

1 December 2023

Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

There is no increase to general security allocations from the latest resource assessment in the Murrumbidgee regulated river water source.

The current general security allocation for 2023/24 remains at 46% of entitlement. Together with the total volume carried forward, current average water availability across all general security licences is around 74% of entitlement.

Generally dry conditions over winter and spring have reduced unregulated rivers to baseflow levels providing limited system inflows. Sporadic rain events have raised inflows only slightly above minimums this water year, creating small volumes of additional resource to provide the increments to general security in the past few months. However, significant inflows have not been captured this water year, and with drying conditions, the catchment is likely to produce less runoff from individual rainfall events.

The impact of rainfall over the past week in the upper Murrumbidgee will be seen in the coming days, and therefore has not been incorporated into this assessment. If there is an improvement in resources, it is likely to be modest due to the relatively small inland rainfall totals. Any improvement in resource will be seen in the next assessment (15 December 2023).

The Murrumbidgee Valley is in regulated conditions, meaning releases from storages are being made to meet system requirements. However, individual rainfall events can reduce demand and increase river flows, resulting in unregulated flows, for which timely notifications will be provided and water users should look to waterinsights.waternsw.com.au for latest supplementary access details. General security entitlement holders may also be able to access surplus flows without debit to their accounts (subject to their licence conditions) under the uncontrolled flow (UCF) provisions in the water sharing plan.

The valley has recorded some 38,000 megalitres of UCF usage to date (accounts reconciliation processes may result in adjustments to this volume). An improvement in resources due to UCF usage will only be realised if allocations increase sufficiently from future resource improvements resulting in a conversion of UCF usage to debit usage on accounts.

Total general security water availability (carryover plus current year allocations) is currently 74% of entitlement. Improvements above 80% are required to be matched with a commensurate allocation to the Provisional Storage Volume 1 in accordance with the water sharing plan.

With dry conditions likely setting in, and a significant chance it remains dry for the coming months, reserves to assure high priority needs for 2024/25 being carefully assessed. Each assessment going forward will need to consider risks to 2024/25 high priority commitments when deciding to allocate further water in 2023/24. As shown in the data sheet below, a small volume of water (10 gegalitres) has already been set aside for the 2024/25 high priority needs reserve in this assessment.

Year to date allocations for 2023/24

2023/24	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murrumbidgee	95%	46%	28%

Storage levels (as of 1 December 2023)

- Blowering Dam is about 72% full – holding about 1,185,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is about 90% full – holding about 930,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The latest Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) seasonal outlook for December to February does not show a clear indication of drier or wetter than average conditions. However daytime and overnight temperatures are expected to be hotter than median over this period.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) index outlook indicator points to El Niño. Models indicate that El Niño conditions are likely to persist into autumn. Also, a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) event is currently active, which models indicate may persist through summer. El Niño and positive IOD events typically influence weather conditions to become drier than median.

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

Trade

Trade out of the Murrumbidgee is open, however; trade into the Murrumbidgee is closed (as of 1 December 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 limits of 0 GL and 100 GL, however the balance can move rapidly. The information presented in this statement is current at the time of writing.

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 has now lapsed. The restriction is based on the risk of spill from headwater storages in the NSW Murray system. Although the storages remain high (Hume currently 91% full), the spill risk from headwater storages is expected to reduce over the coming months. Conditions will be closely monitored and any sustained risk of spill may require reinstatement of the temporary interstate trade restriction.

More information on temporary water restrictions can be found at:

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

Next announcement

The next Murrumbidgee water allocation statement will be published on Friday 15 December 2023. It will update current conditions and include information on the chances of improvement in allocations under various inflow conditions.

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

Murrumbidgee resource assessment data sheet

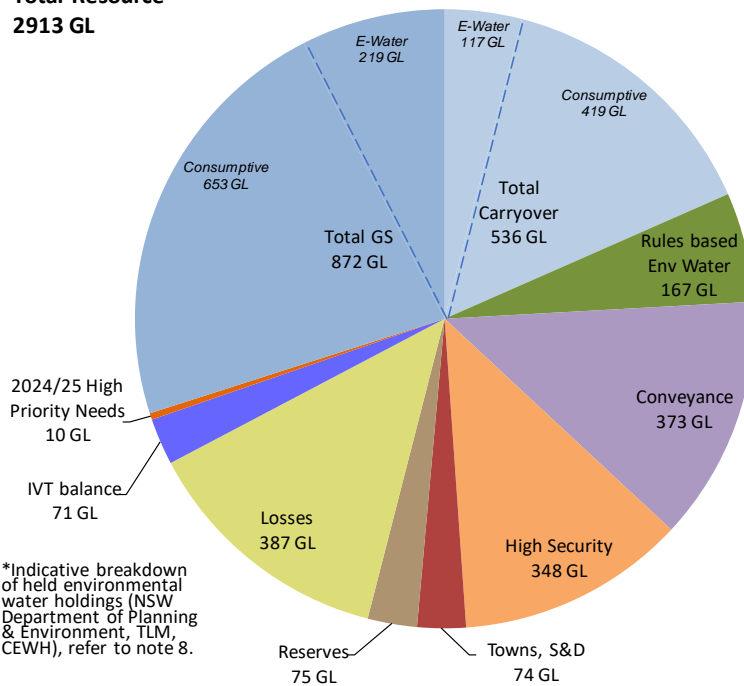
Resource Distribution* (1 December) for 2023-24	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	2,912
less	
Carryover ⁽⁸⁾	536
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽²⁾	167
Towns, Stock, Domestic (100%)	74
Reserves ⁽³⁾	75
Conveyance ⁽⁴⁾	373
Announced High Security (95%)	348
Losses (transmission, evaporation, operational) ⁽⁵⁾	387
Murrumbidgee IVT account (this is the carryover remaining from 1 July) ⁽⁶⁾	71

Announced General Security (46%) ⁽⁸⁾	872
Year 2 (2024-25) high priority needs ⁽⁷⁾	10

*See notes below

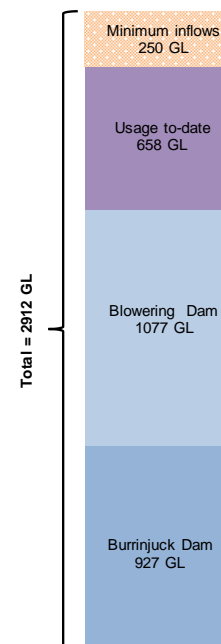
Murrumbidgee resource distribution 2023-24 – 1 December 2023

Total Resource
2913 GL



*Indicative breakdown of held environmental water holdings (NSW Department of Planning & Environment, TLM, CEWH), refer to note 8.

Supply Distribution⁽⁹⁾



*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 750 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 63 GL) and environmental water allowances (EWA1 = 100 GL, EWA2 = 4 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 conservative volume required to run the river to meet demands for the remainder of the water year. This includes storage evaporation, transmission and operational loss. This estimate is updated monthly.
- 6) IVT account carryover value into 2023-24. Does not necessarily reflect the current IVT balance. Balance was reduced by 18 GL (equating to the IVT spill which occurred on 14 August 2023) from 89 GL to 71 GL.
- 7) 2024-2025 high priority needs on 1 July - volume set aside to cover high priority needs on 1 July 2024, for ‘Year 2’.
- 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 219 GL of GS, 11 GL of HS, 76 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, TLM and CEWH. 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). It also includes the current balance of the Blowering Compensation Account, which is held within the Snowy Scheme and only delivered if Blowering storage levels get critically low.

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: water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/allocations-availability/allocations/how-water-is-allocated/resource-assessment-process

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