

15 April 2021

Murrumbidgee Valley

Water allocation update

Murrumbidgee regulated river water source allocations to general security reached 100% in January 2021. No further allocations are allowed this water year. Improvements in resource since January have been captured in storage as much as possible for future allocation. This statement aims to provide an indicative outlook of opening water availability for 2021-22. It will be updated again in mid-May.

2020-21	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage
Murrumbidgee	100%	100%	18%*	 Stage 1

*General security account limit is 100% of entitlement, therefore allocation plus individual carryover cannot exceed 100% in any given water year. Water users who carried over water into 2020/21, forfeited allocation improvement to the extent of their carryover volume.

Storage levels (as at 14 April 2021)

- Blowering Dam is 78% full – steady – holding 1,270,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is 87% full – steady – holding 895,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for May to July indicates that rainfall is likely to be around or below 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.

For further details: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

Trade

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 14 April 2021), while trade **into** and **within** the valley remains **open**.

Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.watarnsw.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 announcement

The next water allocation statement will be published on **Monday 17 May 2021**. The next statement will be the final statement to be issued this water year.

An indicative water availability outlook for the start of the next water year (1 July 2021) is provided below. Outlooks become more reliable as the forecast period reduces, therefore, the 17 May 2021

statement will be the statement which provides the most accurate forecast for opening 2021-22 water availability.

The water availability outlook for next year is indicative only and not guaranteed. It should be used with caution, particularly when projecting many months ahead. Nevertheless it aims to help water users with their end of year water management decisions.

Outlook for 2021-22

Key information

- This outlook for 1 July 2021 water allocation is conservatively based on assumed extreme dry (99%) inflows for the remainder of the current 2020-21 water year and similarly through 2021-22. Indicative forecast general security allocations for September and November 2021 under a range of inflow scenarios are provided to assist water users to plan ahead.
- For context, the Murrumbidgee regulated system has experienced wet (about 25th percentile) conditions this water year. That is, based on long term inflow statistics, about 25 out of a 100 years would generally experience conditions that are wetter than those experienced this year. This is not necessarily indicative of conditions that may be experienced in the near future.
- The forecast information is not guaranteed and should be used at one's own risk. It will be updated in the mid-May water allocation statement and will become more reliable as the forecast period reduces.
- Although extreme dry conditions are conservatively assumed to continue, heavy rainfall and significant inflows can occur at any time, and forecasts will be adjusted accordingly.
- In the Murrumbidgee regulated water source, general security and conveyance licences can carry over water up to a maximum of 30% of entitlement, and the account limit (allocation plus carryover) is 100 per cent of entitlement.
- It is difficult to reliably predict end-of-year carryover, as it is highly dependent on weather conditions in coming months and individual decisions by water users. Nevertheless, estimates suggest general security carryover could be close to the maximum allowable limit of 30 per cent of entitlement on average, or around 565,000 megalitres (ML).
- Access to inter-valley trade in 2021-22 is dependent on the balance of the IVT account. The 30 June 2021 balance will carry forward unchanged to 1 July 2021.
- Once the commencing allocations are announced on 1 July 2021, regular assessments will be undertaken and allocation announcements made fortnightly on the 1st and 15th of each month, or the following working day, until full allocations are achieved.

Indicative allocations on 1 July 2021

- Full (100%) allocation can be expected for **towns, domestic and stock** access licences, and **sub-category high security** entitlements.
- **Supplementary** (including Lowbidgee) access licence holders can expect to receive a full allocation, which is available subject to announced periods of supplementary access.
- It is forecast that **high security** allocation may receive 95 per cent of entitlement in accordance with the water sharing plan.
- **Conveyance** allocation will likely be available in accordance with the water sharing plan.

- **General security** allocations may start around 25% per cent based on current forecast.
- All **carryover** water allowed under the water sharing plan is expected to be fully deliverable.

Chances of improvement

The chances of improved general security allocations after 1 July 2021, based on a repeat of historical inflows, are provided in the following table under a variety of conditions. The forecast is based on all available historical data, which gives a better outlook than using just the driest years on record (dry tercile).

It is important to note that these estimates are indicative improvements only and are not guaranteed allocations. Estimates may change based on weather variability, water management decisions and other events. This means water users should use this information with caution and at their own risk, as it currently projects many months ahead.

Forecast general security allocations (%)

(Any carryover water can be added to these indicative allocations)

Repeat of historical inflow conditions	1 Sept 2021	1 Nov 2021
99 chances in 100 (extreme) (99%)	25%	25%
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	30%	35%
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)	35%	45%
1 chance in 2 (mean) (50%)	55%	65% ^{3,4}

Note 1: Estimated values indicative only, not guaranteed and subject to change based on actual events unfolding.

Note 2: Forecast assumes 30% carryover on average.

Note 3: A physical spill under 50% inflow conditions is possible by late spring.

Note 4: With 30% carryover assumed, general security allocations approaching 70% will result in 100% being announced for the valley due to internal accounts spilling (similar to this year). Current forecasts indicate that this is possible for inflow conditions wetter than around 50%.

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