

1 July 2023

Opening Water Allocations 2023/24 – NSW Regulated River Water Sources

Water availability and allocation update

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment today announced opening water allocations for regulated river water users for the 2023/24 water year.

Opening allocations 2023/24

All critical environmental and human needs are secure for the 2023/24 water year. All town supplies and domestic and stock water users have received their maximum (100%) allocation.

Opening allocations (1 July) are mostly about ensuring license categories that cannot carryover water from water-year to water-year, are provided with a new annual allocation. Resource assessments and allocations for general security water users will continue to their usual timetable, meaning that water allocation statements for respective regulated river water sources will be issued as scheduled in July, based on the end of June resource assessment.

All regulated river high security license holders have received their usual full opening allocation, including 97% in the NSW Murray, 95% in the Murrumbidgee and 100% elsewhere.

General security water users on all regulated coastal rivers, except the Bega-Brogo River, are receiving their maximum 100% allocation. Inland, the users on Upper Namoi, Peel and Lower Darling water sources are also receiving their maximum 100% allocation. General security water users have full access to allowable carryover water in accordance with respective water sharing plan rules.

Full allocation is provided to supplementary license holders in all applicable river systems, except for those in the Lower Namoi water source. They receive a reduced allocation of 0.36 ML/unit share, due to exceedance of long-term extraction limits and the need to reduce usage. Use of water in supplementary access accounts is only available during periods of announced supplementary flow.

All floodplain harvesting license holders, where licenses exist, have received their maximum opening allocation.

New licenses created during the year will receive a reduced pro-rata allocation based on the remainder of the year remaining. That is, if 40% of the year remains, a 40% allocation is provided.

Valley-specific allocation details are summarised below. Water allocation statements for major inland regulated river systems are published and updated on the department's website at least monthly until all license categories are fully allocated. The statements explain the latest information on the sharing of available resources.

Recap on last water year (2022/23)

The 2022/23 water year marked a continuation of the 2021/22 water year, where wet conditions delivered full water recovery from the severe drought experienced from late 2017 to early 2021. Throughout the year major storages remained full or near full. By the end of 2022/23, water users on all coastal rivers (except Bega-Brogo) received their maximum allocation. Similarly, water users on all inland rivers either received their maximum allocation or reached their maximum account balance or generally enjoyed very high account balances.

The Barwon-Darling River has been consistently high since April 2021, resulting in the most significant inflow to the Menindee Lakes in almost a decade. A recession has been underway for some months now, with inflows reducing as the Basin continues to slowly drain.

River operations in the state continued to focus on managing flood risk for much of the year. Most major rural storages were either spilling or releasing water for airspace operations and flood mitigation at various times during the water year.

However, with the La Nina system being declared over by the Bureau of Meteorology in the first quarter of 2023 and the ENSO status at El Niño ALERT, storages may continue to fall away from their full supply capacity in the coming year.

Currently all major storages are still greater than 80% full. The total volume of water held in major NSW storages has decreased from an average of 97% full this time last year to about 94% full.

For several regulated river water sources, the 2022/23 water year began with their maximum general security allocations. And by mid-January 2023, all regulated river general security license holders, except Bega-Brogo and Belubula, had received at least 100% allocation.

While full allocation could not be provided in the Bega-Brogo and Belubula systems, there was no shortage of water for take due to access to persistent unregulated flow conditions. That is, tributary flows provided access, rather than water stored in dams (allocations).

The Lachlan regulated river water source experienced two account resets in accordance with the water sharing plan, triggered by a full system and spill from storage. The general security accounts were reset to 115% and 118% on 28/9/22 and 5/5/23 respectively. Similarly, Burrendong Dam volume rising to the flood mitigation zone triggered an account reset for applicable license categories. The general security and high security accounts and environmental water allowance on the Macquarie and Cudgegong regulated rivers water source were reset to their maximum (100%) limit on 6/9/22.

Supplementary water users on the Gwydir and NSW Border Rivers regulated rivers commenced the year with 21% and 74% allocations respectively, with all other rivers starting with full (100%) allocation. Users on both water sources were later topped up to their maximum (100%) allocation on 15/8/22. This was possible due to the creation of new floodplain harvesting licenses. Allocation to supplementary water users on Hunter River rose to their maximum 200% for a third consecutive water year. In most regulated rivers there was ample opportunity for supplementary take.

Details for individual Regulated River Valleys

NSW Border Rivers regulated river

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- General security (A class) license holders have received an allocation of 6% of their entitlement.
- General security (B class) license holders have received no allocation at this time. Allocations to general security (B class) will begin once allocations for general security (A class) have reached 100%, in accordance with the water sharing plan rules.
- Water remaining in general security (A and B class) accounts has been carried forward, noting that the maximum volume that may be held at any time is 1.0 ML/share (100% of entitlement).
- Supplementary and floodplain harvesting license holders received a maximum (100%) allocation.
- Inflows up to 200 ML/day into Pindari will be passed transparently through the storage during winter months, in accordance with environmental flow rules in the water sharing plan.
- Allocations to general security accounts will be assessed and announced in routine water allocation statements during the 2023/24 water year.

Gwydir regulated river

- All license categories, except general security, have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Water held in general security accounts can continue to accrue across years and is carried forward in full. The maximum volume that may be held at any time is 1.5 ML/share.
- Routine monthly resource assessments and allocation announcements for general security water users will continue in July, with the next scheduled publication on Friday 7 July 2023.
- The estimated opening general security account balance is 738 gigalitres (GL) or an average of 145% of entitlement.
- Supplementary access and floodplain harvesting access license holders received their maximum (100%) allocation.

Upper and Lower Namoi regulated rivers

- All Upper Namoi license holders, including general security, received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Water held in Lower Namoi general security accounts accrues on a continuous basis and has been carried forward in full. The maximum volume that may be held in Lower Namoi general security accounts at any time is 2 ML/share (200% of entitlement).
- The estimated opening Lower Namoi general security account balance is 484 GL, which is on average 198% of entitlement, meaning most water users start the year with full accounts.
- Supplementary license holders have received a reduced allocation of 0.36 ML/unit share, due to the required implementation of growth-in-use measures.
- Allocation to Lower Namoi general security accounts will be assessed and announced at the next routine water allocation statement scheduled for publication on Friday 7 July 2023 and will incorporate the resources to the end of June 2023.

Peel regulated river

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- General security license holders have also received their maximum (100%) allocation with a commensurate volume allocated to the environmental contingency allowance (ECA).
- All license categories in this water source are accounted on an annual basis. The remaining account balances from 2022/23 have been forfeited at 30 June 2023.
- With full allocations for all license categories announced for this valley, regular allocation statements will not be issued in 2023/24. However, conditions will continue to be monitored and statements will be issued approximately quarterly to update information and outlooks.

Macquarie and Cudgegong regulated rivers

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Supplementary access and floodplain harvesting access license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- A preliminary estimate of Macquarie environmental water allowance (EWA) carryover is 126 GL.
- The water carried over into 2023/24 by general security water users in the Macquarie system is estimated to be about 81% of entitlement and in the Cudgegong system about 85%. This water is fully deliverable.
- Allocation to general security accounts will be assessed and announced at the next routine water allocation statement scheduled for publication on Wednesday 12 July 2023. It is likely to include a general security allocation of up to 45% of entitlement with a commensurate increment to EWA.
- A new Cudgegong EWA sub-account came into effect from 1 July 2023. The account is credited with any undelivered environmental water from 2022/23 and new allocation commensurate with general security users. The resulting volume will be updated in the 12 July allocation statement.

Lachlan regulated river

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Conveyance license holders have received their full (100%) allocation.
- Wyangala and Brewster Environmental Water Allowances are allocated 10 GL each. The water quality allowance (WQA) is allocated 20 GL, in accordance with the water sharing plan.
- The water carried over into 2023/24 by the general security users is estimated to be 718 GL or on average about 121% of entitlement and is fully deliverable.
- Allocation to general security accounts will be assessed and announced at the next routine water allocation statement scheduled for publication on Monday 10 July 2023.

Belubula regulated river

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Water held by general security licenses has been carried forward, subject to the rules of the water sharing plan.
- The water carried over into 2023/24 by general security users is predicted to be 22.6 GL or 100% of share components. The account limit for general security licenses is 130% of entitlement.

- There is no opening allocation to general security license holders. Nevertheless, general security license holders overall already have large account balances and conditions will continue to be monitored throughout the year to identify available resource for allocation.
- Supplementary license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- The next water allocation statement will be published in August 2023, or earlier if storage levels or stream flow conditions change significantly.

Murrumbidgee regulated river

- All higher priority license holders, including domestic and stock, local water utilities and sub-category high security water access licenses, have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- High security license holders have received their full (95%) opening allocation.
- Supplementary access license holders (including Lowbidgee) have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- General security and conveyance carryover is anticipated to be near 680 GL in total (or the maximum 30% of entitlement averaged across all licenses) and is expected to be fully deliverable in 2023/24 water year.
- General security license holders commence the 2023/24 water year with a 37% allocation.
- Conveyance license holders have received an allocation in accordance with the water sharing plan and commensurate with the announced general security allocation.
- As usual the Murrumbidgee Inter Valley Trade (IVT) account balance on 30 June 2023 has been carried forward unchanged into 2023/24.
- Interstate water trade remains closed. With Hume and Dartmouth storages too full to safely accommodate trade water without spilling, a new interstate trade restriction was introduced from 1 July to 31 August 2023. This protects those not involved in trade from potential impacts.
- Regular fortnightly water allocation statements will commence on Monday 17 July 2023.

NSW Murray regulated river

- All higher priority license holders, including domestic and stock, local water utilities and sub-category high security water access licenses, have received their maximum (100%) allocations.
- High security license holders have received their full (97%) opening allocation.
- General security carryover into the 2023/24 water year is anticipated to be about 838 GL in total, equivalent to nearly 50% of share components averaged across all licenses.
- General security license holders commence the 2023/24 water year with a 55% allocation.
- Conveyance license holders received an allocation commensurate with the general security allocation in accordance with the water sharing plan.
- Supplementary license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- With general security opening with an allocation higher than 30%, no borrow from the Barmah-Millewa EWA is necessary in 2023/24. The current BMEWA account balance is 200 GL.
- The Barmah Choke trade balance is re-set on 1 July to reflect the volume of annual Snowy Savings below the choke that will not need to be delivered downstream. Up-take of the opening available trade capacity is usually rapid.
- The Murrumbidgee Inter Valley Trade (IVT) account balance on 30 June 2023 has been carried forward to 2023/24. The balance is a callable resource available to the NSW Murray.

- Interstate water trade remains closed. With Hume and Dartmouth storages too full to safely accommodate trade water without spilling, a new interstate trade restriction was introduced from 1 July to 31 August 2023. This protects those not involved in trade from potential impacts.
- Regular fortnightly water allocation statements will commence on Monday 17 July 2023.

Lower Darling regulated river

- All water access license holders, including domestic and stock, local water utility, high security, general security and supplementary have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Following full allocation provided to general security entitlements, carryover in accounts can be assumed to be spilled and replaced by new allocations.
- The Menindee Lakes System is falling slowly, holding some 1,420 GL or 82% of full capacity.
- The Menindee resource remains shared with other states, under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement, as the system is holding more than 640 gigalitres (GL). It will remain a shared resource until total storage next falls below 480 GL.
- Water trade to and from the Lower Darling water source, excluding interstate trade, is open. Trade within the Lower Darling water source is also permitted.
- Interstate water trade remains closed. With Hume and Dartmouth storages too full to safely accommodate trade water without spilling, a new interstate trade restriction was introduced from 1 July to 31 August 2023. This protects those not involved in trade from potential impacts.
- Regular fortnightly water allocation statements will commence on Monday 17 July 2023.

Bega-Brogo regulated river

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- General security license holders received a 40% allocation. Note: the small storage capacity of Brogo Dam cannot support a full general security allocation at the start of the water year.
- Supplementary license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- The next water allocation statement will be published in August 2023 or earlier if conditions or forecasts change significantly.

Hunter regulated river

- All higher priority license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Environmental water allowance (EWA) has been credited with its maximum of 20 GL volume.
- General security license holders have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- Unused water in applicable license categories has been carried forward into the 2023/24 water year, subject to allowable limits and maximum account balance rules.
- Supplementary license holders have received a full opening allocation of 100%.
- As water resources have been fully allocated for the 2023/24 water year, conditions will be monitored and quarterly water allocation statements will be published during the 2023/24 water year, unless the resource situation changes significantly.

Paterson regulated river

- All water access license holders, including higher priorities, general security and supplementary users have received their maximum (100%) allocation in this water source.

- With full allocations for all license categories announced for this valley, regular allocation statements will not be issued in 2023/24. However, conditions will continue to be monitored and statements will be issued approximately quarterly to update information and outlooks.

Richmond regulated river

- All license holders in this water source have received their maximum (100%) allocation.
- All categories of license are accounted on an annual basis. The remaining account balances from 2022/23 have been forfeited at 30 June 2023.
- With full allocations for all license categories announced for this valley, regular allocation statements will not be issued in 2023/24. However, conditions will continue to be monitored and statements will be issued approximately quarterly to update information and outlooks.

Tabulation of 1 July 2023 regulated river water allocations

Water Sources	Categories	Amount
BEGA AND BROGO REGULATED RIVERS WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100 %
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100 %
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100 %
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0.4 ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1 ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [TOWN WATER SUPPLY]	100 %
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1 ML/share
BELUBULA REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100 %
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100 %
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100 %
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0 ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1 ML/share
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1 ML/share
BORDER RIVERS REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100 %
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100 %
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100 %
	FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING (REGULATED RIVER)	1 ML/share
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100 %
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY A)	0.06 ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY B)	0 ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1 ML/share
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1 ML/share
	GWYDIR REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK
DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]		100 %
DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]		100 %
FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING (REGULATED RIVER)		1 ML/share
LOCAL WATER UTILITY		100 %
REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)		0 ML/share
REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)		1 ML/share

	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [RESEARCH]	100	%
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share
HUNTER REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	MAJOR UTILITY [POWER GENERATION]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share
LACHLAN REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (CONVEYANCE)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
LOWER NAMOI REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [RESEARCH]	100	%
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	0.36	ML/share
LOWER-DARLING REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share

MACQUARIE AND CUDGEGONG REGULATED RIVERS WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING (REGULATED RIVER)	1	ML/share
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [RESEARCH]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [TOWN WATER SUPPLY]	100	%
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share
MURRUMBIDGEE REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	COLEAMBALLY IRRIGATION (CONVEYANCE)	0.8702	ML/share
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	MURRUMBIDGEE IRRIGATION (CONVEYANCE)	0.7790	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (CONVEYANCE)	0.37	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0.37	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	0.95	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [ABORIGINAL CULTURAL]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [ENVIRONMENTAL]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [RESEARCH]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [TOWN WATER SUPPLY]	100	%
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER (LOWBIDGEE)	1	ML/share
NEW SOUTH WALES MURRAY REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%

Opening Water Allocations 2023/24 – NSW Regulated River Water Sources



	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY [DOMESTIC AND COMMERCIAL]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (CONVEYANCE)	0.7136	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	0.55	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	0.97	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [RESEARCH]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [TOWN WATER SUPPLY]	100	%
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share
PATERSON REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [TOWN WATER SUPPLY]	100	%
	SUPPLEMENTARY WATER	1	ML/share
PEEL REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY) [RESEARCH]	100	%
RICHMOND REGULATED WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share

UPPER NAMOI REGULATED RIVER WATER SOURCE	DOMESTIC AND STOCK	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [DOMESTIC]	100	%
	DOMESTIC AND STOCK [STOCK]	100	%
	LOCAL WATER UTILITY	100	%
	REGULATED RIVER (GENERAL SECURITY)	1	ML/share
	REGULATED RIVER (HIGH SECURITY)	1	ML/share

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