

15 March 2024

Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

The Murrumbidgee regulated valley is fully allocated for the current water year (2023/24). No further allocation increments are anticipated this water year based on the water sharing plan.

This Water Allocation Statement affirms the current water year allocations and provides an outlook for potential opening 2024/25 allocations on 1 July 2024, including likely increases in general security allocation under various inflows conditions to 1 September and 1 November 2024.

Since the valley reached full allocations on 1 February 2024 for the current water year, resources have continued to accrue. This additional resource will be used to meet high priority needs for 2024/25 on 1 July 2024, and likely provide a small opening general security allocation based on current forecasts (details below).

Drier conditions this water year compared to recent water years resulted in early demand and storage drawdown. This created airspace to capture some new resource in storage from higher than minimum inflows, and to a lesser extent, reduced losses.

Further rainfall and runoff, above assumed minimums, will help to increase resources and potentially boost opening allocations on 1 July 2024 beyond current estimates. Updates to the 2024/25 outlook will be provided in mid-April and mid-May 2024 and the reliability of 1 July forecasts should improve. However, water users are reminded that these forecasts are indicative only and not guaranteed allocations, and therefore should be used with caution.

Year to date allocations for 2023/24 (current water year)

2023/24	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Murrumbidgee	100%	100% [#]	28% [*]

[#] Water availability on individual licences is subject to account limits as per the rules in the water sharing plan.

^{*} Carryover in accounts can be considered forfeited and replaced by allocation when full allocations are announced.

Storage levels (as of 15 March 2024)

- Blowering Dam is 65% full – holding about 1,080,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is 81% full – holding about 830,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for April to June shows that rainfall may be below average, particularly for the headwater catchments. Daytime and overnight temperatures are expected to be warmer than average.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) index outlook indicator indicates El Niño conditions are active. The ENSO index is expected to return to neutral through winter. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) indicator is currently neutral, but may become positive in coming months, meaning it may influence a drier than average rainfall pattern.

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

Trade

Trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee is **closed** and trade **into** the Murrumbidgee is **open** (as of 15 March 2024). Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.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 operated between its normal 0 GL and 100 GL range. The Murrumbidgee IVT balance can rapidly fluctuate, and information presented in this statement is current at the time of writing.

Interstate 71V restriction

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 may be placed when there is a high risk of spill in Murray storages.

While no restriction is in place currently, conditions are being monitored closely and a restriction may be placed to protect NSW water users from adverse impacts associated with accepting incoming trades when storages are too full to hold a commensurate transfer of physical water.

More information on temporary water restrictions can be found at the following link:

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions>

Next announcement

The next monthly statement to update the 1 July 2024 opening allocation outlook will be published on Monday 15 April 2024.

Note: Statements are now available online from about 2:30pm on publication day.

Outlook for 2024-25

A water availability outlook for the start of the next water year (1 July 2024) is provided below. The outlook 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 2024 water availability is conservatively based on a recession of current flows to extreme dry (99th percentile) conditions to the end of 2024-25. The resulting indicative forecast general security allocations for September and November 2024 under a range of possible inflow scenarios are provided in the table below to assist planning by water users.
- The forecast information is not guaranteed and should be used at one's own risk.

- Based on the full allocations in 2023-24 and usage to date, the maximum permissible carryover volume is expected for the 2024-25 water year. That is, it is assumed 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 (2023/24) will be carried over unchanged to the next water year (2024/25). The IVT balance is held in Murrumbidgee storages and is a callable resource for the NSW Murray.
- Once the commencing allocations are announced on 1 July 2024, regular assessments will be undertaken and allocation announcements made fortnightly on the 1st and 15th of each month, or the following working day, as usual, until full allocations are achieved.

Indicative allocations on 1 July 2024 for the 2024/25 water-year

- Full (100%) allocation can be expected for **towns, domestic** and **stock** access licences, and **sub-category high security** entitlements.
- Full allocations for **supplementary (including Lowbidgee)** access licence holders can be expected however take of water will be subject to announced periods of supplementary access.
- Forecasts show likely 95% allocation for **high security** entitlements.
- Full **carryover** is expected to be deliverable, some 680,000 ML.
- **Conveyance** will be allocated in accordance with water sharing plan rules, commensurate with high security and general security allocations.
- Preliminary forecasts indicate sufficient resource to provide a likely commencing allocation to **general security** licenses of at least 5% of entitlement. Should resources continue to accrue from higher than minimum inflows, this commencing allocation can be expected to increase.
- Water will be set aside for environmental requirements in accordance with the rules of the Murrumbidgee regulated rivers water sharing plan.

Chances of improvement

The chances of improved Murrumbidgee general security allocations after 1 July 2024, 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 are likely 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 Sept 2024	1 Nov 2024
99 chances in 100 (extreme dry) (99%)	5%	5%
9 chances in 10 (very dry) (90%)	15%	22%
3 chances in 4 (dry) (75%)	20%	35%
1 chance in 2 (median) (50%)	35%*	65%*

1 chance in 4 (wet)	(25%)	45%*	100%*
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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.

* 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.

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 the Murrumbidgee regulated system is available at the following link:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-availability/allocations/how-water-is-allocated/resource-assessment-process>

Subscribe [here](#) to receive the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's monthly email update on water planning, management and reform in New South Wales.

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<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/contact>