Welcome to the Bureau of Meteorology’s National Water Account, providing you with an annual picture of water availability across the country.

We cover eleven key regions, representing most of Australia’s population and more than 80 per cent of Australia’s water use.

The 2018 account reports from the 1st of July 2017 to the 30th of June 2018.

2017-18 was dry for most of Australia. Fewer low pressure systems and cold fronts led to below-average rainfall across many parts of the country.

It was particularly dry across much of south-eastern Australia. For the urban centres of Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, and Sydney, storage volumes decreased from the previous year. In Melbourne and Sydney, end of year storage volumes were at their lowest since 2010.

In the Murray-Darling Basin, where rainfall was the lowest in 15 years, storage volumes decreased by 25%. In the northern parts of the basin most storages were less than half full.

On the other side of the country, defying the national trend, Perth experienced average rainfall. This is notable as it was the highest rainfall in six years. And end of year storage was the highest in more than 20 years.

More than twenty-two thousand GL of water was allocated across the country, which is comparable to recent years. However, the proportion of allocated water used increased from 54% last year to

62% this year, reflecting drier conditions and reduced water availability.

While the drier conditions collectively resulted in a four percent increase in national water use, they also caused an impact on the sources of water used to meet the country's water needs.

Surface water continued to be the dominant source of water for all regions except Daly and Perth. However, in the Murray-Darling Basin, the proportion of groundwater increased, which was largely influenced by the decline in surface water availability.

Almost three quarters of Australia’s water supply was for commercial and private users, mainly related to agriculture.

Water used for environmental purposes was less than recent years, once again reflecting reduced water availability. Eleven per cent of total water supplied was used to support the health of rivers, wetlands and floodplains.

In summary, looking back at 2017–18, most of the country experienced below average rainfall. The collective impact of these drier conditions was a decline in surface water storage volumes, increased water use and a shift towards more groundwater being used.

You can find more details on each of the eleven regions on our website at bom.gov.au/water/nwa.