



# Water Reporting Summary – NSW Murray and Lower Darling Catchments

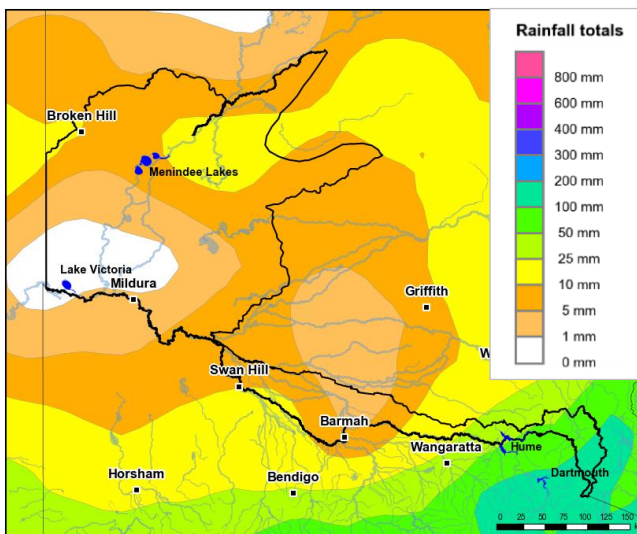
17 May 2021



## Overview

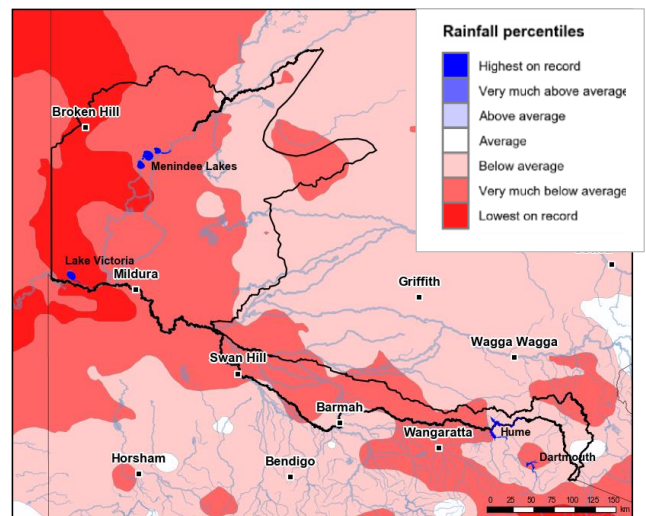
- In the past month, areas in the east of the NSW Murray catchment, including upstream of Hume Dam, received 50 to 100 mm of rainfall with the most upstream areas, including the Dartmouth Dam catchment, receiving 100 to 200 mm. Moving west, rainfall decreased with the most downstream areas receiving less than 5 mm of rainfall. In the Lower Darling catchment, rainfall was less than 10 mm except for small areas in the north which received 10 to 25 mm of rainfall (Figure 1). The total area-average rainfall across both catchments was 10 mm. This recent rainfall is in the context of the extended dry period since January 2017, with rainfall 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 the lowest on record (Figure 2).
- In the last month, root zone soil moisture was mostly average for the upper NSW Murray catchment. In the Lower Darling catchment, average soil moisture conditions prevailed in the north and below average in the south. Rainfall in the last month has not generated significant runoff and inflows into Hume and Dartmouth storages, (Figure 3), however, floodwaters from the end of March rainfall in the northern Murray–Darling Basin have reached the Menindee Lakes and the storage volume has increased from 30.7% of capacity at the end of April to 44.9% on 17 May 2021. Drought Stage 1 conditions remain in the Lower Darling catchment; in Drought Stage 1 (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 in the NSW Murray (Figure 4 and Table 1). However, for the Lower Darling, general security allocations have improved and reached 100%.
- General security allocations in the NSW Murray and Lower Darling catchments are currently 50% and 100% 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 \$95 per ML (Table 1), which is higher than the prices paid last month (\$81/ML) but well below prices paid at the same time last year (\$238 per ML).

## Recent conditions



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Figure 1: Rainfall totals for the last 30 days (18 April to 17 May 2021)



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Figure 2: Rainfall percentiles since January 2017 (compared to 1900–2019 long-term average) (Jan 2017 to April 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\*): 2 219 GL (as at end of April 2021)

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

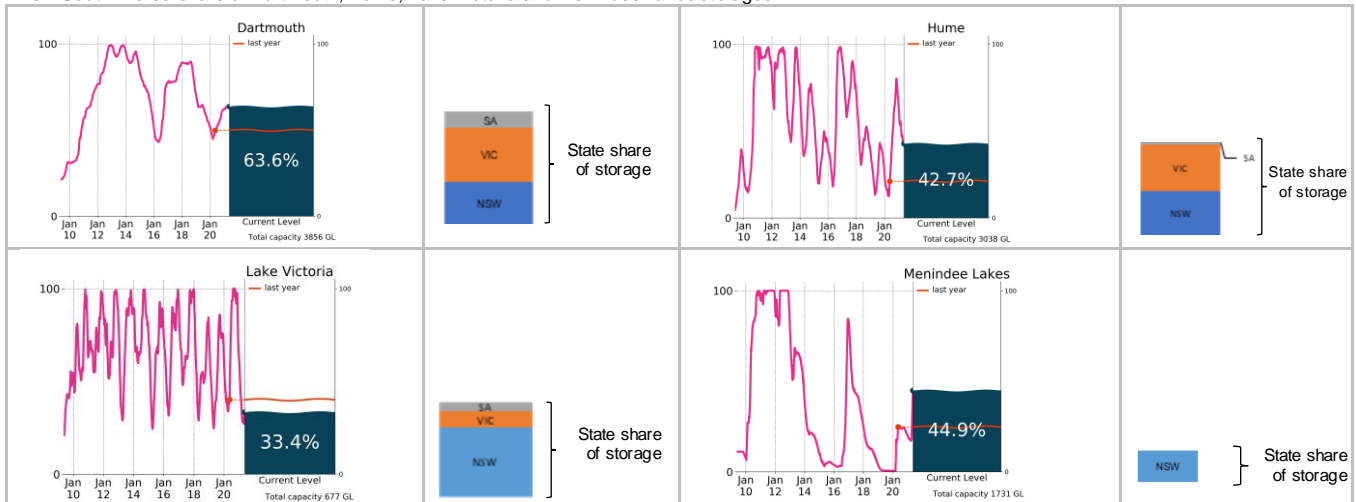


Figure 3: Current total storage (% of total capacity) as at 16 May 2021 compared to the last ten years (State shares updated end April 2021)

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

## Who is the water for?

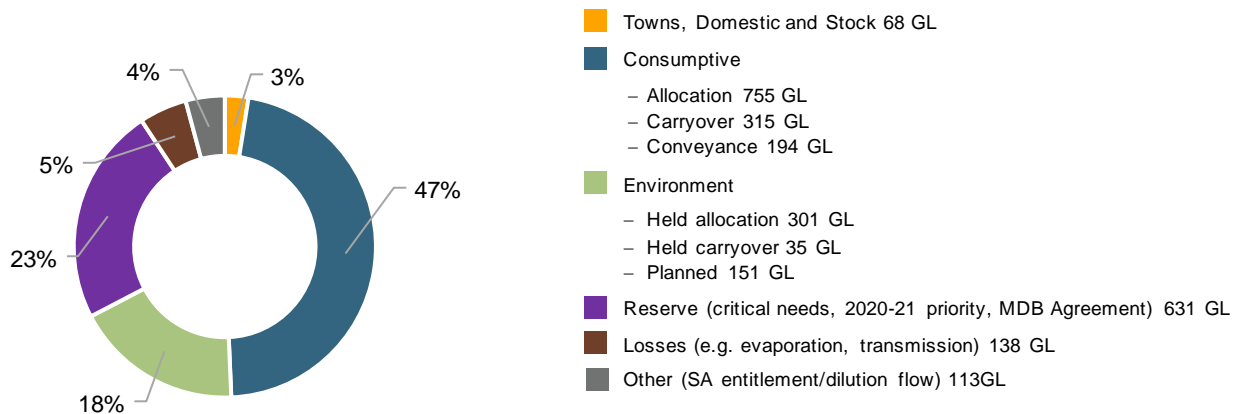


Figure 4: Volumes of water allocated (% of total) for the 2020-21 water year (as at 3 May 2021)

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

NB: Allocation information shown here is water allocated for various purposes as at 3 May 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 17 May 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	\$95/ML (NSW Murray) n/a (Lower Darling)
NSW Murray High Security	97%	Same as most years	\$8 300/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	n/a	
Lower Darling General Security	100%	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](#)

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For more information email [water@bom.gov.au](mailto:water@bom.gov.au)



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