggest neutral and La Niña conditions are equally likely for the second half of 2016, with a repeat El Niño the least likely outcome. With upper Murray storage levels likely to be low at the end of this water year, significant rain over winter and spring 2016 is required to refill these storages.

Trade

Allocation trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee valley remains closed with the Inter-Valley Trade (IVT) account balance above its upper limit, however trade **into** and **within** the valley is unaffected.

Next Announcements

Conditions are being constantly monitored and any significant changes in water availability or outlook will be promptly announced, otherwise:

- The next allocation update for the NSW Murrumbidgee will be on 1 February 2016
- Water availability forecasts for the start of the next water year (1 July 2016) will be provided on 15 February and updated on 16 May 2016.

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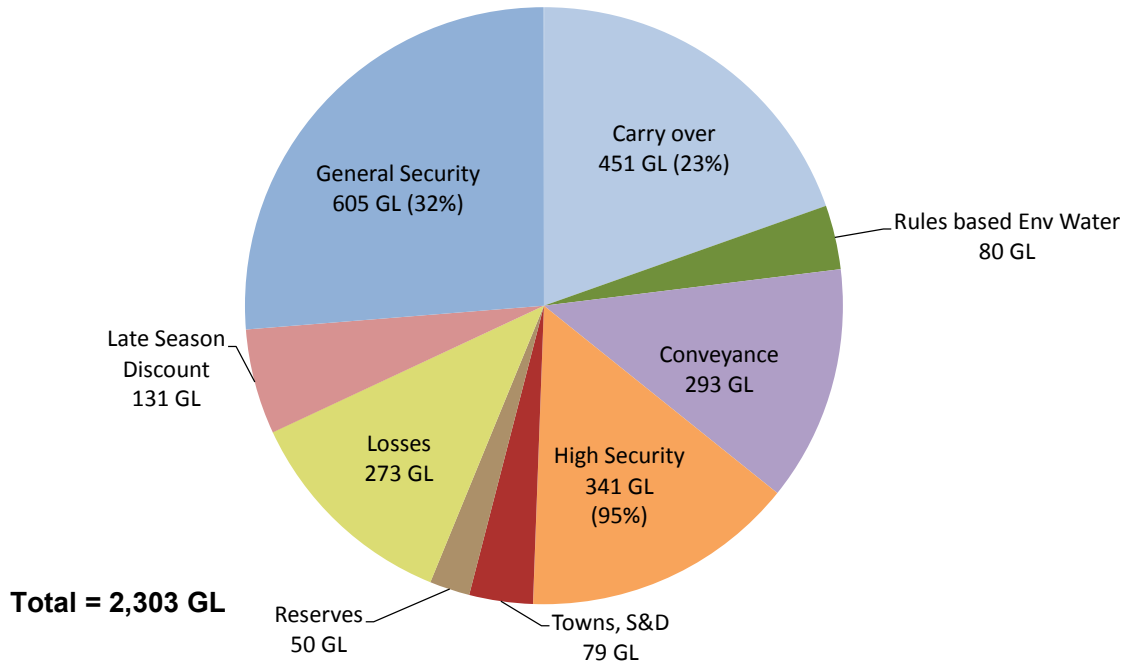
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Murrumbidgee Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (as at 15 January) for 2015-16	
	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	2303
less	
Carryover (incl. Murrumbidgee IVT carryover)	451
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽²⁾	80
Towns, Stock, Domestic	79 (100%)
Reserves ⁽³⁾	50
Conveyance ⁽⁴⁾	293
Announced High Security	341 (95%)
Announced General Security	605 (32%)
Losses (transmission, evaporation, operational) ⁽⁵⁾	273
Late Season Discount ⁽⁶⁾	131

*See notes below.

**Resource Distribution 2015-16
Murrumbidgee Valley - 15 January 2016**



Notes

- (1) Total available resource: total active storage volume (Blowering & Burrinjuck Dams) at the day of assessment plus any usable flows in transit plus drought inflows for rest of the year plus Snowy Hydro's assured Required Annual Release (RAR) plus usage to date.
- (2) Rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. Includes end-of-system flow requirements and environmental water allowances. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water. Usage has decreased this account volume since last assessment.
- (3) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans, and mainly used for emergency purposes and critical needs. Includes Murrumbidgee Provisional Storage Volumes (PSV).
- (4) 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 plans and is a function of high and general security allocations. (This category of licence in the Murrumbidgee valley, like general security, can carry over up to 30% of entitlement).
- (5) 'Losses' is the best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions to meet demands for the remainder of the year. This includes storage evaporation, transmission losses and operational loss. It is assumed there is no further rainfall and that inflow returns to dry conditions. This estimate is regularly refined as the year unfolds.
- (6) Late season inflow is the estimated volume available after the peak irrigation demand season (post-February). The Late Season Discount can be any late season inflow that is surplus to the regulated requirements and cannot contribute to current allocations. This consists of a proportion of assured annual inflows from Snowy Hydro Limited (SHL) as well as assumed drought inflow sequence flows from other parts of the catchment.

A bias toward later delivery of RAR this year will support an allocation improvement of 3 to 5 per cent on 1 March 2016, if not before. (If this water was included in current allocations, the water could be ordered and the storages emptied before the Snowy inflow actually arrives).

Murrumbidgee Resource Assessment – Comparison with this time last year

Item		15 Jan 2015 (GL)	15 Jan 2016 (GL)	Comments
Storage Volume (GL)	Burrinjuck	582	573	less than last year
	Blowering	519	472	less SHL* power generation so far this year
	Total	1101	1045	a bit less in storage this year
Transmission Losses**		177	221	warm and dry conditions
1 July IVT carryover balance		99	11	current IVT balance 100 GL
Late Season Inflows		0	131	larger than usual – allowance for SHL release late in the season which cannot support peak summer demand
GS Available		46%	32%	assured 3% late-season inflow increase 1 March 2016
Average GS Carry Over		26%	23%	

*SHL = Snowy Hydro Limited ** Includes assumed loss from downstream of storages along the entire river length.