

19 May 2023

# NSW Groundwater Allocation Statement

## Water allocation update and outlook

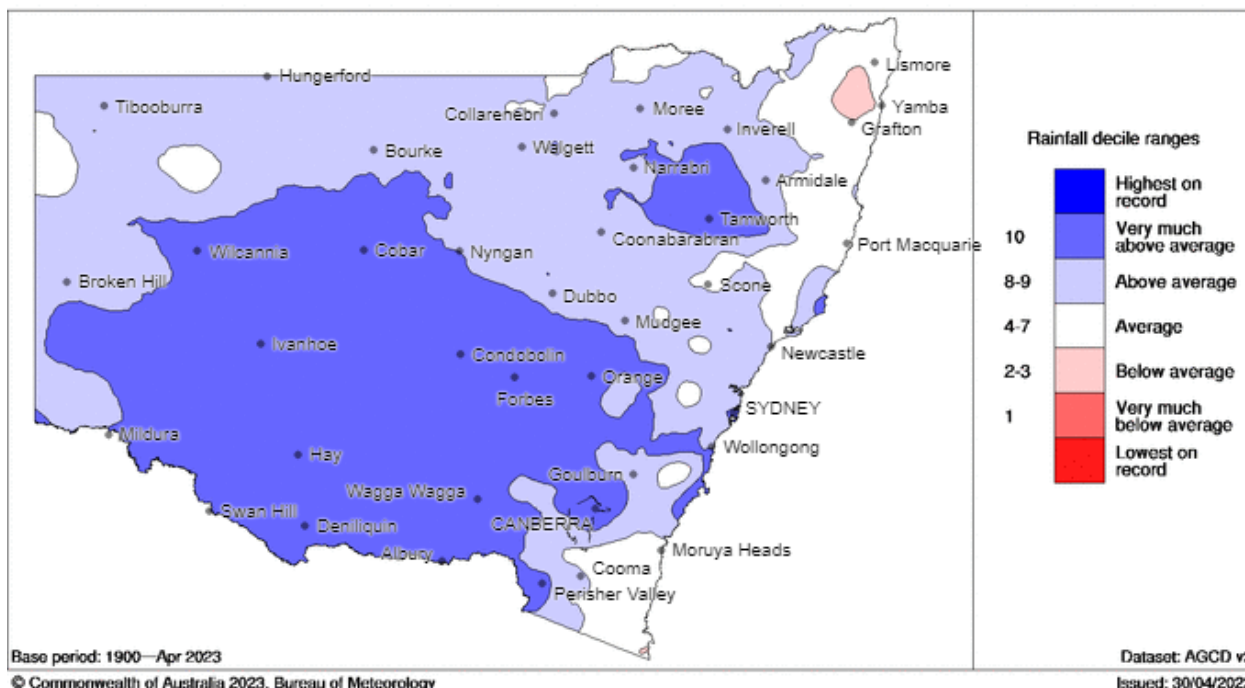
This statement reflects on current conditions and anticipates water allocations for 1 July and the 2023-24 water year. The outlooks are not a guarantee of future allocation therefore water users should apply the information with caution and at their own risk.

Current indications are that, due to exceptional water availability including generally modest levels of extraction and likely good river flows associated with highly connected systems, **all groundwater licence categories across all ground water sources are likely to receive full allocations** on 1 July 2023 for the water year 2023-24.

Since February 2020 there has been good rainfall across much of the state. The rainfall deciles map below shows large areas have received greater than average rainfall for the twelve months to the end of April 2023. This rainfall has alleviated pumping pressures on groundwater.

New South Wales rainfall deciles 1 May 2022 to 30 April 2023

Australian Gridded Climate Data



Water sharing plans allow groundwater to be temporarily pumped for some years at higher volumes than the annual limit, provided long term average annual extractions are not exceeded. This provides users operational flexibility around seasonal variations including droughts.

The plans set limits on the years that this higher level of extraction can continue. Once the compliance trigger is reached, groundwater allocations may be reduced until extraction is back within the long-term plan limit to prevent resource depletion.

As groundwater pumping volumes have significantly declined in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 water years, in response to wetter conditions, the annual average extraction over the water sharing plan compliance period has also declined.

The department's online dashboard provides information to water users on the likelihood of reduced groundwater access. Licence holders and interested stakeholders are encouraged to monitor the status of groundwater extraction through the department's dashboard at: [www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/tracking-groundwater](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/tracking-groundwater).

All licence holders in the northern inland "at risk" groundwater sources have been required to submit monthly meter reads since December 2021 under the rollout of the non-urban water metering rules. Timely usage data reduces the need for conservative estimates and in some cases eliminates the need for precautionary interim (reduced) allocations.

For some "at risk" groundwater sources, the requirement to submit monthly readings is yet to start. Nevertheless, licence holders are strongly encouraged to enter their meter readings into the WaterNSW Internet Water Accounting System (iWAS) as usage data is essential in the available water determination.

More information on the metering requirements can be found at: [water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/320199/non-urban-water-metering-in-NSW-what-water-users-need-to-know.pdf](http://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/320199/non-urban-water-metering-in-NSW-what-water-users-need-to-know.pdf).

The calculations for compliance with extraction limits, and the requirement to reduce allocation, are based on the volumes pumped in the current and previous years to determine the average annual extraction over the five-year compliance period. The plans have varying exceedance levels, typically 5% or 10% above the extraction limit.

As indicated above, recent exceptional water availability including moderate levels of extraction and likely good river flows associated with highly connected systems, mean all groundwater licence categories across all ground water sources are likely to receive full allocations for the water year 2023-24.

## Further information

Information on available water determinations and water sharing plans is available on the Department of Planning and Environment - Water website: [water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/home](http://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/home)

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