



Water Reporting Summary - NSW Murray and Lower Darling Catchments

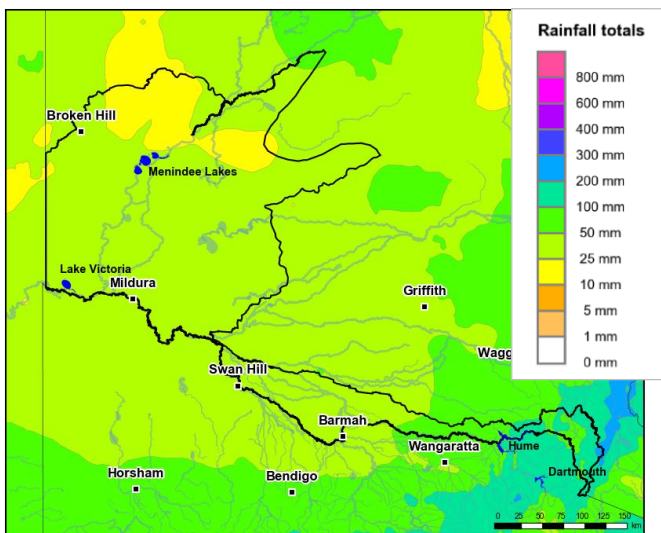
1 September 2020



Overview

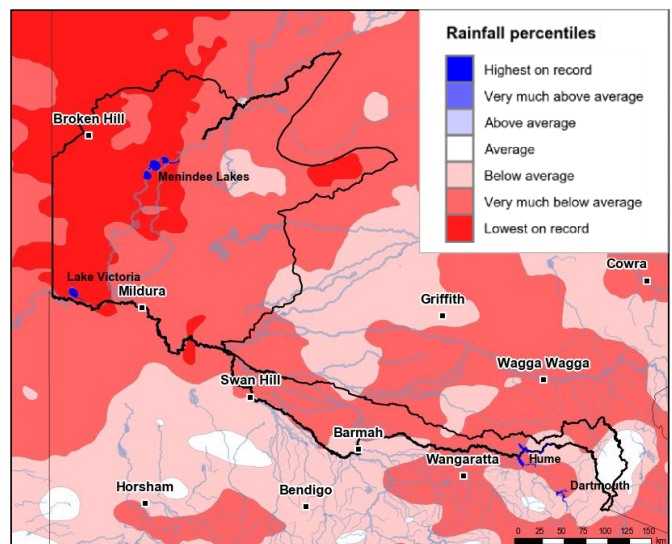
- In the last month, most of the NSW Murray and Lower Darling catchments received 25 to 50 mm of rainfall. Most of the upper NSW Murray catchment received 50 to 100 mm, with some alpine areas receiving up to 200 mm of rain and snow. In contrast, the northern areas of the Lower Darling received 10 to 25 mm of rainfall (Figure 1). The total area-average rainfall across both catchments was 39 mm. This recent patchy rainfall is in the context of the extended dry period since January 2017, particularly for the central areas of the NSW Murray catchment and the Lower Darling catchment, with rainfall being mainly very much below average or lowest on record (Figure 2).
- Recent rainfall has improved soil moisture in the Lower Darling and downstream areas of the NSW Murray, with mostly average to above average soil moisture. Root zone soil moisture in the upper NSW Murray was below average for August, however the average is relatively high given it is typically a wet time of year for this area. Rainfall in the last month has translated into some runoff and inflows into storages (Figure 3). Drought Stage 2 conditions have recently eased to Stage 1 conditions in the NSW Murray catchment, however, 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 12% and 30% respectively. These announced allocations are the highest in the last three years, for this time of year. Allocation prices are currently \$243 per ML, which are lower than prices paid last month (\$350 per ML) and are well below their peak of over \$800 per ML in January 2020 (Table 1).

Recent conditions



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Figure 1: Rainfall totals for the last 30 days (3 Aug to 1 Sept 2020)



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Figure 2: Rainfall percentiles since January 2017 (Compared to 1900-2019 long-term average) (Jan 2017 to Aug 2020)

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*): 2,314 GL (as at end July 2020)

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

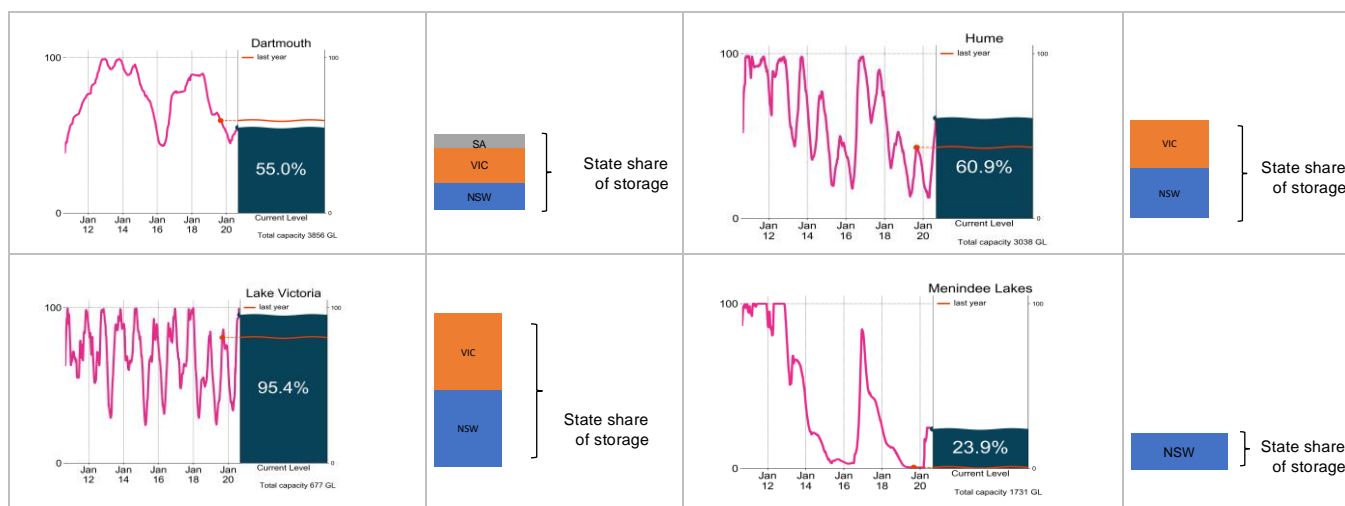


Figure 3: Current total storage (% of total capacity) as at 1 September 2020 compared to the last ten years (State shares updated end July 2020)

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

Who is the water for?

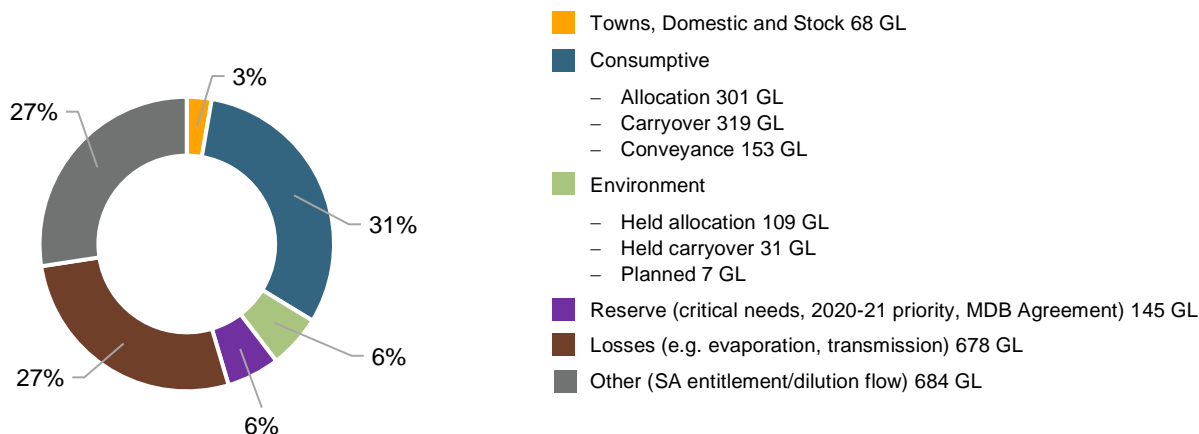


Figure 4: Volumes of water allocated (% of total) for the 2020-21 water year (as at 1 September 2020)

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

NB: Allocation information shown here is water allocated for various purposes as at 1 September 2020. 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 1 September 2020

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	\$174 (NSW Murray-above Barmah Choke)
NSW Murray High Security	97%	Same as most years	\$7,750/ML*	
Lower Darling High Security	100%	Same as most years	n/a	
NSW Murray General Security	12%	Highest allocation for this time of year since 2017-18	\$1,750/ML	\$243/ML (NSW Murray-below Barmah Choke)
Lower Darling General Security	30%	Highest allocation in since 2017-18	n/a	n/a (Lower Darling)
Average Carryover (General Security)	21% (NSW Murray) 48% (Lower Darling)	18% 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



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