

NSW Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers

Water allocation update

There is a 7% allocation increase to General Security entitlements in the NSW Murray regulated river water source. The increment brings the cumulative General Security allocation to 42% in this water source. Incorporating average carryover of around 41%, the total water availability averaged across all General Security entitlements in the NSW Murray regulated river water source is around 83%.

All entitlements in the Lower Darling regulated river water source were fully allocated on 1 July 2024, therefore, no further allocations are permitted this water year in accordance with the Water Sharing Plan.

Improvements in resource facilitating the allocation increase announced today is due to higher than assumed minimum inflows and a lower carryover liability than previously assumed.

The Barmah-Millewa Forest Environmental Water Allowance has not been borrowed this water year and is fully available. The allowance volume included in this assessment is based on the estimated volume anticipated at the end of July. The volume will be firmed up in the August resource assessment.

Carryover volumes assumed in this resource assessment are based on provisional data. Carryover volumes will be finalised in August once water user accounts have been reconciled and finalised.

The Menindee Lakes System is currently holding around 1,110,000 megalitres. The Menindee Lakes System is currently operated as a shared resource in accordance with the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement. It will remain a shared resource until it drops below 480,000 megalitres, after which it will be operated to meet Lower Darling needs only.

Cumulative allocations for 2024/25

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murray	97%	42%	41%
Lower Darling	100%	100%*	3%

*maximum allowable.

Murray storage levels (as at 13 July 2024)

- Dartmouth Dam is 94% full – holding about 3,640 gigalitres (GL).
- Hume Dam is 69% full – holding about 2,085 GL.
- Lake Victoria is 79 % full – holding about 535 GL.
- Menindee Lakes System is 64% full – holding about 1,110 GL.

Climatic outlook

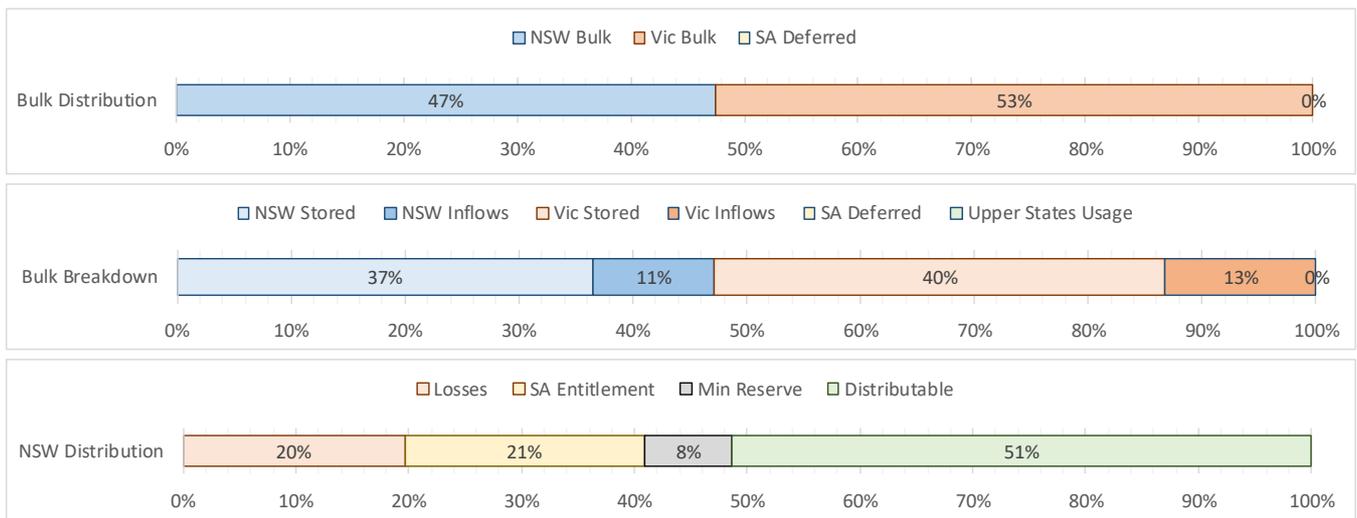
The Bureau of Meteorology’s seasonal outlook for August to October 2024 indicates that rainfall will likely be around average to above average across the catchment. Day and overnight temperatures are likely to be above median over the next three months.

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

State sharing of the Murray Resource

The bulk accounts assessment indicates that around 8,615 gigalitres (GL) of total shared Murray resource is available in the extreme dry (99th percentile) case. The NSW share of this resource is approximately 4,100 GL based on the rules in the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Agreement. After removing commitments required under the MDB Agreement, including losses in operating the River Murray System, South Australia’s entitlement flow and the minimum reserve, the assessment results in a volume of Murray resource for NSW to allocate of 2,084 GL.

Distribution of Murray Resources



The breakdown of the Murray resources is provided in the graphs above. The breakdown is based on the 99% inflow scenario, which is the scenario used by NSW for its allocations and water sharing framework. The NSW government’s acceptable risk, on behalf of all water users including towns and the environment, is given in the water sharing plan. NSW is required to work to the minimum inflow scenario prior to the commencement of the plan (2004). The MDBA’s 99% scenario closely aligns with the minimum inflow pre-2004 scenario. Therefore, NSW distributes the volume provided by the MDBA’s 99% scenario to satisfy the water sharing plan.

It is important to note that other jurisdictions make allocations based on their own water sharing framework and risk appetite. Therefore this 99% (extreme dry) scenario should not be used to infer allocation announcements by other jurisdictions.

Additional notes for the graphs are provided below:

- **Bulk Distribution Graph** – distribution of bulk resource into NSW’s bulk share, Victorian bulk share and South Australia’s deferred storage. **Of the total resource available in the Murray under the 99% scenario, NSW is entitled to approximately 47% of it.**
- **Bulk Breakdown** – breakdown of distribution of bulk resource, as per the Bulk Distribution Graph, by state and resource source (i.e. stored water vs future inflow). **Of the 47% of the total bulk resource which NSW is entitled to (under the Bulk Distribution Graph),**

approximately 37% is sourced from stored water and 11% is sourced from future inflows, with the remainder coming from usage to date.

- Future inflow includes minimum inflows into major storages, expected tributary inflows and un-delivered IVT balance.
- As the distributable resource is comprised of usage to date, usage in NSW and Victoria contributes to the total resource made available to date. Note, other jurisdictions may report on remaining account balances, which does not require the incorporation of usage to date. NSW reports on total water made available to date, which must include water which has been used to date.
- **NSW Distribution** – breakdown of the resource which NSW is entitled to (i.e. the 47% component of the bulk resource under the Bulk Distribution Graph).
 - 20% of the resource NSW is entitled to is required for losses.
 - 21% of the resource NSW is entitled to is required to meet commitments to South Australia (dilution and non-dilution) as per the Murray Darling Basin Agreement.
 - 8% of the resource NSW is entitled to is required to meet minimum reserve requirements as per the Murray Darling Basin Agreement.
 - Leaving **51% of the resource NSW is entitled to for distribution amongst its water users as per the Water Sharing Plan. Distributable resource includes usage to date.**

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) 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 system next falls below 480 GL. Trade within the Lower Darling regulated river water source also remains open.

Trade **out of Murrumbidgee is closed** and **trade into the Murrumbidgee is open** (as of 13 July 2024). Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.watarnsw.com.au) for daily information about the IVT account balance, the status of trade, and other important information. 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.

NSW Murray resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution* (15 July) for 2024/25	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	2,084
<i>less</i>	
Carryover ^{(2), (8)}	690
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	156
Towns, Stock, Domestic (100%) ⁽⁴⁾	62
High Security subcategory (100%) ⁽⁴⁾	<1
High Security (97%) ⁽⁴⁾	184
Conveyance ⁽⁵⁾	219

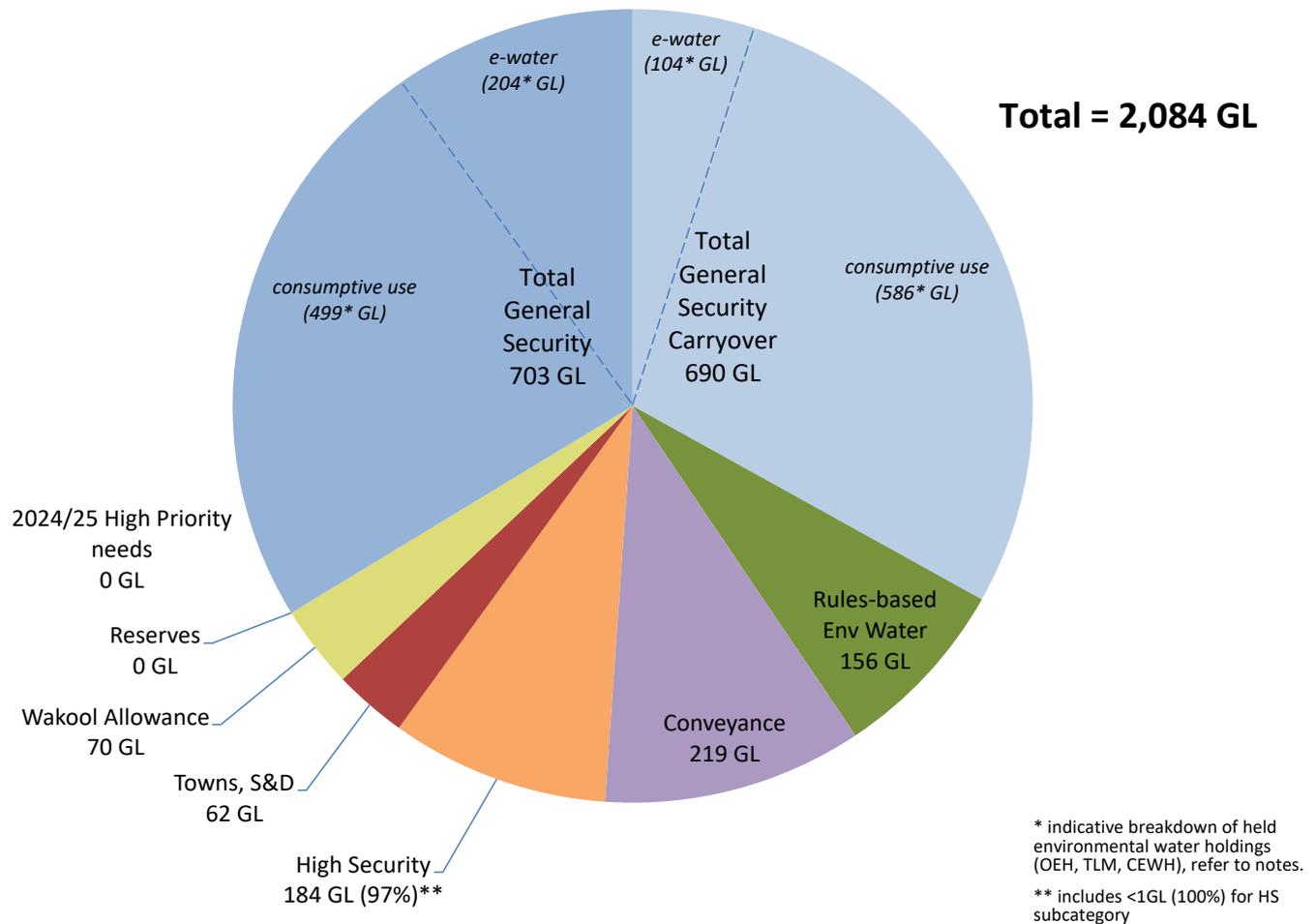
Wakool Allowance ⁽⁶⁾	70
Reserves ⁽⁷⁾	0
General Security (42%) ⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾	703
2025/26 high priority needs reserve ⁽¹⁰⁾	0

equals

Surplus (or deficit) ⁽¹¹⁾	0
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*See notes below

NSW Murray resource distribution 2024/25 – 15 July 2024

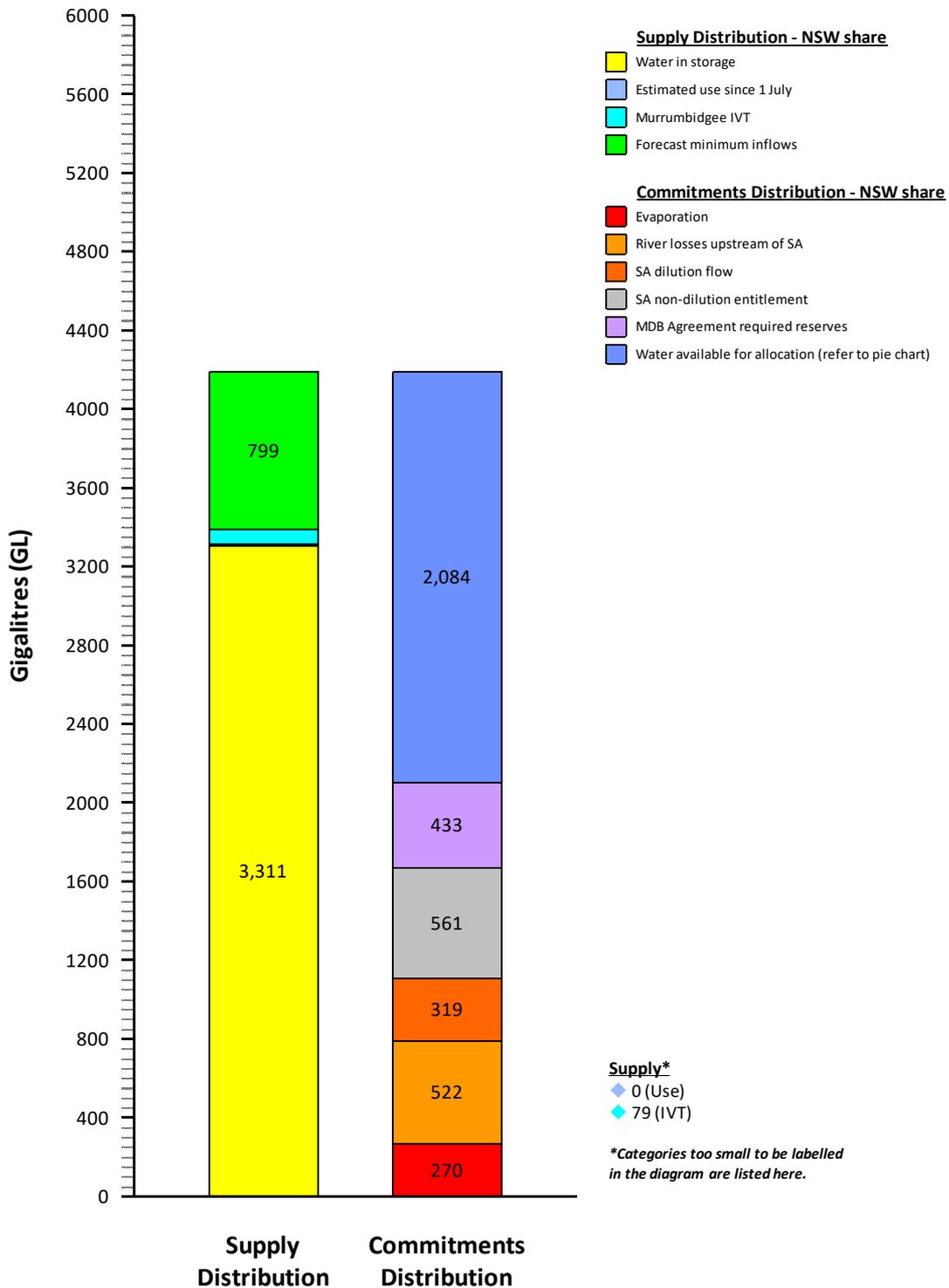


Data sheet notes

- (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 (MDB) 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 (2024/25) is estimated to be about 236 GL. NSW is not in Special Accounting with South Australia. 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 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) (150 GL). It also includes River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF) in Hume, accrued as part of the Snowy Water Initiative (currently 0 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 licenses in the Murray Water Source. High Security subcategory licences that are present in the NSW 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 Security and General Security allocations.
- (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 General Security allocation and carryover also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting of HEW is limited to only NSW entitlements, reporting of credits to accounts (not usage or trade), and estimated to be 204 GL of General Security, 104 GL of General Security carryover, 25 GL of High Security, 33 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 Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, The Living Murray and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. Details on environmental holdings can be found on individual agency websites.
- (9) General Security carryover plus allocation is equal to 1393 GL, equating to 83% of General Security. General Security cannot exceed 110%.
- (10) 2025/26 high priority needs on 1 July 2025 - volume set aside for high priority needs on 1 July 2025, for ‘Year 2’.
- (11) Remaining unallocated water. Any surplus volume which was insufficient to provide an additional increment to allocations in the current assessment will be used in future resource assessments, if possible, to underpin allocation increases and meet any necessary Water Sharing Plan requirements. Any deficit volume will be covered by any future resource improvements prior to any further allocation increases.

NSW Murray water balance – 15 July 2024



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.
 - 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. Generally 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, may included the Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) when 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.

Chances of improvement

The potential improvements in NSW Murray General Security allocations, based on a repeat of historical inflows, are provided in the table below under a range of conditions from wet to extreme dry. The forecast is based on all available historical data, which gives a more optimistic outlook than using just the driest years on record (dry tercile).

It is important to note that these estimates are indicative improvements only and are not guaranteed allocations. Estimates are subject to change based on weather conditions, water user behaviour, water management decisions and other events. This means water users should use this information with caution and at their own risk, particularly as it projects many months ahead.

Forecast General Security allocations (%)

(Any carryover water can be added to these indicative allocations)

Repeat of historical inflow conditions	1 Sep 2024	1 Nov 2024
99 chances in 100 (extreme) (99%)	42%	42%
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	42%	53%
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)	49%	66%
1 chance in 2 (mean) (50%)	59%*	110%*
1 chance in 4 (wet) (25%)	110%*	110%*

Note 1: Estimated values indicative only, not guaranteed and subject to change based on actual events unfolding.

Note 2: Statistical values reflect NSW share of inflows, not whole of system inflows.

Note 3: Forecast incorporates Murrumbidgee regulated end of system flows.

* Potential storage spills may limit resource improvements if usage is limited, as spilling storages and low usage means liabilities do not retire from the storages, and therefore resources do not improve. Therefore, actual allocations for the given inflow condition may be lower than forecast.

Water Allocation Guide

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has produced a series of guides to describe the water allocation methods for most NSW regulated river systems. The guide for this regulated system is available at the following link:

[Resource assessment process | Water \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Further information

The next statement will be published on Thursday, 2:30 pm, 1 August 2024.

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