



16 March 2015

NSW Murray and Murrumbidgee general security water availability and outlook for 2015/16

Department of Primary Industries Deputy Director General Water, Gavin Hanlon, today announced an increase of two percentage points for general security water allocations in the NSW Murray regulated river water sources, whilst the Murrumbidgee general security allocation remains unchanged.

“Available resources in the NSW Murray Valley have improved slightly in the past fortnight, enabling an increase for general security entitlement holders of two percentage points increasing their allocation from 59 to 61 per cent,” Mr Hanlon said.

“In the Murrumbidgee Valley however, below average rainfall has meant inflows into the major dams over the past month have not been sufficient to increase the general security water allocation.”

Mr Hanlon said the improvement in the NSW Murray Valley had mostly come from reduced river losses rather than improved inflows.

“Trade arrangements in the NSW Murray Valley remain unchanged from last month with some capacity available for trade downstream across the Barmah choke by virtue of recent net trades upstream.”

Water users should check trade capacity on-line using the MDBA website before making a trade application.

Looking at storage volumes in the NSW Murray Valley, Mr Hanlon said Hume Dam is falling and is currently at 32 per cent of capacity, whilst Dartmouth Dam is just over 78 per cent capacity.

In the Murrumbidgee Valley, Burrinjuck Dam is currently at 32 per cent of capacity and Blowering Dam is at 31 per cent capacity.

“The rainfall outlook into autumn shows an even chance we will experience median rainfall conditions across most of inland NSW.”

“Water availability will continue to be closely monitored by the Office of Water and the result of the next resource assessment will be announced on Wednesday 1 April 2015 and an update of the 2015/16 water availability outlook will be provided in mid-May,” said Mr Hanlon.

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Murrumbidgee outlook for 2015/16

Indicative allocations on 1 July 2015

- Full allocation can be expected for all water utility, and domestic and stock access licences.
- All carryover in general security accounts should be fully deliverable. At this stage, it is estimated that the average general security carryover will be around 15-20 per cent of entitlement, although subject to weather conditions and business decisions.
- High Security access licences will receive an allocation of 95 per cent of entitlement.
- There will be no commencing general security allocation for 2015/16 under drought conditions, and probably two per cent under very dry conditions.
- Supplementary access licence holders will receive a full allocation with extraction allowed only during periods of announced supplementary access.
- Sufficient water will be available to make opening allocations for conveyance water, commensurate with the expected opening allocations above.

Chances of improvement

The chances of improved general security allocation based on different inflow conditions are as follows:

Potential Inflow Conditions	Forecast General Security allocation #		
	1 July 2015	1 Sept 2015	1 Nov 2015
99 chances in 100 (drought) (99%)	0	0	0
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	2	9	19
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)	5	18	32
1 chance in 2 (mean) (50%)	11	33	59
1 chance in 4 (wet) (25%)	27	65	100

Assumes an average Carryover of 17%

NSW Murray outlook for 2015/16

Key information

- Storages are about 1,170 gigalitres lower than this time last year.
- Once the commencing allocation is announced on 1 July 2015, regular assessments will be undertaken and allocation announcements made by the 15th of each month or next working day following, for the remainder of the water year.
- Indicative assessments may be made between the formal assessments.
- The rules for water sharing are outlined in the *NSW Murray Regulated River Water Sharing Plan* and will continue in 2015/16, including that carryover of water in accounts is limited to a maximum of 50 per cent of entitlement for general security licences only.

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- It is difficult to predict end-of-year carryover, as it is highly dependent on weather conditions over the next few months and individual decisions by water users.
- Closing dates for allocation trade of general security water with the Murrumbidgee Valley have been extended so that trade within the NSW Murray valley and inter-valley trade into and out of the Murrumbidgee Valley will continue until the end of May 2015. Interstate allocation trade closes on the 30 April.
- All allocation trade will then resume on 1 July 2015.
- An update to this preliminary forecast of water availability for 2015/16 will be made in mid-May.

Indicative allocations on 1 July 2015

- Full allocations can be expected for all town water and domestic and stock access licences, including those in the Lower Darling.
- Full allocations for supplementary access licence holders, which is available subject to announced periods of supplementary flows.
- At this early stage it is estimated that general security carryover will average around 15-25 per cent of entitlement. Under very dry conditions or worse, 80 per cent of carryover will be deliverable on 1 July. The final carryover volume is highly dependent on weather conditions over the next few months and individual decisions by water users. The forecast will be updated in mid-May.
- High security allocation in the NSW Murray is likely to be 97 per cent, and 80 per cent in the Lower Darling.
- It is expected that opening general security allocation will be zero (0) per cent of entitlement in the NSW Murray and Lower Darling, unless there is significant rainfall.
- Under the water sharing plan, the NSW share of the Barmah-Millewa Forest account water may be borrowed for allocations when the general security plus average carryover is less than 30 per cent.
- Full conveyance allocation will not be available at 1 July under very dry or worse inflow conditions. However, up to 80 gigalitres can be made available at 1 July, and this will accrue with resource improvements to target (165 gigalitres) before allocations commence for general security entitlements.

Chances of improvement

The chances of improved general security allocation based on different inflow conditions are:

Potential Inflow Conditions ^{##}	Forecast General Security allocation [#]		
	1 July 2015	1 Sept 2015	1 Nov 2015
99 chances in 100 (drought) (99%)	0	0	1
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	0	4	16
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)	1	8	33
1 chance in 2 (average) (50%)	6	23	62
1 chance in 4 (wet) (25%)	8	42	100

[#] Assumes an average carryover of 25%

^{##} Multi-history modelling using all years

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