

15 January 2020

Murrumbidgee Valley

Water allocation update

General Security allocations in the Murrumbidgee regulated river water source **remain unchanged**.

There has been minimal rainfall in the last month and inflows are tracking near assumed minimums. Extreme dry catchment conditions combined with high temperatures have caused high river losses and tributary inflows to crash. Storages received just 9 gigalitres (GL) of inflow in December.

The continuing drought conditions and extremely low inflows, combined with record high temperatures, is resulting in low water availability and increasing the losses in running the system. If conditions continue to deteriorate and inflows fall below assumed minimums, or the losses incurred in running the system are higher than anticipated, further drought management strategies may be enacted.

Though good inflows prior to winter/spring are unlikely based on historical patterns, individual storms can bring heavy rainfall and good inflows at any time. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored and water allocation statements updated, ensuring that any water that does become available is safely and promptly allocated in accordance with statutory water sharing plans.

The current bushfires have affected access to Blowering Dam site, however, water delivery is continuing as per normal operations. No major impact to operations is anticipated at this stage.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover	Drought Stage
Murrumbidgee	95%	6%	8%	 Stage 1

Drought stage

The **Murrumbidgee Valley** regulated river water source is in Stage 1 drought criticality, meaning all allocated water can be delivered under normal regulated river operations. Drought conditions across NSW continue to persist and the resource situation is being monitored closely to ensure Murrumbidgee high priority needs can remain secure for 2020-21.

More information on NSW's Extreme Events Policy and related drought stages can be found at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events

Storage levels (as at 13 January 2020)

- Blowering Dam is 38.6 per cent full – steady – holding 646,000 megalitres (ML).
- Burrinjuck Dam is 31.2 per cent full – falling – holding 323,000 ML.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for February to April shows no clear indication of drier or wetter than average conditions. Temperatures are likely to be warmer than average.

The Bureau indicates that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) remains neutral. ENSO is likely to remain neutral into winter. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) has returned to neutral from a very strong positive IOD event, and will remain so for the coming months.

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

Trade

Trade **out** of the Murrumbidgee Valley is closed; however, trade **into** and **within** the valley is open. Water users are encouraged to monitor the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.com.au) for daily information about the IVT account balance and status of trade. Trade **out** of the valley will open again when the IVT balance falls to 85 GL but will then close again should it rise to 100 GL.

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the Murrumbidgee valley will be on **Monday 3 February 2020**.

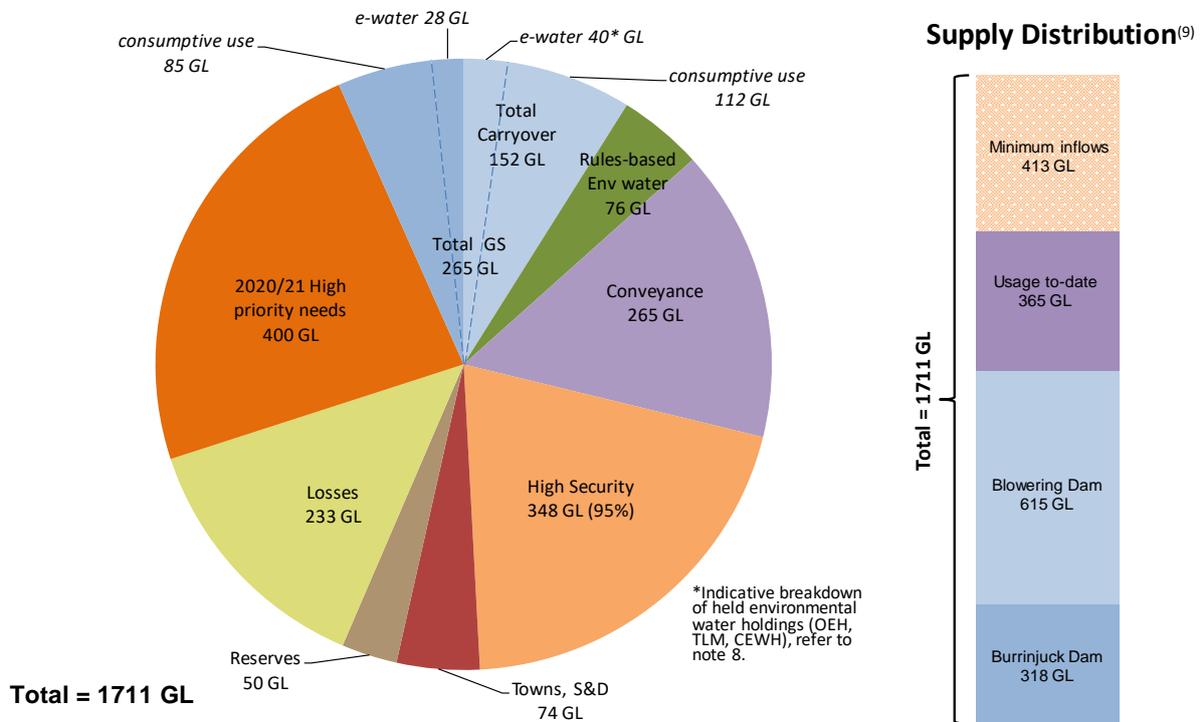
From mid-February, forecasts of indicative starting allocations for 1 July 2020 will be included in the mid-month water allocation statements. This aims to help water users with their end of year management decisions.

Murrumbidgee resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution (15 January) for 2019-20	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	1,711
less	
Carryover (GS and Conveyance) ⁽⁸⁾	152
Rules based Environmental Water ⁽²⁾	76
Towns, Stock, Domestic	74 (100%)
Reserves ⁽³⁾	50
Conveyance ⁽⁴⁾	265
Announced High Security	348 (95%)
Losses (transmission, evaporation, operational) ⁽⁵⁾	233
Late Season Inflows ⁽⁶⁾	0
Announced General Security ⁽⁸⁾	113 (6%)
Future (2020-21) high priority needs ⁽⁷⁾	400

***See notes below.**

Murrumbidgee resource distribution 2019-20 – 15 January 2020



Data sheet notes

- 1) Total available resource – total active storage volume (Blowering & Burrinjuck Dams) at the day of assessment plus any usable flows in transit plus drought inflows for 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 net Jounama Release for this year (2019-20) is estimated to be about 880GL (includes montane release). Net Jounama release from 1 May 2019 to date has been around 634 GL.
- 2) Rules-based environmental water – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for riverine environments. Includes end-of-system flow requirements (currently 50 GL) and environmental water allowances (EWA1 = 0 GL, EWA2 = 26 GL, EWA3 = 0 GL). Excludes ‘licence-based’ environmental water also known as held environmental water (HEW). This total volume typically reduces as water is used during the year.
- 3) Reserves – required primarily under statutory plans, and mainly used for emergency purposes and critical needs. Includes 25GL per dam as an operational reserve, and Provisional Storage Volumes (PSV1 = nil, PSV2 = nil).
- 4) 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 plans and is a function of high and general security allocations. Conveyance licences in the Murrumbidgee valley can also carryover 30% of their entitlement.
- 5) Losses – is the best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions to meet demands for the remainder of the water year. This includes storage evaporation, transmission losses and operational loss. This estimate is updated monthly.
- 6) Late Season Inflows – is the estimated inflow volume that will arrive into storage late in the year, after the peak irrigation demand season (usually post-February). This water cannot be allocated to water users at the start of the water-year, as it can create an expectation that the water is available for delivery before it is captured in storage.
- 7) Future high priority needs – it is required to look ahead to next water year (2020-21) to ensure there is sufficient resource available to meet high priority commitments on 1 July 2020. This volume is estimated to be about 400 GL. This value changes from month to month based on the complex interaction of climatic factors, projected historical inflow sequence including Snowy Hydro Required Annual Releases forecast, usage/potential carryover, and actual transmission and operational losses as the water year unfolds.
- 8) Held environmental water (HEW) – licenced 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 held environmental water is the total credited to accounts (not usage) and is estimated to be 28GL of GS, 15 GL of HS, 43 GL of conveyance allocation and 40 GL of GS carryover. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), The Living Murray (TLM) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on e-water holdings can be found on individual agency websites.
- 9) Supply Distribution – the distribution of supply includes volumes at the time of the assessment for the following categories: active volumes in the dams, indicative usage to-date (may be estimates prior to reconciliation with hydrographic updates) and assumed minimum future inflows (includes Snowy Hydro’s guaranteed inflows for the water year, and late season inflows).

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