Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update

3 February 2020

Murrumbidgee Valley

Water allocation update

The Murrumbidgee regulated river water allocation remains **unchanged at six per cent of entitlement.**

Though some areas of the Murrumbidgee catchment received up to 100 mm of rainfall in the latter half of January, no significant inflows were observed. Total system inflows were just 4 gigalitres (GL) in January. Furthermore, the aggregate inflows for the previous 36 months are tracking close to their minimums.

The continuing drought conditions, with extremely low inflows and record high temperatures, is resulting in low inflows and high losses. If water availability conditions continue to deteriorate in coming months, drought management strategies may need to be enacted.

Good rainfall and inflow can occur at any time; however, it is statistically more likely in winter. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored and water allocation statements updated fortnightly, ensuring that any water that does become available is safely and promptly allocated in accordance with statutory water sharing plans.

The current bushfires have had no major impacts to river operations. However, fire affected landscape may result in changed runoff behaviour and quality, the nature and extent of which will be evident over time.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage
Murrumbidgee	95%	6%	8%	Stage 1

Drought stage

The **Murrumbidgee Valley** regulated river water source is in Stage 1 drought criticality, meaning all allocated water can be delivered under normal regulated river operations. Drought conditions across NSW continue to persist and the resource situation is being monitored closely to ensure Murrumbidgee high priority needs can remain secure for 2020-21.

More information on NSW's Extreme Events Policy and related drought stages can be found at: **www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events**

Storage levels (as at 29 January 2020)

- Blowering Dam is 37.7 per cent full – steady – holding 632,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is 30.6 per cent full – falling – holding 317,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for February to April shows no clear indication of drier or wetter than average conditions for a majority of the catchment. Temperatures are likely to be warmer than average.

The Bureau indicates that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) remains neutral. Modelling suggests that the ENSO is likely to remain neutral through autumn. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) has returned to neutral from a very strong positive IOD event, and will remain neutral for the coming months.

For further details: **www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary**

Trade

Trade **out, into and within** the Murrumbidgee valley is open (as of 31 January 2020). Water users are encouraged to monitor the WaterNSW website (**www.waternsw.com.au**) for daily information about the IVT account balance and status of trade. Trade **out** of the valley will close when the IVT balance increases to 100 GL.

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the NSW Murray and Lower Darling valleys will be on **Monday 17 February 2020**.

From mid-February, forecasts of indicative starting allocations for 1 July 2020 will be included in the mid-month water allocation statements. This aims to help water users with their end of year management decisions. Forecast conditions are best estimates only and not guaranteed water availability. They should be used with caution, particularly when they project many months ahead.

Murrumbidgee resource assessment data sheet

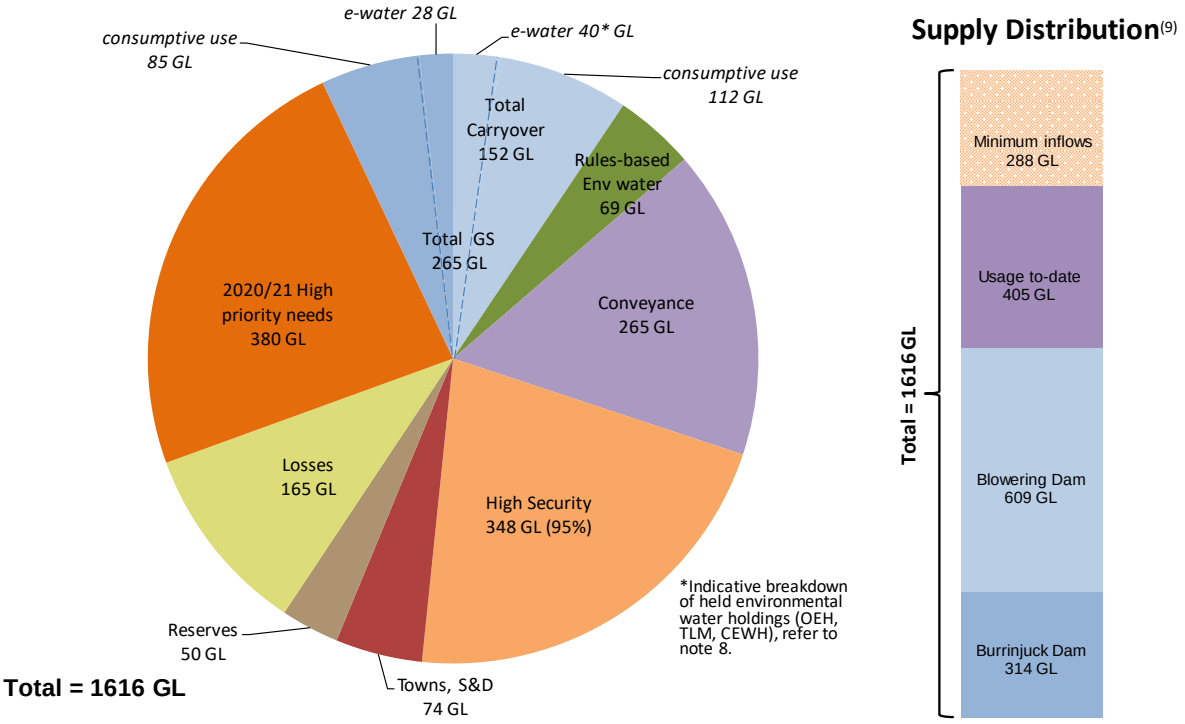
Resource Distribution (3 February) for 2019-20	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource[1]	1,616
less	
Carryover (GS and Conveyance) [8]	152
Rules based Environmental Water[2]	69
Towns, Stock, Domestic	74 (100%)
Reserves[3]	50
Conveyance[4]	265
Announced High Security	348 (95%)
Losses (transmission, evaporation, operational)[5]	165
Late Season Inflows[6]	0
Announced General Security[8]	113 (6%)
Future (2020-21) high priority needs[7]	380

See notes below.

Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update

Murrumbidgee resource distribution 2019-20 – 3 February 2020



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 drought 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 (2019-20) is estimated to be about 880GL (includes montane release). Net Jounama release from 1 May 2019 to date has been around 770 GL.
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 43 GL) and environmental water allowances (EWA1 = 0 GL, EWA2 = 26 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 25GL per dam as an operational reserve, and Provisional Storage Volumes (PSV1 = nil, 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 – is 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) Late Season Inflows – is the estimated inflow volume that will arrive into storage late in the year, after the peak irrigation demand season (usually post-February). This water cannot be allocated to water users at the start of the water-year, as it can create an expectation that the water is available for delivery before it is captured in storage.
7) Future high priority needs – it is required to look ahead to next water year (2020-21) to ensure there is sufficient resource available to meet high priority commitments on 1 July 2020. This volume is estimated to be about 380 GL. This value changes from month to month based on the complex interaction of climatic factors, projected historical inflow sequence including Snowy Hydro Required Annual Releases forecast, usage/potential carryover, and actual transmission and operational losses as the water year unfolds.
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 28GL of GS, 15 GL of HS, 43 GL of conveyance allocation and 40 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). Details on e-water 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).

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