



Water Reporting Summary – NSW Murray and Lower Darling Catchments

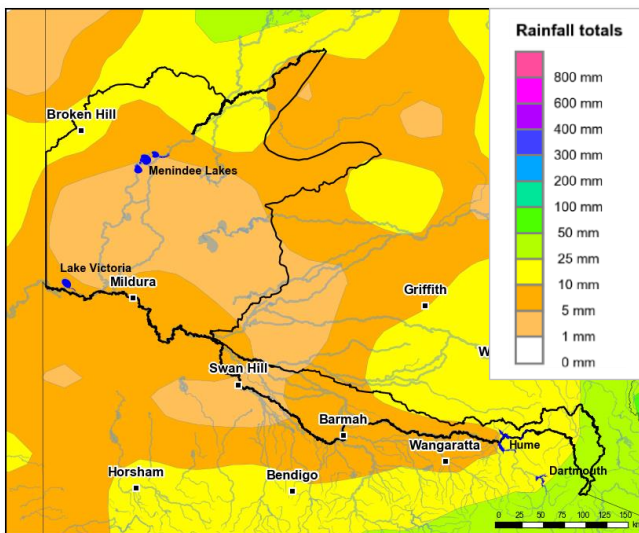
15 March 2021



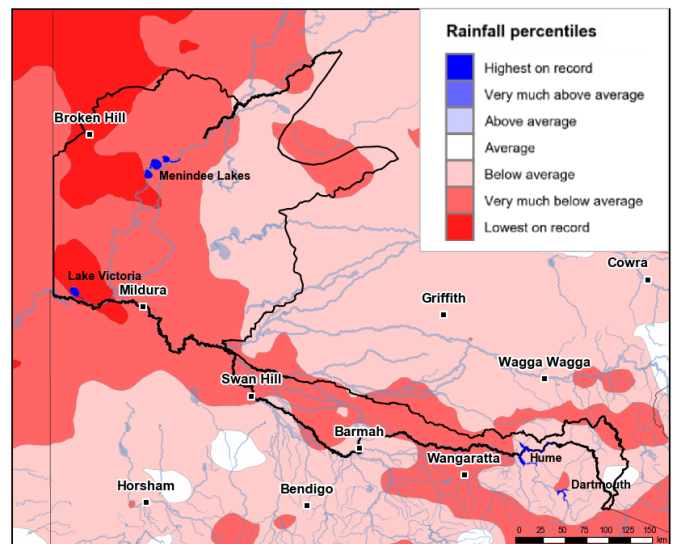
Overview

- In the past month, eastern areas of the NSW Murray catchment, including upstream of Hume Dam, received 10-50 mm of rainfall. Moving west, rainfall decreased with central areas receiving only 5 to 10 mm and the most downstream areas receiving less than 5 mm. In the Lower Darling catchment, north-western areas received 10 to 25 mm of rainfall, while most other areas of the catchment received less than 10 mm (Figure 1). The total area-average rainfall across both catchments was 7.2 mm. This recent rainfall is in the context of the extended dry period since January 2017, with rainfall mainly very much below average for most areas of the NSW Murray and Lower Darling catchments. For the upper NSW Murray and eastern areas of the Lower Darling, recent rainfall has partly offset the rainfall deficiency over the last four years but for the western areas of the Lower Darling catchment, rainfall has been lowest on record (Figure 2).
- In the last month, root zone soil moisture was very much above average for the upper NSW Murray catchment, average for central areas and mainly average to below average for the lower NSW Murray catchment. In the Lower Darling catchment, average soil moisture conditions prevailed with some below average areas in the centre during the last month. Rainfall in the last month has not generated much runoff and inflows into storages (Figure 3). As a consequence, Drought Stage 2 conditions remain in the Lower Darling catchment. In Drought Stage 2 (emerging drought or drought recovery), there has been limited water resources and multiple years of low flows (NSW DPIE). As there has been only limited improvement in water resources, allocations for some entitlement holders remain low (Figure 4 and Table 1).
- General security allocations in the NSW Murray and Lower Darling catchments are currently 50% and 30% respectively. Announced allocations (including carryover) for the NSW Murray are the highest since 2017–18, for this time of year.
- Allocation prices in the NSW Murray are currently \$100 per ML (Table 1), which are similar to the prices paid last month (\$96 per ML) and well below prices paid at the same time last year (\$450 per ML).

Recent conditions



<http://www.bom.gov.au>
© Commonwealth of Australia 2021, Bureau of Meteorology
Figure 1: Rainfall totals for the last 30 days
(14 Feb to 15 March 2021)



<http://www.bom.gov.au>
© Commonwealth of Australia 2021, Bureau of Meteorology
Figure 2: Rainfall percentiles since January 2017 (compared to 1900–2019 long-term average) (Jan 2017 to Feb 2021)
Note: Rainfall percentiles for the period from January 2017 are shown as the Bureau of Meteorology considers January 2017 to be the start of the current dry period for eastern Australia.

How much water is in the storages?

Combined total storage (NSW share*): 2 221 GL (as at end of Feb 2021)

*New South Wales' share of Dartmouth, Hume, Lake Victoria and Menindee Lakes storages

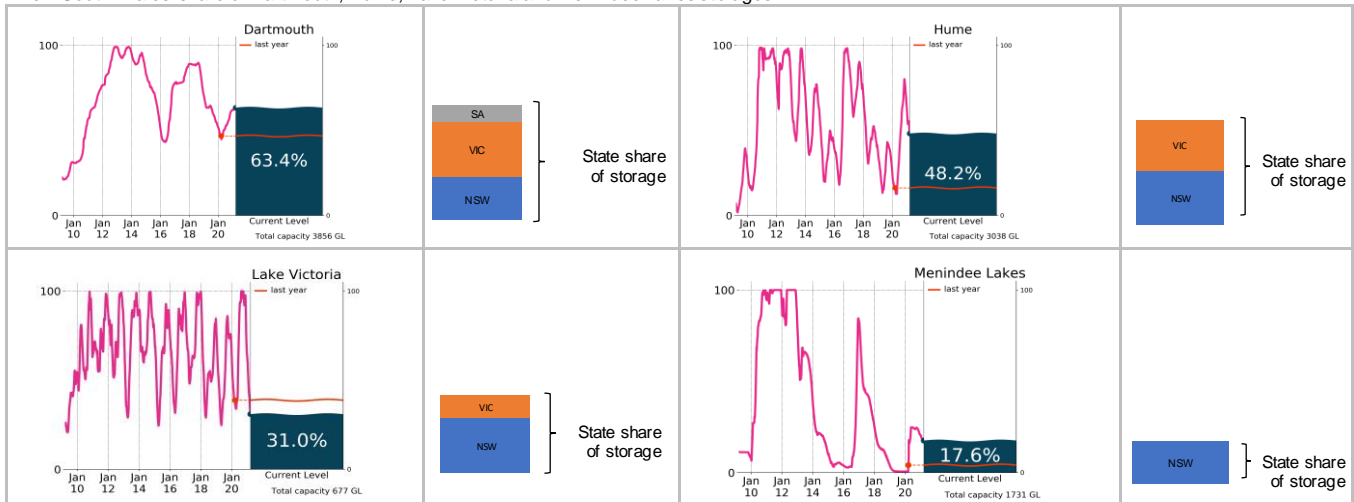


Figure 3: Current total storage (% of total capacity) as at 14 March 2021 compared to the last ten years (State shares updated end Jan 2021)

Source: [BoM water storages dashboard](#) and [MDBA](#)

Who is the water for?

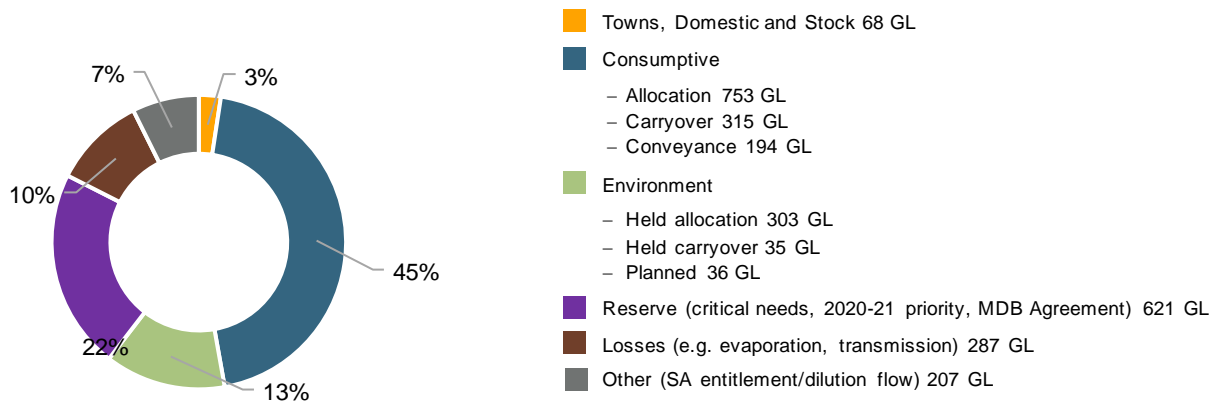


Figure 4: Volumes of water allocated (% of total) for the 2020-21 water year (as at 15 March 2021)

Source: [NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment](#)

NB: Allocation information shown here is water allocated for various purposes as at 15 March 2021. It does not represent remaining available allocated water as it does not allow for water used, traded or new storage inflows (in excess of minimum assumptions).

Table 1: Allocation announcements (%) and market prices – selected licence categories as at 15 March 2021

Licence category	Announced allocation	Historic comparison (same time of year)	Entitlement prices (monthly median)	Allocation price (median – last 7 days)
Stock and Domestic	100%	Same as most years	n/a	\$100/ML (NSW Murray)
NSW Murray High Security	97%	Same as most years	\$8 150/ML *	
Lower Darling High Security	100%	Same as most years	n/a	
NSW Murray General Security	50%	Highest allocation (including carryover) for this time of year since 2017–18	\$1 850/ML	n/a (Lower Darling)
Lower Darling General Security	30%	Highest allocation in since 2017–18	n/a	
Average Carryover (General Security)	21% (NSW Murray) 48% (Lower Darling)	19% last year (NSW Murray) 19% last year (Lower Darling)	n/a	

*Indicative - limited trade data

Source: [NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment](#) and [BoM water markets dashboard](#)

FIND OUT MORE

For more information email water@bom.gov.au



With the exception of logos, photography and data referenced as being from other organisations, this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence. The terms and conditions of the licence are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au>. Attribution for this publication should be: © Commonwealth of Australia (Bureau of Meteorology) 2021.