

15 January 2018

NSW Murray and Lower Darling

Water allocation update

Allocations

NSW Murray general security allocation has **increased by 3 per cent to 49 per cent of entitlement**, with a commensurate increase in allocation to conveyance entitlements.

Rainfall was well above average across upper Murray catchments during December, with conditions also relatively wet along the mid to lower Murray valley. Most of this rain fell at the beginning of the month.

Storm activity over the mid-Murray in mid-December, combined with higher flows resulting from the early December rainfall, allowed supplementary access to be made available on the River Murray downstream of the Murrumbidgee Junction for a week in late December.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	97%	49%	44%
Lower Darling	100%	100%	

Upper Murray storage levels (as at 12 January 2018)

- Dartmouth Dam is 89 per cent full – steady – holding 3,437,000 megalitres (ML).
- Hume Dam is 67 per cent full – falling – holding 2,023,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology’s seasonal outlook for February to April indicates that average rainfall conditions are likely in the valley over the next three months, though above average rainfall is likely in February in the western portion of the valley. Daytime temperatures are forecast to be variable across the valley, with average temperatures likely in the western portion and cooler than average temperatures in the eastern portion.

Weak La Niña conditions are present and models suggest this event will end by mid-autumn. La Niña typically brings above average rainfall to eastern Australia during summer; however the current event is forecast to be weak and short-lived, therefore having less influence on rainfall. La Niña events can also increase the likelihood of prolonged warm spells for southeast Australia.

Trade

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah choke remains restricted to ‘**no net trade downstream**’. Downstream trade opens automatically to the extent of the volume of any upstream trade.

The trade restriction helps to protect existing downstream entitlement holders from an increased risk of delivery shortfall caused by the limited physical capacity of the Barmah choke.

Water users are encouraged to monitor the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) website at - 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.

The Menindee Lakes system has fallen below 480 GL, the threshold at which the Lower Darling becomes administratively separated from the Murray. Temporary trade with the Murray has therefore ceased. Trade typically remains closed until the system recovers to above 640GL. Trade within the Lower Darling water source remains unaffected.

Trade **out** and **within** the Murrumbidgee Valley is open, but trade **into** 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 inter-valley trade (IVT) account balance and status of trade.

Next announcements

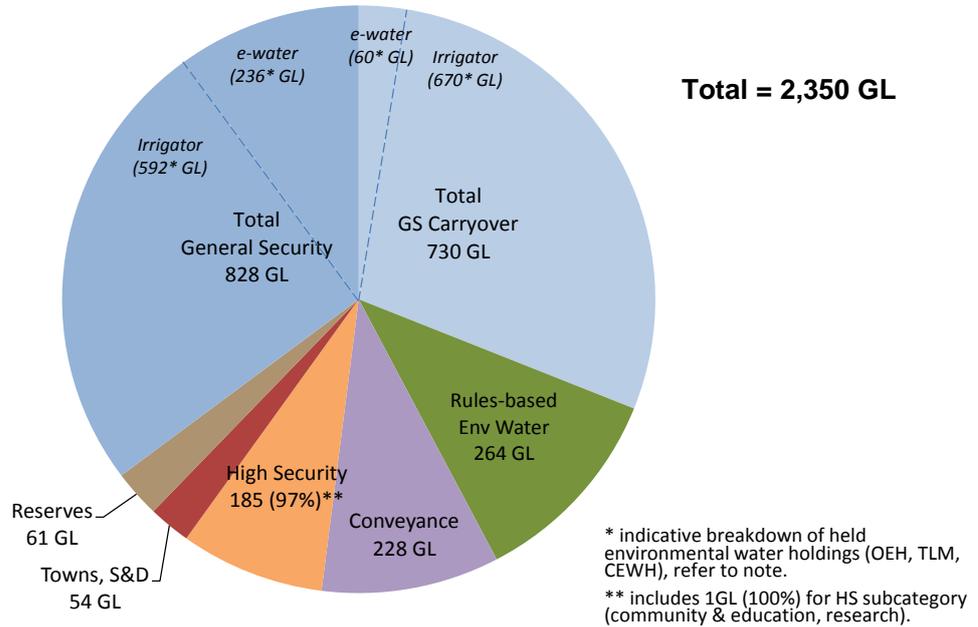
The next allocation update for the NSW Murray regulated river valley will be issued on **Thursday 1 February 2018**.

NSW Murray Resource Assessment Data Sheet

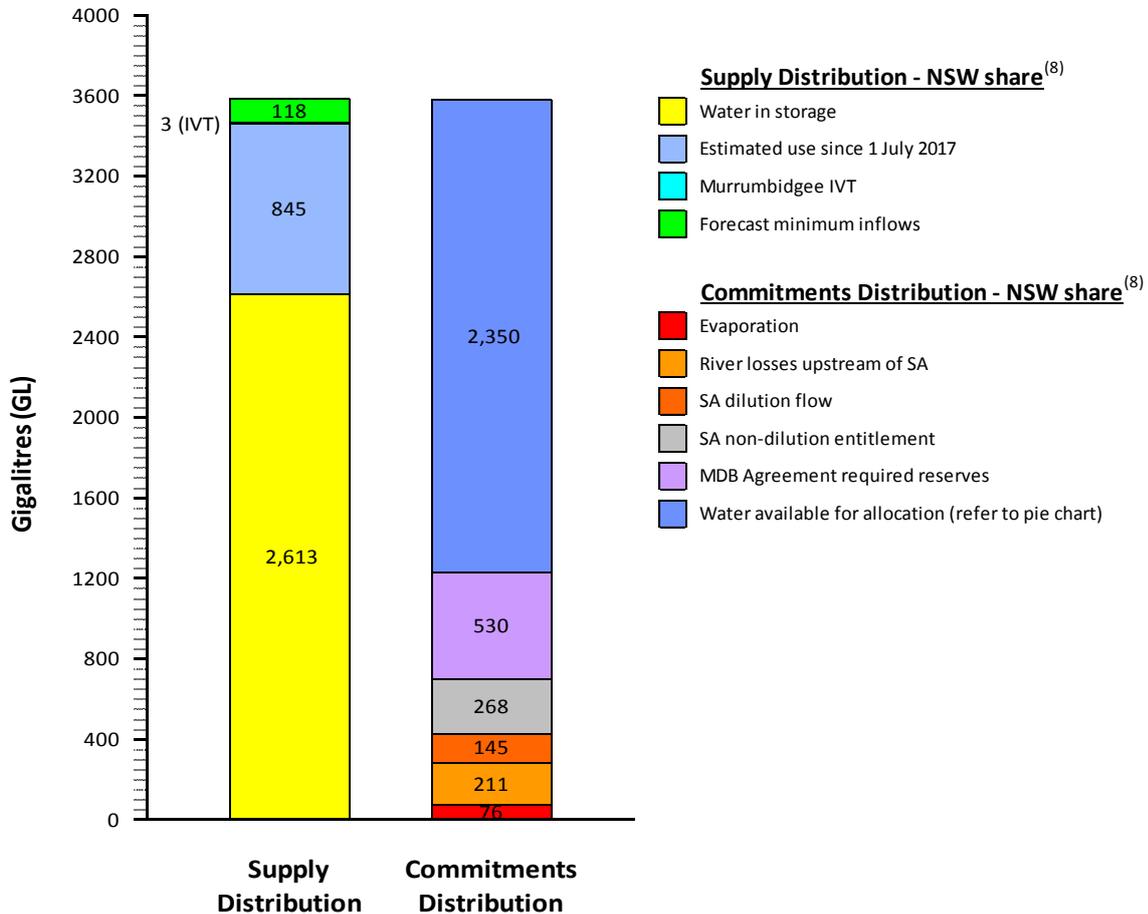
Resource Distribution (15 January) for 2017-18	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	2,350
less	
Carryover ^{(2), (7)}	730
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	264
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	54 (100%)
Announced High Security subcategory (education, research) ⁽⁴⁾	1 (100%)
Announced High Security ⁽⁴⁾	184 (97%)
Conveyance ⁽⁵⁾	228
Reserves ⁽⁶⁾	61
Announced General Security ⁽⁷⁾	828 (49%)

*See notes below.

Resource Distribution 2017-18 NSW Murray - 15 Jan 2018



NSW Murray Water Balance – 15 Jan 2018



Notes:

- (1) Total available resource - NSW's state share of active storage volume (Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee and Lake Victoria) as assessed and accounted for under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement at the time of the assessment plus any usable flows in transit plus assumed drought inflows for the rest of the year plus Snowy Hydro's assured Required Annual Release (RAR), as well as estimated usage to date. NSW is in Special Accounting with South Australia (SA) but this currently 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 water year to supply SA with its entitlement in the following water year. Details can be found in the MDB Agreement Clauses 123-129.
- (2) Carryover – NSW Murray general security water users can carryover a maximum account balance of 50 per cent of their entitlement into the following water year. The account limit is 110 per cent of entitlement, which can consist of both allocation and carryover.
- (3) Primarily rules-based planned environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. In the NSW Murray this includes the Murray Additional Allowance (MAA) (about 6 GL), Wakool system requirements (up to 70 GL), and the Barmah-Millewa Allowance (B-MA) (188 GL). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water also known as held environmental water (HEW).
- (4) 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. At the commencement of each water year, these licences are to receive 100% allocation, while 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 as "Towns, S&D".
- (5) 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.
- (6) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans; set aside for emergency purposes and critical needs.
- (7) Held environmental water (HEW) – As a trial, general security allocation and carryover water administered by the environmental water holder has been identified in the above pie chart. This reporting of held environmental water is limited to only NSW entitlements, reporting of credits to accounts (not usage or trade), and estimated to be 236 GL of GS, 24 GL of HS, 29 GL of conveyance allocation and 60 GL of GS carryover. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), The Living Murray (TLM) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). For more details on environmental holdings please refer to individual Agency websites.
- (8) Supply Distribution and Remaining Commitments – as a trial, the distribution of supply and commitments is being provided on a monthly basis. The volumes in the provided categories are only those relating to NSW's share of the resource, at the time of the assessment. The categories include the following:

Water in storage: Volumes in the dams at the end of the previous month, excluding water that is not available to NSW under water sharing arrangements.

Forecast inflows: NSW's share of forecast inflows into the River Murray System based on estimated minimum future inflows (includes Snowy Hydro's guaranteed inflows for the water year), and lowest expected inflows for the current month based on recorded inflow information available at the time of the assessment.

Estimated use since 1 July 2017: Estimated NSW usage to-date, including estimates as required prior to reconciliation with hydrographic updates.

Murrumbidgee IVT: Total Murrumbidgee system water bought by Murray system users that is yet to be delivered.

Evaporation: Water needed to account for evaporation from the storages.

River losses upstream of SA: Water needed to account for losses from the River Murray upstream of the South Australian border.

SA non-dilution entitlement: Water to supply entitlement to South Australia, as required under the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Agreement. Note that SA non-dilution and dilution entitlement values were incorrectly reversed in the 15 December 2017 graph and have been correctly reported here.

SA dilution flow: Water to provide supply of dilution water to South Australia, as required under the MDB Agreement.

MDB Agreement required reserves: Includes conveyance reserve and minimum reserve, as required by the MDB Agreement in clause 102D and 103, respectively.

Water available for allocation: NSW's bulk share of the resource that can be assigned to NSW Murray entitlement holders based on the water sharing plan. This volume includes entitlement holder carryover. The allocation of this volume is provided in the above table and pie chart.