

1 August 2016

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

Allocations

NSW Murray general security allocation has **increased by 8 per cent to 12 per cent** of entitlement. This is from tributary inflows in recent weeks including improvement in assured Snowy Hydro delivery.

An average general security carryover of 27 per cent is available in NSW Murray accounts, meaning that overall general security water availability is 39 per cent of entitlement.

Supplementary access continues to be available in many reaches of the NSW Murray due to the fact that tributary inflows cannot be fully regulated. Customers holding a supplementary water access licence should confirm with WaterNSW the times and reaches where supplementary access applies.

In addition, general security licence holders can divert supplementary water 'without debit' bearing in mind that diversions will count toward annual usage limits. For further information refer to WaterNSW's website at <http://www.waternsw.com.au/customer-service/news/supplementary>.

A special update for the **Lower Darling** with details about the proposed management of recent inflows is provided in a section below. The modest inflows to the Lower Darling water source, although insufficient at this stage to relax water restrictions, have supported a **20 per cent increase** in allocations across high priority categories of licence as follows:

Local water utility – up 20 per cent to now be 70 per cent of entitlement

Domestic and stock – up 20 per cent to now be 50 per cent of entitlement

High security – up 20 per cent to now be 40 per cent of entitlement.

It must be remembered that water restrictions continue to apply meaning that high security irrigation water taken from the river can only be used on permanent plantings.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	97%	12%	27%
Lower Darling	40%	0%	Restricted access

Upper Murray storage levels (as at 29 July 2016)

- Dartmouth Dam is currently 53 per cent full – rising - holding 2,039,000 megalitres (ML).
- Hume Dam is 64 per cent full – rising - holding 1,933,000 ML.

Media contact: James Muddle – 0407 103 507

www.water.nsw.gov.au

Climate outlook

There was significant rain throughout July. Building on previous wet conditions, catchments have been able to provide considerable runoff with about 20 per cent annual exceedance probability (AEP) inflow conditions in July in the Murray system.

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook continues to indicate a high likelihood (about 65 to 75 per cent chance) of above average rainfall conditions continuing within the Murray catchment over the three months to October. Cooler days are also likely in the eastern portion of the catchment.

Although La Niña conditions remain possible, BoM indicates the majority of model outlooks maintain neutral values throughout the remainder of winter and spring.

Sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean show a strong negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) present, and climate models indicate it will persist through to the end of spring. A negative IOD often results in greater than average winter-spring rainfall and cooler than average day time temperatures over south-eastern Australia.

Trade

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah choke is restricted to 'no net trade downstream'. Trade from above the choke to downstream of the choke closed on 29 July as the net trade balance reached zero. Downstream trade re-opens automatically corresponding with the volume of any upstream trade.

The trade restriction is in place to prevent water trades from placing excessive physical water delivery demand on choke channel capacity during the year, which could affect the water security of existing entitlement holders. Water users are encouraged to monitor the MDBA website at <http://www.mdba.gov.au/managing-water/water-markets-trade/interstate-water-trade/barmah-choke-trade-balance> for information about the trade balance and status of trade.

Trade is permitted within the Lower Darling water source, but inter-valley trade remains closed due to the severe water shortage.

Water users can trade **into** the Murrumbidgee Valley, but trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee Valley is closed. Water users are encouraged to monitor the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/customer-service/trading/murrumbidgee for information about the Murrumbidgee IVT account balance and status of Murrumbidgee trade.

Next announcements

The next resource assessment and allocation update for the NSW Murray and Lower Darling valleys will be on **Monday 15 August 2016**. It will include additional detailed information including comparison of values with last year, probability table (outlooks of likely improvement in water availability under different inflow scenarios) and rocket diagram.

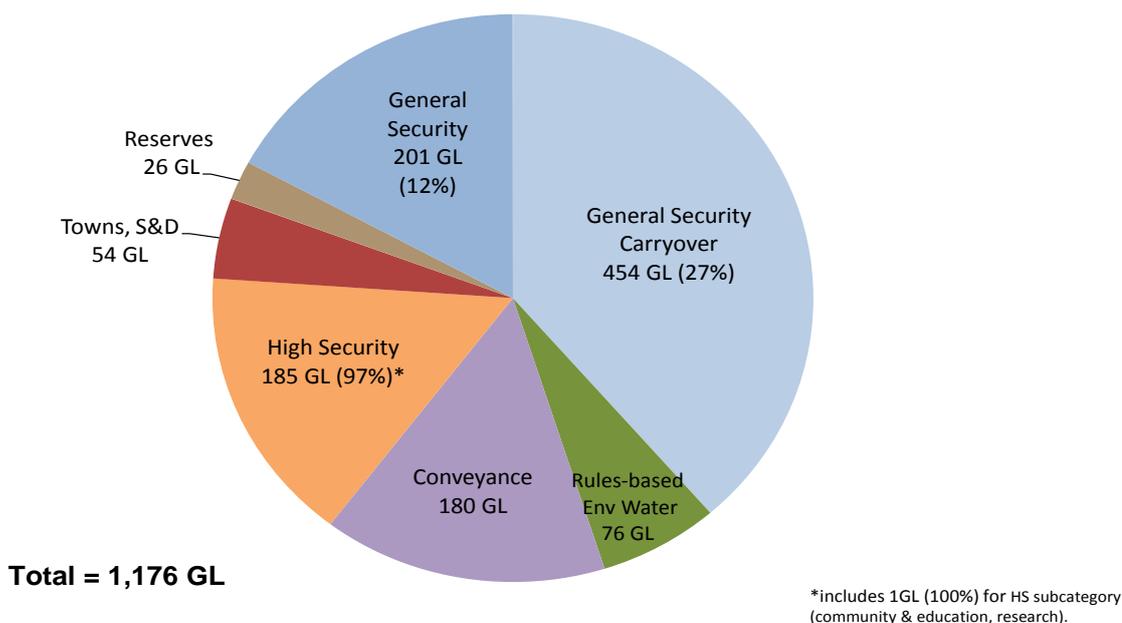
NSW Murray Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (as at 1 August) for 2016-17	
	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	1,176
less	
Carryover	454
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽²⁾	76
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽³⁾	54 (100%)
Announced High Security subcategory	1 (100%)

(community & education, research) ⁽³⁾	
Announced High Security ⁽³⁾	184 (97%)
Conveyance ⁽⁴⁾	180
Reserves ⁽⁵⁾	26
Announced General Security	201 (12%)

*See notes below.

Resource Distribution 2016-17 NSW Murray - 1 August 2016



Notes:

- (1) NSW is currently in Special Accounting with South Australia but this has no material impact on NSW allocations. Special accounting is triggered when NSW is forecast unable to meet the required reserve of 1,250 GL by the end of the year to supply South Australia (SA) with its entitlement in the following water year. Details can be found in the MDB Agreement Clauses 123-129.
- (2) Primarily rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. In the NSW Murray this includes Additional Environmental Allowance (AEA) (6 GL). The Barmah-Millewa Allowance (B-MA) is 'rules-based' water but the account balance of 232 GL is currently fully borrowed by consumptive users and will progressively pay-back with further resource improvements once announced general security allocations reach 30 per cent of entitlement, in accordance with the water sharing plan. Wakool system requirements (70 GL) are included but licence-based environmental water is excluded.
- (3) The *Water Sharing Plan for the New South Wales Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2016* has subcategories of high security licenses in the Murray Water Source. High security subcategory licences under *Part 7 Division 2 Clause 46(2)* that are present in the Murray include community and education, research, and town water supply. These licences are to receive 100% allocation at the commencement of each water year. Remaining high security licences are to receive 97% allocation. For the purposes of this water allocation statement, the high security – town water supply allocation volume has been grouped with "Towns, S&D".
- (4) 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 plan and is a function of current high and general security allocation.
- (5) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans; used for emergency purposes and critical needs.

Lower Darling – Summary and Update

- Current estimates are that at least 100,000 ML will flow into the Menindee Lakes system (Lake Wetherell) as a result of rainfall in upper Basin catchments.
- This is a relatively small inflow event in terms of average annual flows and will provide some welcome temporary relief; however, water users must continue to be vigilant about usage.
- Approximately 65,000 ML from the anticipated inflows has already arrived – with the total Menindee storage volume having increased to over 8 per cent.
- A release of approximately 35,000 ML of water from Lake Wetherell into the Lower Darling River commenced Thursday 28 July 2016. Over coming weeks it will provide much needed relief to downstream landholders and communities from the prolonged water shortage.
- This is the first release to the Lower Darling since mid-December 2015.
- Releases from Lake Wetherell are measured at Weir 32 and are planned to increase up to a maximum rate of 1,500 ML/day - to flush the river and bring environmental benefit - before tapering off to approximately 150-200 ML/day to prolong the flow for as long as possible.
- The water level upstream of weir 32 as of 29 July is 1.33m and at the peak forecast flow of 1,500ML/day that water level will rise to 1.95m.
- WaterNSW is advising landholders and customers to be vigilant and make plans to manage pump locations and other infrastructure.
- The first of approximately 80 properties downstream of the Menindee Lakes system can expect to start receiving increased flows from early this week - with water arriving at Pooncarie from about mid-August.
- As of 29 July, flows at Bourke were 1,080 ML/day and flows at Wilcannia were 2,308 ML/day, both receding slowly.
- Coinciding with the releases from Menindee Lakes - DPI Water is undertaking comprehensive water sampling activities along the Lower Darling River over coming weeks.
- Aerial and ground operations are being used to monitor flow movement and water quality as water progresses downstream. Over the next two weeks, a helicopter will be operating along the Lower Darling River. The information collected will be used to adaptively manage river operations and ensure the best outcomes possible for the riverine environment and water users.
- Water quality samples will be collected regularly and the raw data for several of the parameters tested will be made available to downstream landholders the following day where possible – other parameters will require laboratory analysis and therefore will not be immediately available.
- As a result of the inflows, Essential Water customers in Broken Hill can continue to be serviced by treated surface water, which should now be sufficient to meet needs until at least early 2018.
- The forecast is for likely wetter conditions in coming months, meaning there is every likelihood that further rain events could eventually add to the volume of water making its way to the Darling River and downstream to Menindee Lakes.
- PI Water will continue to monitor conditions and provide advice accordingly.