



Water Reporting Summary – Barwon–Darling Watercourse

1 April 2021



Overview

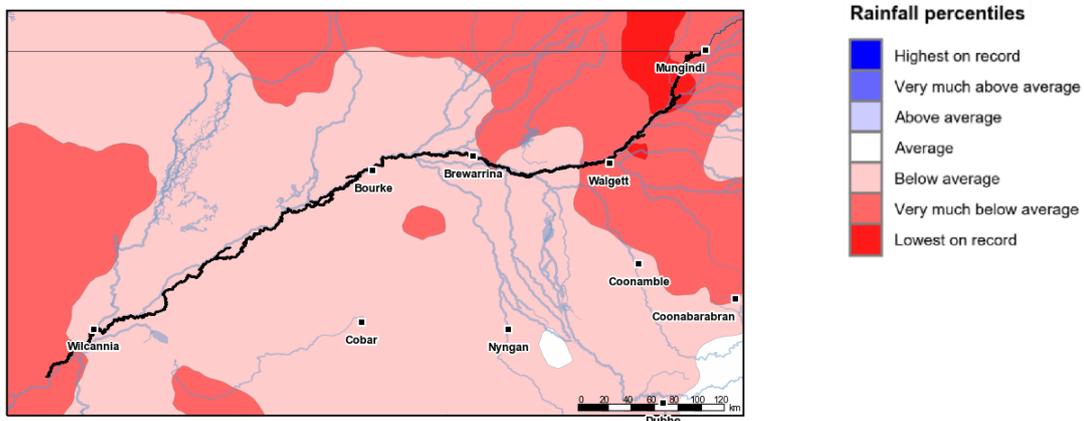
- In the last month, there has been widespread rainfall across the Barwon–Darling Watercourse with upstream areas receiving 100 to 200 mm of rainfall. Downstream areas of the Watercourse between Bourke and Wilcannia received 50 to 100 mm of rainfall, while the south western part of the catchment received less than 50 mm (Figure 1). The total area-average rainfall for the watercourse was 101 mm, with nearly half of this rainfall received on 22nd and 23rd of March. The rainfall in the last month is in the context of the extended dry period since January 2017 with rainfall for most areas of the Barwon–Darling Watercourse being below average, and areas upstream of Brewarrina mainly being very much below average (Figure 2).
- Recent rainfall has resulted in above average root zone soil moisture for the upstream parts of the Watercourse. Rainfall in the last month has translated into significant runoff and increases in streamflow, especially in the Darling River at Bourke (Figure 3). Currently, there are Drought Stage 2 (emerging drought or drought recovery) conditions for the Barwon–Darling Watercourse. In Drought Stage 2, there has been limited water resources and multiple years of low flows (NSW DPIE).
- Water resources are shared between water users according to a water sharing plan, with entitlements on issue shown in Table 1. However, the ability of water users to take water is governed by entitlement conditions which are subject to river flow conditions. With limited water resources available, there has been limited recent water trading activity (Table 2).

Recent conditions



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Figure 1: Rainfall totals for the last 30 days (3 March to 1 April 2021)



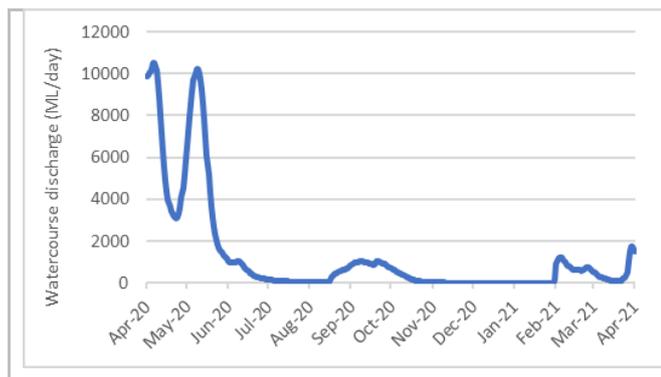
<http://www.bom.gov.au> © Commonwealth of Australia 2021, Bureau of Meteorology

Figure 2: Rainfall percentiles since January 2017 (compared to 1900–2019 long-term average) (Jan 2017 to March 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 river?

Darling River at Wilcannia



Darling River at Bourke

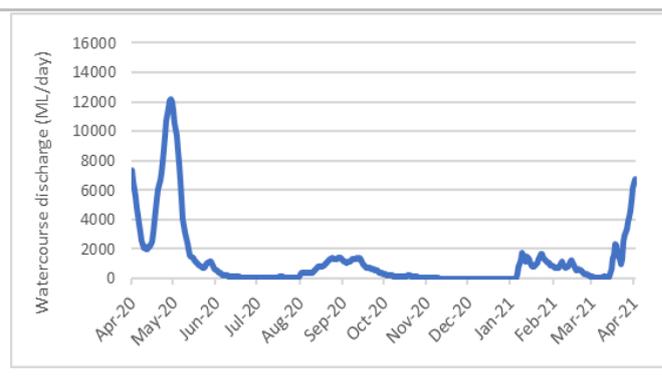


Figure 3: Watercourse discharge (ML per day) for last 12 months at selected gauges in the Barwon–Darling Watercourse (as at 1 April 2021)

Source: [BoM Water Data Online](https://www.bom.gov.au/water/data/)

Who is the water for?

As the Barwon–Darling Watercourse is an unregulated system, water is not stored for the purpose of supplying orders to downstream users. Water is shared between different users according to the *Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon–Darling Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2012* (NSW DPIE). The plan includes categories of water licences or entitlements and the share of the water resource for each entitlement category (expressed as a nominal volume). Entitlements on issue as at 1 July 2020 are shown in Table 1. This does not necessarily represent water that is actually available to licence holders at a given point in time as each licence category has conditions that govern when water can be taken.

Table 1: Nominal volumes of water entitlements on issue, per licence categories (GL) for the 2020–21 water year (last updated 1 July 2020)

Entitlement category	Entitlement share (Nominal GL)
Town, Domestic & Stock	6.6
Unregulated River – Consumptive	161.5
Unregulated River – Environmental	28.6

Source: [BoM water markets dashboard](https://www.bom.gov.au/water/markets/)

Table 2: Water market prices – selected licence categories as at 1 April 2021

Licence category	Entitlement price (monthly median)	Allocation price (median – last 7 days)
Unregulated River (A, B and C Class)	n/a	n/a

Source: [BoM water markets dashboard](https://www.bom.gov.au/water/markets/)

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For more information email water@bom.gov.au



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