

17 July 2023

# NSW Murray and Lower Darling

## Water allocation update\*

*\*This statement has been updated to correct values in the pie chart only. While there is no change to water in accounts the previous version of this statement showed an incorrect split between environmental and consumptive water in the general security allocation.*

There is a 55% increase to general security allocation in the NSW Murray regulated river water source taking allocations to their maximum annual limit for 2023/24 of 110% of entitlement. In addition, high security and conveyance entitlements have also been incremented to their full allocation of 100% of entitlement, in accordance with the water sharing plan.

All **Lower Darling** regulated river entitlements, including **general security**, received their maximum allocation (100%) for this water year on 1 July 2023.

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

Rainfall over the past few weeks has facilitated ongoing unregulated conditions in the NSW Murray system. Subject to their licence conditions and approved periods of access, supplementary access licence holders can continue to take water. Details of supplementary access opportunity can be found at: [waterinsights.waternsw.com.au](http://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au)

However, **general security uncontrolled flow access provisions are no longer available** as full allocations for general security have been achieved.

The Barmah Millewa Environmental Water Allowance (BMEWA) account is fully available in 2023/24 but is subject to spill commensurate to Hume spill volumes, as per the operating rules of the allowance. For the 2023/24 water year, all but 100 gigalitres (GL) of the allowance is subject to spill. Therefore, if sufficient spill at Hume is recorded, the allowance will spill down to 100 GL.

The Menindee Lakes System (MLS) is currently holding around 1,435,000 megalitres (ML). The MLS are currently a shared resource, meaning it is subject to the sharing rules of the Murray Darling Basin Agreement and is support Murray commitments. Operations updates from WaterNSW can be found at: [waterinsights.waternsw.com.au](http://waterinsights.waternsw.com.au).

Further improvements in resource will be used to assure high priority needs for 2024-25, and subject to sufficient resource being available, assist in an opening allocation to general security. With dry conditions forecast, further resource improvements are expected to accrue slower than those observed over the recent wet period.

## Year to date allocations for 2023/24

2023/24	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	100%	110% <sup>#</sup>	43% <sup>*</sup>
Lower Darling	100%	100% <sup>#</sup>	4% <sup>*</sup>

<sup>#</sup> Availability of allocation on individual licences is subject to account limits as per the rules in the water sharing plan.

<sup>\*</sup> Carryover in private accounts can be considered forfeited and replaced by allocation when full allocations are announced.

## Murray storage levels (as at 17 July 2023)\*

- Dartmouth Dam is 97% full – stable – holding 3,755,000 ML
- Hume Dam is 97% full – stable – holding 2,905,000 ML
- Lake Victoria is 75% full – stable – holding 505,000 ML
- Menindee Lakes System is 83% full – stable – holding 1,435,000 ML

\* The NSW Murray share of this water is approximately 49%, 50%, 41% and 33% for these storages respectively, or 46% in total (averaged across all storages).

## Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology’s seasonal outlook for August to October shows that rainfall is very likely to be below median. Daytime 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. Models indicate that El Niño conditions may develop in the coming weeks. Furthermore, positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions may develop in the coming weeks also. Should El Niño or negative IOD conditions develop, rainfall will likely be drier than median conditions.

Further details at: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary)

## Trade

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah choke remains restricted to ‘**no net trade downstream**’. Downstream trade opens to the extent of the volume of any upstream trade. Water users are advised to monitor the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) website ([www.mdba.gov.au](http://www.mdba.gov.au)) for information about the trade balance and status of trade across the Barmah choke.

Temporary trade between the Lower Darling and the Murray is open and will likely remain open until the Menindee Lakes system next falls below 480 GL. Trade within the Lower Darling regulated river water source also remains open.

Trade **out of the Murrumbidgee** and **into the Murrumbidgee is open** (as of 17 July 2023). Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website ([www.watarnsw.com.au](http://www.watarnsw.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 managed within its normal 0 GL to 100 GL operating range. The

Murrumbidgee IVT balance can rapidly fluctuate, and information presented in this statement is current at the time of its 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 while Murrumbidgee allocations are substantially lower, and with Murrumbidgee storages spilling, 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 for trade out of the Murrumbidgee. Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website ([www.waternsw.com.au](http://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 accompanied by a reassignment of physical water (resource) in storages 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 reassigned resource will spill. Therefore, 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.

More information on temporary water restrictions can be found at:

[www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions)

## Next announcement

As all entitlements in the NSW Murray have reached their full allocation, publication of regular statements will cease until March 2024. Nevertheless, a quarterly update of conditions will be provided in about October and in January, highlighting any significant changes or observations.

As usual, from Friday 15 March 2024, monthly statements will commence to communicate the potential water availability on 1 July 2024 for the 2024-25 water year.

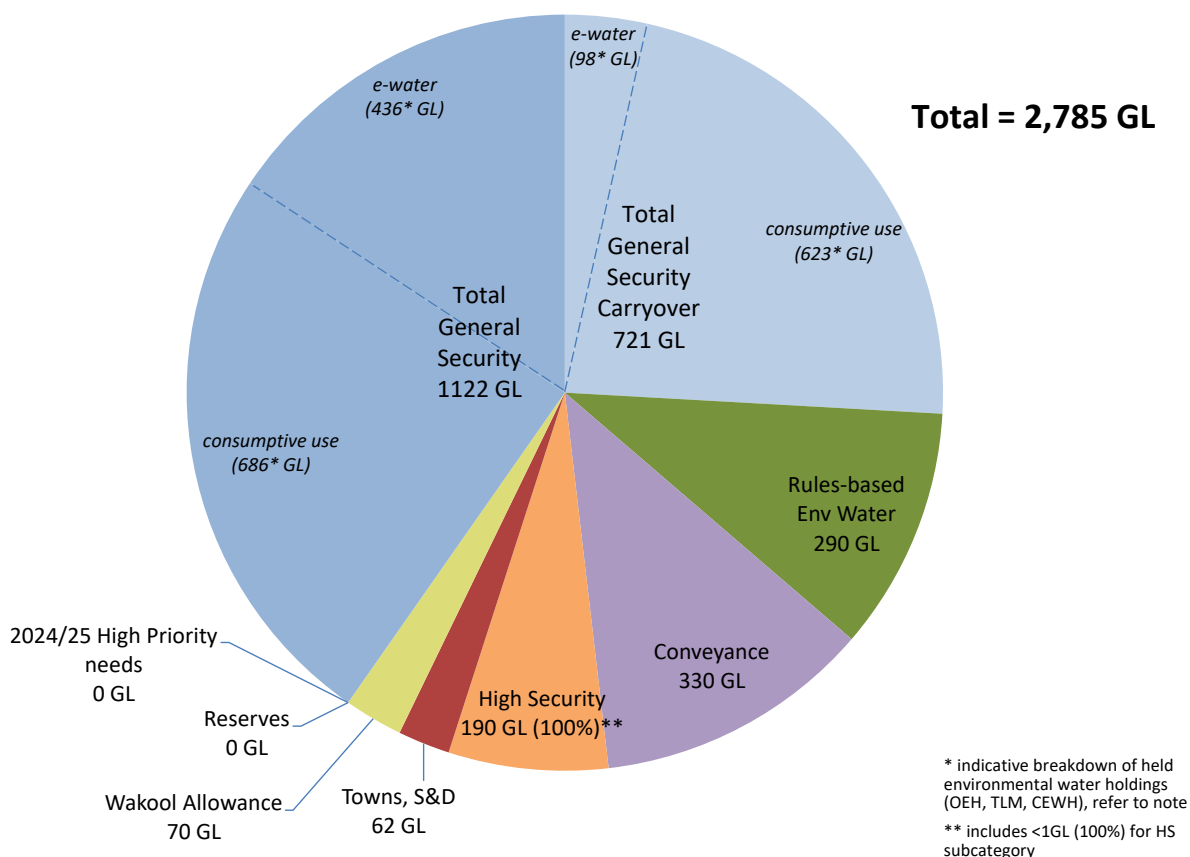
**Note: NSW Murray statements are now available online about 2:30pm on the day of the publication.**

## NSW Murray resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution* (17 July) for 2023/24	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource <sup>(1)</sup>	2,785
<b>less</b>	
Carryover <sup>(2), (8)</sup>	721
Rules based Environmental Water <sup>(3)</sup>	290
Towns, Stock, Domestic <sup>(4)</sup>	62 (100%)
Announced High Security subcategory <sup>(4)</sup>	<1 (100%)
Announced High Security <sup>(4)</sup>	190 (100%)
Conveyance <sup>(5)</sup>	330 (100%)
Wakool Allowance <sup>(6)</sup>	70
Reserves <sup>(7)</sup>	0
Announced General Security <sup>(8)(9)</sup>	1,122 (110%)
Year 2 (2024-25) high priority needs <sup>(10)</sup>	0

\*See notes below

## NSW Murray resource distribution 2023/24 – 17 July 2023

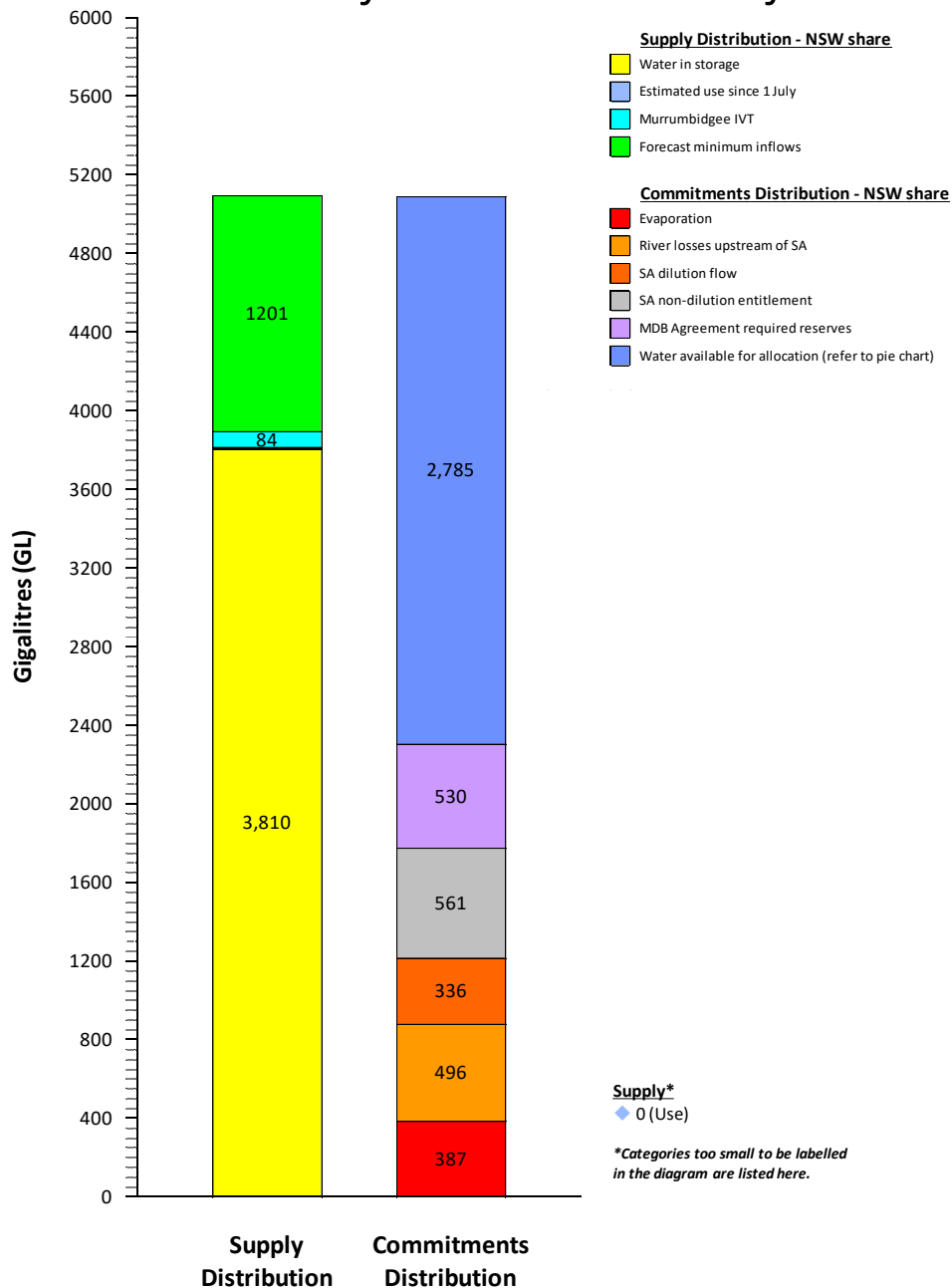


### Data sheet notes

- (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 (99%ile) inflows for the 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 M1 releases to date for this water year (2023/24) is estimated to be about 178 GL. NSW is not in Special Accounting with South Australia (SA). The details of Special Accounting can be found in the MDB Agreement clauses 123-129. Special Accounting is triggered when forecasts indicate that NSW will have an end of year reserve of less than 1,250 GL.
- (2) Carryover - NSW Murray general security (GS) water users can carryover a maximum account balance of 50% of their entitlement into the following water year. The account limit is 110% of entitlement, meaning that account credits from allocation and/or carryover cannot exceed 110% of entitlement in any water year. The limit does not include allocation trade.
- (3) Primarily rules-based planned environmental water (PEW) - water required to be set aside to provide for riverine environments, as per the Water Sharing Plan and other inter-jurisdictional agreements. In the NSW Murray this includes the Murray Additional Allowance (MAA) (currently 6 GL), Barmah-Millewa Allowance (B-MA) (265 GL - fully available). It also includes River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF) in Hume, accrued as part of the Snowy Water Initiative (currently 19 GL). The total commitments to MAA, B-MA and RMIF will decrease over the water year as they are released from Hume for use. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water, 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 licences 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 100% 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 GS allocation.
- (6) Wakool Allowance - a conveyance volume necessary for NSW to operate the Edward-Wakool system. Typically up to

- 70 GL is required.
- (7) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans, up to 61 GL; set aside for critical human needs in accordance with Clause 11.03 of the Basin Plan.
  - (8) Held environmental water (HEW) – water administered by environmental water holders is reported here, with the associated portions of GS allocation and carryover also 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 436 GL of GS, 98 GL of GS carryover, 25 GL of HS, 50 GL of conveyance allocation. 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) GS carryover plus allocation is equal to 1842 GL, equating to 110% of general security. GS cannot exceed 110%.
  - (10) 2024-2025 high priority needs on 1 July 2024 - volume set aside for high priority needs on 1 July 2024, for 'Year 2'.

### NSW Murray water balance – 17 July 2023



#### Water balance notes:

- (1) Supply and Commitments Distribution – The volumes in the categories shown are only those relating to NSW's share of the resource, at the end of the preceding month. The categories include the following:
  - Water in storage: Volumes in the dams at the end of the previous month. (Excludes water in storage unavailable to NSW)

- under the water sharing arrangements of the Murray Darling Basin Agreement).
- Estimated use since 1 July: Estimated NSW usage to-date, reconciled periodically with hydrographic updates (meter readings).
- Forecast inflows: NSW's share of forecast inflows into the River Murray System based on assumed extremely dry future conditions (includes Snowy Hydro's guaranteed inflows for the water year, and Murrumbidgee end of system flows).
- IVT: Total tributary system water bought by Murray system users that is yet to be delivered.
- Evaporation: Water set aside for evaporation for the remainder of the year. This reduces as the year progresses.
- River losses upstream of SA: Water budgeted for transmission losses from the River Murray system upstream of the South Australian border for the remainder of the year. Generally reduces as the water year progresses.
- SA non-dilution entitlement: Water to supply South Australia's entitlement flow, as required under the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Agreement. Generally reduces as water year progresses.
- SA dilution flow: Water to provide South Australia's dilution and conveyance component of flow, as required under the MDB Agreement. Reduces as the year progresses. Note that Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) is currently triggered.
- MDB Agreement required reserves: Includes conveyance reserve and minimum reserve to be set aside for use in the next water year, 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. Allocation of this volume is provided in the above table and pie chart.

## 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 NSW Murray regulated system is available at: [www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations/how-water-is-allocated/resource-assessment-process](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations/how-water-is-allocated/resource-assessment-process)

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