

15 March 2022

# Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source

## Water allocation

Murrumbidgee regulated river water source allocations to general security licences reached full allocation of 100% of entitlement in November 2021. Under the water sharing plan rules, no further allocations are permitted this water year. However, since then, resources have continued to accrue in storage and will be used for opening allocations on 1 July 2022.

This statement provides a preliminary outlook of opening water availability for 2022-23. These early estimates are intended as a guide only for water users in assisting their end-of-year decisions.

With significant uncertainty in weather patterns and water users' actions for the remainder of the water year, all outlooks should be used with caution and are subject to change. The figures will be updated in mid-April and mid-May and are expected improve in accuracy as 1 July 2022 approaches.

2021-22	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murrumbidgee	100%	100%*	22%*

\*Availability of allocation on individual licences is subject to account limits given in the water sharing plan. The general security account limit is 100% (excluding trade). Carryover plus allocations received in 2021/22 cannot exceed this limit.

## Storage levels (as at 14 March 2022)

- Blowering Dam is about 95% full – falling – holding about 1,540,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is about 95% full – rising – holding about 970,000 ML.

## Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for April to June indicates that rainfall is likely to be near average across the catchment and above average for daytime and overnight temperatures.

The Bureau indicates that the 2021–22 La Niña is past its peak, with outlooks indicating a return to neutral El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) levels – neither La Niña nor El Niño – during the southern hemisphere autumn. As La Niña weakens, it will continue to influence global weather and climate. The Indian Ocean Dipole is neutral and is forecast to remain neutral for the coming months.

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

## Trade

The normal operating range for the Murrumbidgee Inter-Valley Trade (IVT) account is between 0 GL and 100 GL, however; the use of tagged licences has pushed the balance outside of these limits. The account balance is currently about 125 GL. Trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee is **closed**, while trade **into** the Murrumbidgee Valley is **open** (as of 14 March 2022). 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.

## IVT in 2022/23

The IVT balance, which is effectively Murray water waiting to be delivered from Murrumbidgee storages, was spilt in November 2021 when Murrumbidgee storages were spilling. This boosted resources in the Murrumbidgee when full allocation had already been reached in the NSW Murray. It is conceivable a similar situation could arise in the 2022/23 water year.

When water physically spills from Murrumbidgee storage (including pre-release for airspace), a decision must be made to spill or retain any IVT balance. Therefore, in general:

- A decision to spill the IVT balance is likely when Murrumbidgee general security allocations are significantly behind the NSW Murray, as it provides a boost to Murrumbidgee allocations.
- A decision to retain the IVT balance, despite a Murrumbidgee storage spill, is likely when Murrumbidgee allocations are similar or better than NSW Murray, as this prevents a loss of NSW Murray resource.

Conditions will be monitored closely and any decision to spill the IVT balance in 2022-23 will be communicated to water users and markets at least 10 days before the IVT account adjustment and any implications for trade. The IVT account balance on 30 June 2022 will be carried forward unchanged on 1 July 2022 into the 2022-23 water year.

## Next announcement

The next monthly statement will be published on **Tuesday 19 April 2022** to update the information contained in this statement and to assist water users with end of year water management decisions.

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## Outlook for 2022-23

A preliminary water availability outlook for the start of the next water year (1 July 2022) is provided below. It is still too early for certainty with such forecasts, however; it is expected that outlooks will become more reliable as the forecast period reduces each month.

The water availability outlook for next year is indicative only, not guaranteed, and should be used with caution, particularly when projecting many months ahead. Nevertheless, it aims to help water users with their end of year water management decisions.

### Key information

- This outlook for 1 July 2022 water availability is conservatively based on extreme dry (99th percentile) conditions from April 2022 to the end of 2022-23. The resulting indicative forecast general security (GS) allocations for September and November 2022 under a range of possible inflow scenarios are provided in the table below to assist water users to plan ahead.
- For context, the Murrumbidgee regulated system has experienced very wet conditions this water year. That is, based on long term inflow statistics, about nine-tenths of years would generally experience drier conditions than those experienced this year.
- The forecast information is not guaranteed and should be used at one's own risk. It will be updated in the mid-April and mid-May water allocation statements and will become more reliable as the forecast period reduces.
- Although extreme dry conditions are conservatively assumed, significant rainfall and inflows can occur at any time, and forecasts will be adjusted accordingly.
- Due to wet conditions and low usage this water year, the maximum permissible carryover volume is assumed for the 2022-23 water year. That is, it is assumed, at this stage, that the General Security and Conveyance carryover will be around 30% of entitlement, some 680,000 ML.
- The undelivered IVT balance at the end of this water year (2021/22) will be carried over unchanged to the next water year (2022-23). The IVT balance is held in Murrumbidgee storages and is a callable resource available to the NSW Murray.
- If wet conditions persist, a situation similar to earlier this year may arise where, due to full storages, allocations stall as there is no space available to capture new resource. Only when liabilities reduce, through water usage, and that airspace is refilled, can allocations increase.
- Once the commencing allocations are announced on 1 July 2022, regular assessments will be undertaken and allocation announcements made fortnightly on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, or the following working day, as usual, until full allocations are achieved.

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### Indicative allocations on 1 July 2022 for 2022-23

- Full (100%) allocation can be expected for **towns, domestic** and **stock** access licences, and **sub-category high security** entitlements.
- Full allocations for **supplementary (incl. Lowbidgee)** access licence holders can be expected and is available subject to announced periods of supplementary access.
- Forecasts show likely 95% allocation for **high security** entitlements.
- Full **carryover** is expected to be available, some 680,000 ML, on 1 July.
- **Conveyance** will be allocated in accordance with water sharing plan rules, commensurate with high security and general security.

- Forecasts indicate sufficient resource to provide a likely commencing **general security** allocation of around 15% of entitlement.
- Water can be expected to be set aside for environmental requirements in accordance with the rules of the Murrumbidgee regulated rivers water sharing plan.

## Chances of improvement

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The chances of improved Murrumbidgee general security allocations after 1 July 2022, based on a repeat of historical inflows, are provided in the table below under a variety of conditions. The forecast is based on all available historical data, which gives a better 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 may change based on weather variability, 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 Sept 2022	1 Nov 2022
99 chances in 100 (extreme) (99%)	15%	15%
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	20%	26%
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)	27%	36%
1 chance in 2 (mean) (50%)	39%	48%*
1 chance in 4 (wet) (25%)	42%	49%*

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

Note 2: Forecast assumes 30% carryover on average.

\* Likely higher 5%-10% higher if conditions met for IVT spill.

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