

1 August 2023

Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

There is no increase to allocations in the Murrumbidgee regulated river water source.

The current general security allocation for 2023/24 is 37%. Together with the total volume carried forward, current water availability across all general security licences is around 65% of entitlement.

Full and spilling storages, coupled with low demand, means that airspace in storages is not available to capture new resource. This has prevented any resource improvement since the last assessment. As was the case last year, allocations are unlikely to increment significantly until usage increases, creating airspace to capture and regulate new water.

The forecast dry conditions expected to develop in coming months mean that inflows are likely to reduce compared to the recent wet conditions experienced in the valley. However, once airspace is available, resource improvements will be driven by likely higher than assumed minimum inflows.

A further challenge is that the Required Annual Release (RAR) from Snowy Hydro is being received onto a full Blowering Dam. It is therefore spilling downstream, currently unused, and could drive the resource assessment into shortfall as this guaranteed water is already included in the announced allocations. Conditions are being closely monitored and updated information will be provided in fortnightly water allocation statements.

Surplus flows in the system mean that supplementary take is available. Subject to their licence conditions and approved periods of access, individual water users can take supplementary water and use uncontrolled flow provisions. Supplementary access details can be found at:

waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au

Information on the **spill of Murrumbidgee Intervalley Trade (IVT)** and a **temporary restriction to interstate trade** is provided below in this statement.

Year to date allocations for 2023/24

2023/24	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murrumbidgee	95%	37%	28%

Storage levels (as of 1 August 2023)

- Blowering Dam is about 90% full – falling – holding about 1,475,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is about 95% full – stable – holding about 975,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for August to October shows that rainfall is very likely to be below median. Day and overnight temperatures are expected to be hotter than median.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) index outlook indicator is on El Niño Alert. This is to be updated by BoM later today. Models have indicated that El Niño conditions may develop in the coming weeks. Also, positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions may develop in the coming weeks. Should El Niño or negative IOD conditions develop, rainfall will likely be drier than median.

Further details at: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

Trade

Trade **out of the Murrumbidgee and into the Murrumbidgee is open** (as of 1 August 2023). Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.com.au) for daily information about the IVT account balance, the status of trade, and other information including seasonal trade closures. The Murrumbidgee IVT account is operated between its normal 0 GL and 100 GL range. The Murrumbidgee IVT balance can fluctuate rapidly, and information presented in this statement is current at the time of writing.

IVT in 2023/24

When water physically spills from Murrumbidgee storages (including pre-releases for airspace operations), a decision must be made to spill or retain any IVT balance. With NSW Murray allocations full and Murrumbidgee allocations substantially lower, a decision to spill the IVT balance has been made, with the **spill to take effect on 14 August 2023**. The removal of water from the IVT account balance on the morning of 14 August 2023 will mean additional trade opportunity will be available **out** of the Murrumbidgee valley. Note: trade **into** the valley after the spill will only be available to the extent there is trade out. The improvement to Murrumbidgee valley resources from the IVT spill will be to the extent of the IVT balance at the time of the spill, currently about 29 GL.

Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.com.au) for detailed information on trade.

Interstate Trade

A **temporary restriction on interstate water trades** (clause 71V of the *Water Management Act 2000*) into the NSW Murray, Lower Darling and Murrumbidgee regulated river water sources from other states is **currently in place, until 31 August 2023** (subject to change based on spill risk at Hume).

Interstate trades are typically accompanied by a reassignment of physical water (resource) from the selling state to the buying state. When storages are full or near full, there is limited capacity to hold reassigned resource and a high risk that any resource which is reassigned will spill. Currently, interstate trades into NSW cannot be safely underpinned by resource. Accepting incoming interstate trades in such conditions puts NSW Murray allocations and water users at risk.

An update on storage conditions and likely trade implications will be made in the next statement.

More information on temporary water restrictions can be found at:

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions

Uncontrolled flow (without-debit-take)

The water sharing plan permits general security water users to take water from uncontrolled flows (also known as unregulated flows) without debit from their account water. This is permitted during periods of announced supplementary access. Supplementary access details can be found at: waterinsights.watarnsw.com.au.

Without-debit-take from uncontrolled flows by individual general security entitlement holders is subject to the following rules as outlined in the water sharing plan:

- Without-debit-take from uncontrolled flows (i.e. during periods of unregulated flows when supplementary access is permitted) is allowed when the effective available water for the current water year is less than or equal to 70% of entitlement (i.e. 0.7 megalitres per unit share component). Exercising of without-debit-take provisions is subject to the licence conditions of the respective individual entitlement/licence.
- The effective available water for an individual general security entitlement is defined as
 - just the general security allocation for the current water year if the carryover is less than 15% of entitlement for the relevant licence, or
 - the general security allocation for the current water year, **plus** the carryover less 15% of entitlement, when carryover is greater than 15% of entitlement for the relevant licence.
- The effective available water in the current water year, **plus** without-debit-take from uncontrolled flows cannot exceed 85% of an individual entitlement's share components (i.e. 0.85 megalitre per unit share component). Should these respective values sum to greater than 85% (for example, due to allocations increasing), then without-debit-take volumes will be converted to debit-take, to the extent necessary to bring the sum down to 85% of entitlement. That is, the account will reflect the new allocation as already having been used.
- When the effective available water in the current water year is greater than or equal to 85% of entitlement (i.e. 0.85 megalitre per unit share) for an individual entitlement, all without-debit-take will have converted to debit-take.

Water users should refer to the licence conditions of their individual licences for further details of rules applicable to their entitlements.

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement will be published on **Tuesday 15 August 2023**. It will be a comprehensive statement, including the likely improvement in general security allocations under various inflow scenarios.

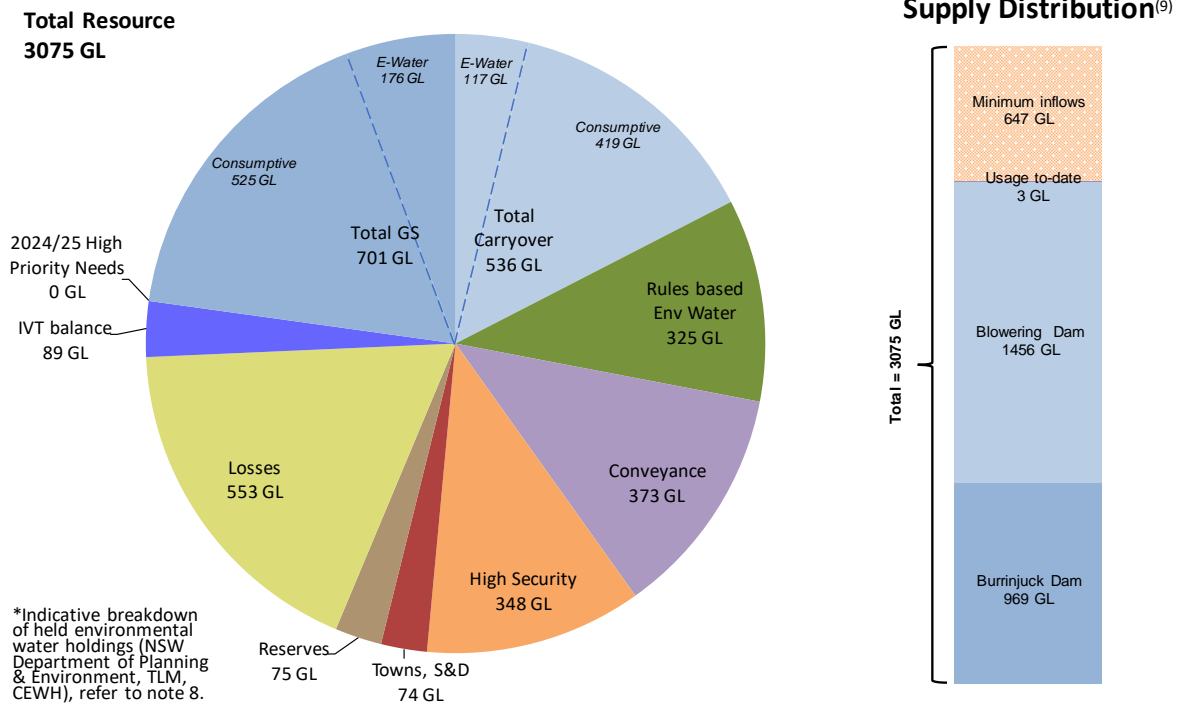
Note: Murrumbidgee statements are available from around 2:30pm on the day of the publication.

Murrumbidgee resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution* (1 August) for 2023-24	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	3,075
less	
Carryover ⁽⁸⁾	536
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽²⁾	325
Towns, Stock, Domestic (100%)	74
Reserves ⁽³⁾	75
Conveyance ⁽⁴⁾	373
Announced High Security (95%)	348
Losses (transmission, evaporation, operational) ⁽⁵⁾	553
Murrumbidgee IVT account (carryover on 1 July) ⁽⁶⁾	89
Announced General Security (37%) ⁽⁸⁾	701
Year 2 (2024-25) high priority needs ⁽⁷⁾	0

*See notes below

Murrumbidgee resource distribution 2023-24 – 1 August 2023



*See notes below

Data sheet notes

- 1) Total available resource – total active storage volume (Blowering & Burrinjuck Dams) at the day of assessment plus any usable flows in transit plus minimum inflows for rest of the year plus Snowy Hydro's assured Required Annual Release (RAR) (including any flex (pre-release) from the prior year), as well as estimated usage to date. Snowy Hydro's net Jounama Release for this year (2023-24) is estimated to be about 400 GL (includes montane release).
- 2) Rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. Includes end-of-system flow requirements (currently 190 GL) and environmental water allowances (EWA1 = 100 GL, EWA2 = 35 GL, EWA3 = 0 GL). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water also known as held environmental water (HEW). This total volume typically reduces as water is used during the year.
- 3) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans, and mainly used for emergency purposes and critical needs. Includes 25 GL per dam as an operational reserve, and Provisional Storage Volumes (PSV1 = 25 GL, PSV2 = nil).
- 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 plans and is a function of high and general security allocations. Conveyance licences in the Murrumbidgee valley can also carryover 30% of their entitlement.
- 5) Losses – the best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions to meet demands for the remainder of the water year. This includes storage evaporation, transmission losses and operational loss. This estimate is updated monthly.
- 6) IVT account carryover value into 2023-24. Does not necessarily reflect the current IVT balance.
- 7) 2024-2025 high priority needs on 1 July 2024 - volume set aside to cover high priority needs on 1 July 2024, for 'Year 2', including potential carryover.
- 8) Held environmental water (HEW) – licenced water administered by environmental water holders is reported here, with the associated portions of general security allocation and carryover also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting of held environmental water is the total credited to accounts (not usage) and is estimated to be 177 GL of GS, 11 GL of HS, 60 GL of conveyance allocation and 117 GL of GS carryover. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, The Living Murray and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. Details on environmental holdings can be found on individual agency websites.
- 9) Supply Distribution – the distribution of supply includes volumes at the time of the assessment for the following categories: active volumes in the dams, indicative usage to-date (may be estimates prior to reconciliation with hydrographic updates) and assumed minimum future inflows (includes Snowy Hydro's guaranteed inflows for the water year, and late season inflows).

Water Allocation Guide

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment – Water has produced a series of guides to describe the water allocation methods for most NSW regulated river systems. The guide for the Murrumbidgee regulated system is available at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations/how-water-is-allocated/resource-assessment-process

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