

15 January 2016

NSW Murray and Lower Darling:

Water availability and allocation update

Allocations

There is **no increase** in NSW Murray general security allocation at this time. Despite some intermittent rainfall in the past month, generally dry and hot conditions have resulted in very low system inflows consistent with those assumed in previous resource assessments.

In the Lower Darling, the **High Security allocation has increased by 25 per cent to 75 per cent** of entitlement to allow for continued watering of permanent plantings.

Domestic and Stock access licences have **increased by 25 per cent to 75 per cent** of entitlement and **Local Water Utility** access licences have **increased by 10 per cent to 80 per cent** of entitlement.

It should be remembered that water restrictions in the Lower Darling mean water can only be ordered and used for towns, domestic and stock purposes and to keep permanent plantings alive.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	97%	19%	30%
Lower Darling	75%	0%	Restricted access

Upper Murray Storage levels (at 14 January 2016)

- Dartmouth Dam is currently 48 per cent full, holding 1,895,000 megalitres (ML)
- Hume Dam is 38 per cent full, holding 1,150,000 ML

Outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for January to March indicates roughly even chance of median rainfall conditions across most of the region, with below average rainfall more likely in the eastern, upper Murray catchment. The temperature outlook ranges from generally average temperatures likely in the eastern portion of the catchment to cooler in western parts.

The northern Australian wet season so far has been below average and has provided minimal inflow to Basin catchments. The southern Basin usually receives more inflow in winter/spring.

The Bureau of Meteorology has advised the 2015-16 El Niño is likely past its peak and likely to decline in 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.

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Trading

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah choke is restricted to 'no net trade downstream'; however there is currently capacity for downstream trade (by virtue of upstream trades).

Trade is permitted within the Lower Darling water source but inter-valley trade is closed due to the water shortage. NSW Murray water users can trade **into** the Murrumbidgee valley but trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee valley is closed.

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 Murray 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.

NSW Murray Resource Assessment Data Sheet

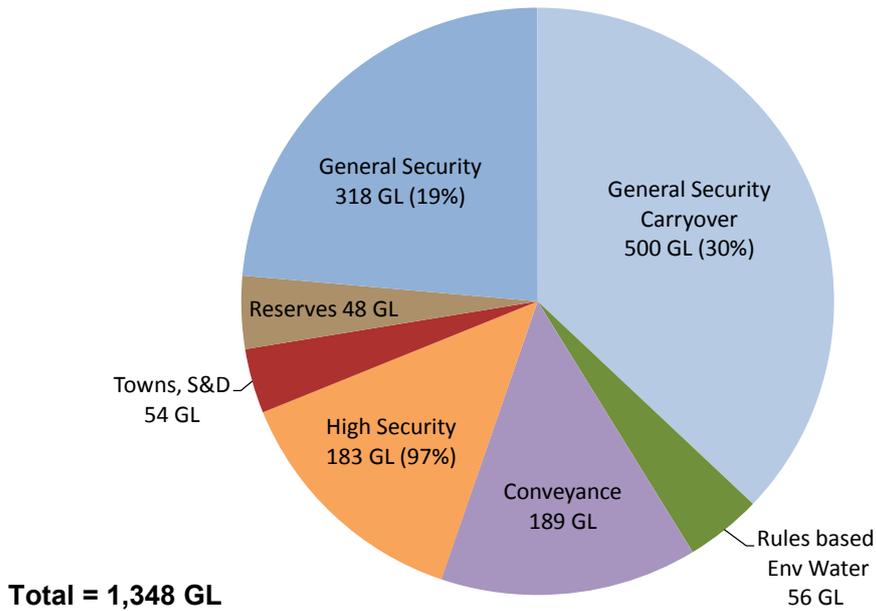
Resource Distribution (as at 15 January) for 2015-16	
	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource	1,348
less	
Carryover	500
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽¹⁾	56
Towns, Stock, Domestic	54 (100%)
Reserves ⁽²⁾	48
Conveyance ⁽³⁾	189
Announced High Security	183 (97%)
Announced General Security	318 (19%)

**See notes below.*

Notes:

- (1) Primarily rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. In the Murray this includes Additional Environmental Allowance (AEA) (6 GL), the Barmah Millewa Allowance (B-MA) (which is currently 100 per cent borrowed) and Wakool system requirements (50 GL). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water.
- (2) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans; used for emergency purposes and critical needs.
- (3) 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 current high and general security allocations.

Resource Distribution 2015-16 NSW Murray - 15 January 2016



NSW Murray Resource Assessment – Comparison with this time last year

Item	15 Jan 2015 (GL)	15 Jan 2016 (GL)	Comments
NSW share of total resources	2,110	1,348	Inflows in the last 12 months rate very dry**
less			
Carryover	498	500	similar carryover
Rules based Environmental Water	238	56	(borrowed B-M water)
Towns, Stock, Domestic	59	54	similar to last year's
Critical Human Need (CHN) Reserve [#]	24	48	double to last year's
Conveyance	239	189	less allocated water
High Security	183	183 (97%)	same
General Security	870 (52%)	318 (19%)	about one third of last year's

** In comparison with the historical record since 1891, only about 10% of years have recorded lower inflows than 2015.

[#] CHN reserve target is 61 GL.