

15 May 2026

NSW Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers

Water allocation update

There is **no change in allocations** to general security (GS) licences in the NSW Murray Regulated River Water Source at this time. The cumulative allocation to GS entitlements remains at 22% for 2025–26 water. The current balance of general security licence holders is 415 GL or an average of 25% of their entitlement. Note that individual balances may be higher or lower than this percentage subject to their water use decisions.

The required reserve to secure higher priority opening allocations for the water year 2026–27 has been fully secured.

This assessment is based on NSW's share of storage volumes as of the end of April and observed inflows up to 11 May 2026. It also includes a conservative projection of inflows for the rest of May, tapering from observed rates towards minimum inflows. For Menindee, 5 GL of inflows are considered for the rest of the 2025–26 water year.

Entitlements in the Lower Darling Regulated River Water Source were fully allocated on 1 July 2025.

This is the final routine update for the 2025–26 water year for these water sources. Any changes after this date will be reflected in the 2026–27 state-wide opening allocation statements.

Current allocation (NSW Murray)

15 May 2026	Allocation increment	Account balance
General security	0%	415 GL *

* Balance revised following recent account reconciliation.

Key information

- At the end of this water year, any unused balance (up to 50% of entitlement) in general security accounts will be carried over into the next water year. This water will be fully deliverable in 2026–27, providing inflows and losses remain within budgeted volumes.
- NSW Murray and Lower Darling interstate trade for the 2025–26 season closed on 30 April 2026 at 11.59 pm. All other trading closes on 16 June 2026 at 11:59 pm. Trade updates can be found at: [Trading water - WaterNSW](#)

- A Section 324 Order is in place from 17 April 2026 to 30 September 2026, triggering restrictions (subject to conditions) in upstream water sources to ensure that critical needs can be met for the Lower Darling. Further details can be found at: [Temporary water restrictions](#)

Storage volumes

30 April 2026	Full supply level (GL)	Dead storage (GL)	Total volume in storage (GL)	NSW share* (GL)	NSW share* (as %)
Dartmouth Dam	3,856	71	2,189	808	21%
Hume Dam	2,982	23	618	318	11%
Lake Victoria	677	100	256	106	18%
Menindee Lakes [#]	1,731	480 [#]	586	69	6%
Total				1,301 GL	

*Active volume of NSW share and % of the NSW share of the total storage’s active capacity; maximum share is 50%.

NSW has sole access to water when the storage falls below 480 GL.

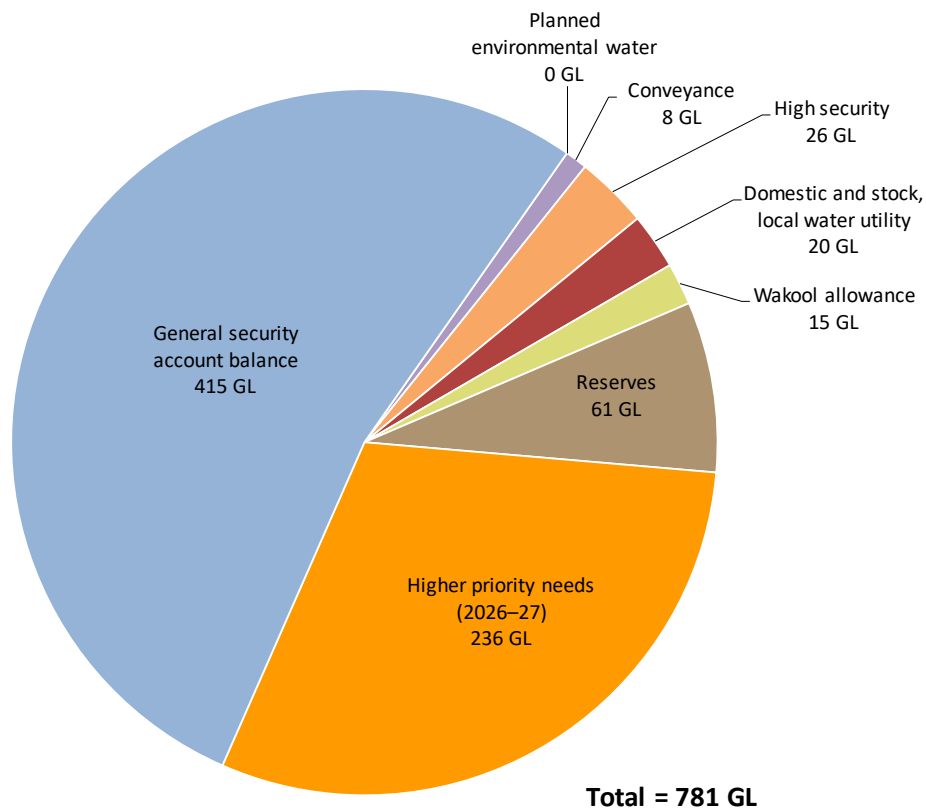
NSW Murray resource assessment data sheet

Resource distribution (15 May 2026 to 30 June 2026)	Volume (GL)
Available resource for allocation	783
Storage volumes NSW share ⁽¹⁾	1,301
Future resources ⁽²⁾	128
less overheads and SA commitments ⁽³⁾	(646)
less	
Planned environmental water ⁽⁴⁾	0
Domestic and stock, local water utility balance ⁽⁵⁾	20
High security balance ⁽⁵⁾	26
Conveyance balance ⁽⁵⁾	8
General security balance ⁽⁶⁾	415
Wakool allowance ⁽⁷⁾	15
Critical human water needs ⁽⁸⁾	61
2026–27 higher priority reserve ⁽⁹⁾	236
equals	
Surplus (or deficit) ⁽¹⁰⁾	2

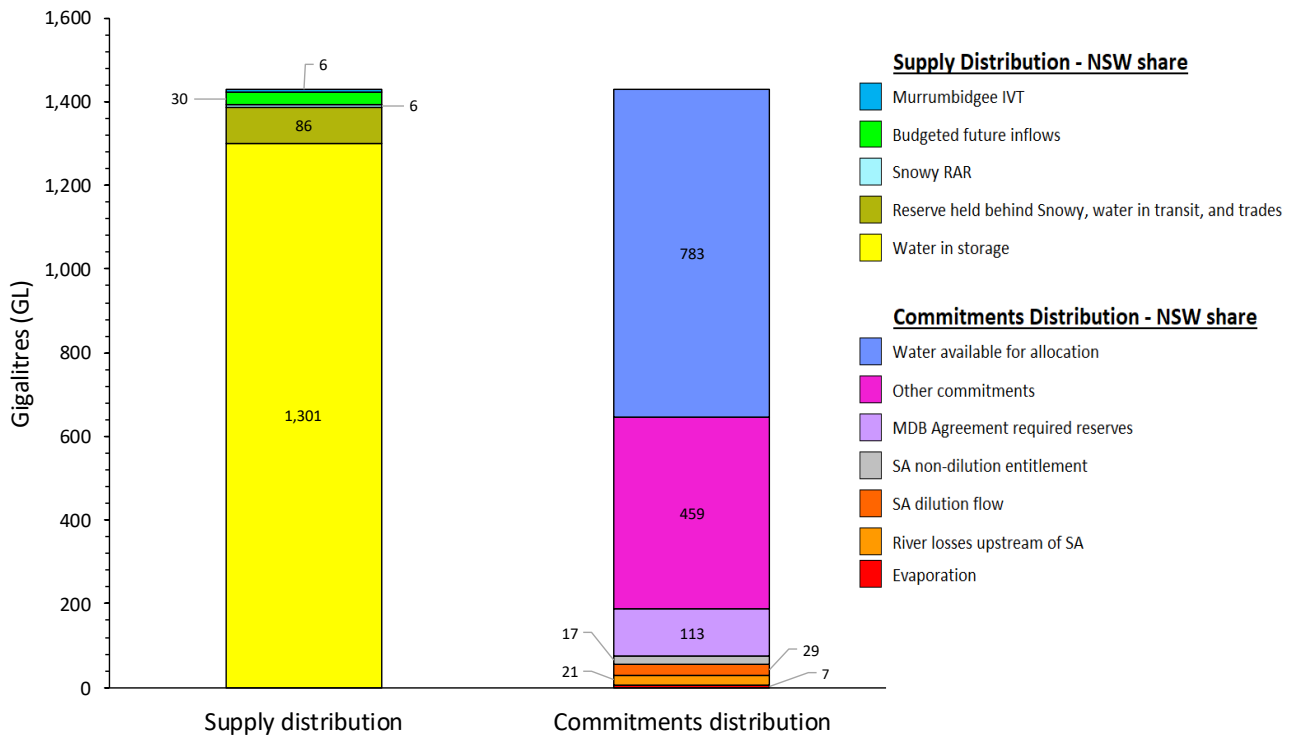
Notes:

- (1) The NSW share of active storage volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee and Lake Victoria as of 30/4/2026.
- (2) Inflow to date (1 to 11/5/2026); plus estimated inflow recessions (12/5/2026 to 31/5/2026); plus any usable flows in transit; plus water from inter valley trade; plus drought reserve held in Snowy.
- (3) Budgeted evaporation and transmission loss; plus SA’s entitlements & dilution flow; plus conveyance reserve; plus Menindee commitments; plus NSW Active Environmental Water (8.4 GL).
- (4) The volume includes 0 GL of Murray Additional Allowance (MAA), 0 GL of Barmah-Millewa Allowance (B-MA), 0 GL of River Murray Increased Flows (RMIF). The total commitments to MAA, B-MA and RMIF will decrease over the water year as they are released from Hume. The balance of B-MA is 172 GL as of 30/04/2026 which has been fully borrowed and will be paid back from future inflows after GS allocations reach 30%.
- (5) Account balance remaining in higher priorities and conveyance licence categories.
- (6) General security accounts balance as of 11/05/2026. This includes carried over volume from last water year, plus any new allocation, plus any trade adjustments, minus usage to date. For information, about 524 GL (31%) was carried over on 1/7/2025.
- (7) Wakool allowance – a conveyance volume necessary for NSW to operate the Edward-Wakool system. The annual budget to deliver the potential maximum allocation to the water users in the system is 70 GL.
- (8) The volume to be stored by NSW for critical human water needs as per Clause 11.03 of the Basin Plan.
- (9) Volume set aside for opening allocation to higher priority needs on 1/7/2026. The current estimate of the required reserve for the next water year is 236 GL, which has been fully reserved since 1 April 2026.
- (10) Surplus (or deficit) of water available after accounting for all commitments. There is a small surplus which will be rolled over to the next assessment.

**Resource distribution as of 15 May 2026
NSW Murray Regulated River Water Source**



NSW Murray and Lower Darling water balance - 15 May 2026



Notes:

- Water in storage: Active volumes of NSW share in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee and Lake Victoria as of 30/04/2026, less adjustments for the River Murray Increased Flow (RMIF) balance in Hume to be delivered next water year.
- Reserve held behind Snowy, water in transit and trades: Includes snowy scheme contributions, drought reserve held in snowy, water in transit, and interstate trades.
- Budgeted inflows: NSW’s budget of future inflows is based on minimum inflow observed pre-2004. The future inflow also includes Snowy Hydro’s guaranteed inflows for the remaining water year, plus Murrumbidgee end of system flows, plus any inflow recession known to date.
- Inter-valley trade (IVT): Total tributary system water bought by Murray system users that is yet to be delivered. Murrumbidgee IVT balance is 6 GL as of 30/04/2026.
- Evaporation: Water set aside for evaporation for the remainder of the year. Generally, this reduces as the year progresses. Of the total evaporation, approximately 2 GL is attributed to Menindee Lakes.
- River losses upstream of SA: Water budgeted for transmission losses from the River Murray system upstream of the South Australian border for the remainder of the year. Generally, reduces as the water year progresses.
- SA non-dilution entitlement: Water to supply South Australia’s entitlement flow, as required under the Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Agreement in clause 88. Generally, reduces as water year progresses.
- SA dilution flow: Water to provide South Australia’s dilution and conveyance component of flow, as required under the MDB Agreement in clause 88A. Reduces as the year progresses. Note, may include the Additional Dilution Flow (ADF) when triggered.
- MDB Agreement required reserves: Includes the conveyance reserve to be set aside for use in the next water year, as required by the MDB Agreement in clause 102D.
- Other commitments: Includes Menindee commitments plus usage, any north-south active environmental water, and other trade adjustments, and the minimum reserve, required to be set aside for use in the next water year, as required by the MDB Agreement in clause 103.
- Water available for allocation: NSW’s bulk share of the resource that can be assigned to NSW Murray entitlement holders based on the Water Sharing Plan. Allocation of this volume is provided in the above table and pie chart.

Outlook for 2026–27

A water availability outlook for the start of the next water year (1 July 2026) is provided below. The outlook is indicative only, not guaranteed, and should be used with caution, particularly when projecting many weeks ahead. Nevertheless, it aims to help water users with their end of year water management decisions.

Indicative allocations on 1 July 2026 for the 2026–27 water year

Lower Darling

- The Menindee Lakes System is around 33% full, holding some 571 GL as of 14 May 2026. About 214 GL of this volume is stored in Lake Cawndilla.
- The Menindee resource is currently shared with other states, under the Murray Darling Basin Agreement, as the system is holding more than 480 GL.
- Full (100%) allocation can be expected for all higher priority entitlements in 2026–27, including local water utility, domestic and stock and high security access licences.
- Full allocations (100%) for supplementary access licences can be expected and is available subject to announced periods of supplementary access.
- We are closely monitoring the resources and operational conditions, including the delivery constraints from Lake Cawndilla to the Lower Darling when the upper and lower lakes are no longer connected. It is currently anticipated that opening allocations for general security access licences may be low. As allocations can only increase during the water year, resource assessments will be undertaken fortnightly, and allocations will be increased when additional water becomes available with sufficient certainty.

NSW Murray

- Full (100%) allocation can be expected for local water utility and domestic and stock access licences, as well as sub-category high security entitlements.
- High security (excluding sub-categories) users can expect their full opening allocation of 97%.
- Conveyance is expected to be allocated in accordance with the plan rules.
- The average general security balance is currently 25%, though individual balances may vary. Individuals can carryover their closing balances up to 50% of their entitlement.
- The current assessment is predicting no opening allocation for general security water users. The allocation will be subject to inflow and losses to 30 June 2026 and any forfeiture of allocated water on 1 July 2026.
- The current Barmah-Millewa Environmental Water Allowance account balance is approximately 172 GL, which is currently borrowed to support 2025–26 general security allocations. In

accordance with the water sharing plan, the balance will remain fully borrowed on 1 July 2026, with resource improvements providing payback before general security allocations can exceed 30%.

- Full opening allocations (100%) for supplementary access licence holders can be expected and is available subject to announced periods of supplementary access.

Chances of improvement

The chances of NSW Murray general security allocations, against repeat of historical inflows, are provided in the table below. The simulation is based on a design water use pattern with no consideration of current weather conditions. Accordingly, the results are indicative only, not guaranteed, and should be used with caution.

Simulated general security allocations (%)

Repeat of historical inflow conditions	1 September 2026	1 November 2026
Pre 2004 minimum	0%	0%
Very dry (90% exceedance)	0%	5%
Dry (75% exceedance)	5%	20%
Median (50% exceedance)	15%	30%

Note 1: Forecast incorporates Murrumbidgee regulated end of system flows.

Note 2: Any water carried into 2026–27 is to be added to these indicative allocations with individual accounts not exceeding 110%.

Held environmental water (HEW)

Held environmental water entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, The Living Murray and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. The figures in the below table are approximate. For detailed information, please refer to the individual agency websites.

Licence category	Share component (GL)	2025–26 volume (GL)*	Account balance (GL)
High security	39	29	5
Conveyance	50	29	8
General security	529	287	182

*Water allocated in 2025–26 plus water carried over on 1/7/2025

Allocations in 2025–26

Table 1: Water allocation history in 2025–26 for the NSW Murray Regulated River Water Source

Date	Licence category	Increment	Total 2025–26
1-Jul	Domestic and stock	100%	100%*
1-Jul	Local water utility	100%	100%*
1-Jul	High security	0.97 ML/unit share	0.97 ML/unit share
1-Jul	Conveyance	0.5039 ML/unit share	0.5039 ML/unit share
1-Jul	General security	0.01 ML/unit share	0.01 ML/unit share
1-Aug	Conveyance	0.0039 ML/unit share	0.5078 ML/unit share
1-Aug	General security	0.01 ML/unit share	0.02 ML/unit share
15-Aug	Conveyance	0.0039 ML/unit share	0.5117 ML/unit share
15-Aug	General security	0.01 ML/unit share	0.03 ML/unit share
1-Sep	Conveyance	0.0078 ML/unit share	0.5195 ML/unit share
1-Sep	General security	0.02 ML/unit share	0.05 ML/unit share
15-Sep	Conveyance	0.0193 ML/unit share	0.5388 ML/unit share
15-Sep	General security	0.05 ML/unit share	0.10 ML/unit share
1-Oct	Conveyance	0.0311 ML/unit share	0.5699 ML/unit share
1-Oct	General security	0.08 ML/unit share	0.18 ML/unit share
1-Nov	Conveyance	0.0078 ML/unit share	0.5777 ML/unit share
1-Nov	General security	0.02 ML/unit share	0.20 ML/unit share
15-Apr	Conveyance	0.0077 ML/unit share	0.5854 ML/unit share
15-Apr	General security	0.02 ML/unit share	0.22 ML/unit share

*Maximum allowable

Table 2: Water allocation history in 2025–26 for the Lower Darling Regulated River Water Source

Date	Licence category	Increment	Total 2025–26
1-Jul	Domestic and stock	100%	100%*
1-Jul	Local water utility	100%	100%*
1-Jul	High security	1 ML/unit share	1 ML/unit share*
1-Jul	General security	1 ML/unit share	1 ML/unit share*

* Maximum allowable

River Murray weekly report (for the week ending 6 May 2026)

- Releases from the Menindee Lakes System continue to support demands in the lower Darling and the River Murray system whilst managing water quality risks upstream of Weir 32.
- Transfers to Lake Victoria continue and inflows from the Darling (Baaka) continue to decrease.
- The MDBA has released its end-October update to the Annual Operating Outlook: [River Murray System Annual Operating Outlook | Murray–Darling Basin Authority](#)

Water sharing plan rules (NSW Murray)

This statement includes plain language information on the plan rules relevant to water allocation below. This is based on our knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. Water users should verify the information as required before making any water management decision.

- Domestic and stock, local water utility, and high security sub-category access licences are to receive an allocation of 100% of their share component at the start of the water year. These licences cannot carry over unused balances into the next water year.
- High security access licences are to receive full allocation of 97% at the start of the water year and cannot carry over any unused balances into the next water year. If general security licences are allocated 97% or more, high security must be increased to 100% of their entitlement.
- Conveyance access licences receive an allocation of 50% after all higher priority categories have been fully allocated and cannot carry over any unused balances into the next water year. These licences are allocated incrementally based on GS allocations.
- General security access licences are to receive allocations after all higher priority categories have been fully allocated, and the conveyance licences have received their 50% allocation. GS accounts can carry over up to 50% of entitlement into the next water year and have a limit of 110% of entitlement.
- Planned environmental water allowances include the Barmah-Millewa Allowance, the Murray Additional Allowance, the River Murray Increased Flows.
- Supplementary water access licences are to receive an allocation of 100% of entitlement at the start of the water year, unless a growth-in-use measure is required. The closing balance cannot be carried over into the next water year.

Useful links

- Water allocation guide – We published a series of guides to describe the water allocation methods for most NSW regulated river systems. The guide for these water sources are available at the following link: [Resource assessment process | NSW Government Water](#)
- Water allocation statement – The water allocation statement for all water sources is available at the following link: [Water allocation statements | NSW Government Water](#)
- Water allocation dashboard – The dashboard on water availability and allocations for regulated river water sources is available at the following link: [Allocations dashboard | NSW Government Water](#)
- Water sharing plan – The water sharing plan for these water sources is available at the following link: [Water Sharing Plan for the NSW Murray and Lower Darling Regulated Rivers Water Sources 2016](#)

Further information

The next water allocation statement for these water sources will be included in the state-wide opening water allocation statements on **Wednesday 1 July 2026 at 6.00am**.

Following the 1 July 2026 water allocation statement, routine fortnightly statements will commence on **Wednesday 15 July 2026 at 2.30pm**.

Subscribe [here](#) to receive water allocation statements and email updates from Water Group of the department.

You can also follow the department on X: [@NSWDCCEEW_Water](#)

Contact information for water enquiries and other water-related matters can be found on the department's website: [Contact us - DCCEEW | Water](#)