



# NSW Murray water allocation outlook 2015/16

15 May 2015

## Key information

- Forecast water availability for 2015-16 has deteriorated since the preliminary estimates in March 2015.
- The rules for water sharing are outlined in the *NSW Murray Regulated River Water Sharing Plan* 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.
- System inflows have been very dry, particularly for the last few months of 2014-15.
- System inflows to the River Murray system since August 2014 have been well below the long-term average and also below the average for the last 10 years, and around the 10<sup>th</sup> driest on record.
- Storages are more than 1,500,000 ML lower than this time last year and NSW share of resource is only 56 percent of what was available at last year's forecast 1 July allocations.
- Active storage in the River Murray System is currently at 42% of capacity which is about 25% less than the long-term average for this time of year.
- Once the commencing allocation is announced on 1 July 2015, regular assessments will be undertaken and allocation announcements made by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month or next working day following, for the remainder of the water year.
- An updated resource availability outlook for 2015-16 will be provided on Monday 17 August 2015.
- The forecast allocations under 99% exceedance conditions use the minimum inflows to the valley at the commencement of water sharing plans (1 July 2004). There is therefore a small risk that inflows similar to that during the millennium drought may occur, which may require contingency measures to be introduced to ensure critical water needs can be met.

## Indicative allocations

### Lower Darling

- In the **Lower Darling**, a critical water management regime is in effect, due to the severe water shortage. Water restrictions mean water may only be used for towns, domestic, stock and existing permanent plantings. Water must be ordered and approved, prior to being taken.
- Allocations will be **50% for town water** supplies, **30% for domestic and stock** licence categories and **20% for high security** entitlements on 1 July. Further allocations may be made as conditions change.
- **Carryover** will be allowed in accordance with the water sharing plan, but under the restrictions water can only be used for approved purposes (towns, domestic, stock and existing permanent plantings).
- There will be no **General Security** allocation until there is significant improvement in resources.
- **Trade** will be allowed within the Lower Darling valley (but not into or from the Lower Darling) but purchased water can only be used for the approved purposes.

## NSW Murray

- In the **NSW Murray** full allocations are likely for all **town water** and **domestic & stock** access licences for all Murray Regulated River water users.
- Full allocation will be made **to Supplementary** access licences and will be available subject to announced periods of supplementary flows.
- **Carryover** will be available in accordance with the water sharing plan rules. Latest estimates indicate that average general security carryover is likely to be about 30 per cent.
- NSW Murray **High Security** access licences are expected to receive 80 per cent of entitlement. Resource improvement will accrue here before conveyance water accrues further.
- Full **conveyance** allocation will **not** be available at 1 July under drought inflow conditions. 80 GL will be available at 1 July. Resource improvement will accrue here up to the target (165 GL) before allocations commence for general security entitlements.
- It is likely 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 between now and 1 July.
- Inter-state trade closed at the end of April, and NSW inter- and intra-valley will close at the end of May.
- All trade will resume on 1 July, apart from trade to and from the Lower Darling. The trade restriction downstream across the Barmah Choke remains in force however there is currently capacity to trade downstream, by virtue of net upstream trade.

## Chances of Improvement

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

| Forecast General Security Allocation # (percent)                                 |             |             |            |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Potential Inflow Conditions ##   | 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%)<br><b><i>We are currently tracking here</i></b> | 0           | 0           | 0          |
| 3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)   | 0           | 0           | 14         |
| 1 chance in 2 (average) (50%)  | 0           | 1           | 35         |
| 1 chance in 4 (wet) (25%)  | 0           | 18          | 71         |

Assumes an average Carryover of 30 %, ## Multi-history modelling using all years

The Bureau of Meteorology has declared establishment of an EL-Nino event meaning typically drier than normal conditions in eastern Australia and a later start to the northern wet season.

## More information

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