

2 March 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 **remain unchanged**.

An easing of dry and hot conditions has slightly increased inflows above assumed minimums and reduced losses in running the River Murray system. This has resulted in an increase in the NSW Murray resource of 20,000 megalitres (ML). Soil moisture is severely depleted and is suppressing catchment runoff response from rainfall events. Soaking rainfall is required to improve runoff conditions and provide water for allocation.

As dry conditions continue to strain resources, the system is being managed to maintain deliverability of all account water and support full opening allocations to high priority needs in 2020-21. The resource improvement has been set aside for 2020-21 high priority needs (15,000 ML) and to reduce the current year's shortfall to Conveyance entitlement holders (5,000 ML).

Though good inflows prior to winter/spring are unlikely based on historical patterns, individual storms can bring heavy rainfall and good inflows at any time. Water users are encouraged to plan for the worst and hope for the best. In the meantime, conditions will continue to be closely monitored and water allocation statements updated, ensuring that any water that does become available is safely and promptly allocated in accordance with statutory water sharing plans.

The Menindee Lakes system remains critical; below 1 per cent full, holding just 5,500 ML. Rainfall in the northern Basin has resulted in flows in the tributary and headwater streams and temporary water restrictions have assisted flows into the Barwon-Darling system. It is forecast that some flows will reach Menindee by late March, potentially sufficient to provide an autumn replenishment flow to the Lower Darling. Conditions will be closely monitored and updates provided as flows progress down the system and potential Lower Darling replenishment plans firm.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage
Murray	97%	0%	18%	 Stage 2
Lower Darling	30%	0%	19% (not available)	 Stage 4

### Next announcement

The next mid-month comprehensive water allocation statement for the NSW Murray and Lower Darling valleys will be published on **Monday 16 March 2020**.

A further indicative water availability outlook for the start of next year (1 July 2020) will be reported in the next statement. While it is still early for reliable forecasts, they will continue to be updated on a mid-monthly basis until mid-May in the lead-up to the new water year. The reliability of the outlook will improve as the forecast period reduces.

# Water Allocation Statement

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Water availability and allocation update



The 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.

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