

16 February 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 20% for 2025–26 water year. The current balance of general security water holders is 515 GL or an average of 31% of their entitlement. Note that individual balances may be higher or lower than this percentage subject to their water use decisions.

January experienced the highest temperatures on record at several locations. River transmission losses, diversions and evaporation were among the highest observed in recent years. Overall losses have been the highest among recent years, exceeding our budget and hence the allocation level failed to meet the outlook issued last Spring.

We are building reserves to secure the opening allocation of higher priority needs due on 1 July 2026. Resource improvements are being set aside first to meet this reserve until full. According to the latest information, the required reserve for next year is approximately 204 GL, of which a total of 181 GL has been secured by now.

This assessment is based on NSW's share of storage volumes as of the end of January and observed inflows up to 9 February 2026. It also includes a conservative projection of inflows for the rest of February, tapering from observed rates towards minimum inflows. It then assumes minimum inflows from March to the end of the water year. For Menindee, no inflows are expected 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.

Current allocation (NSW Murray)

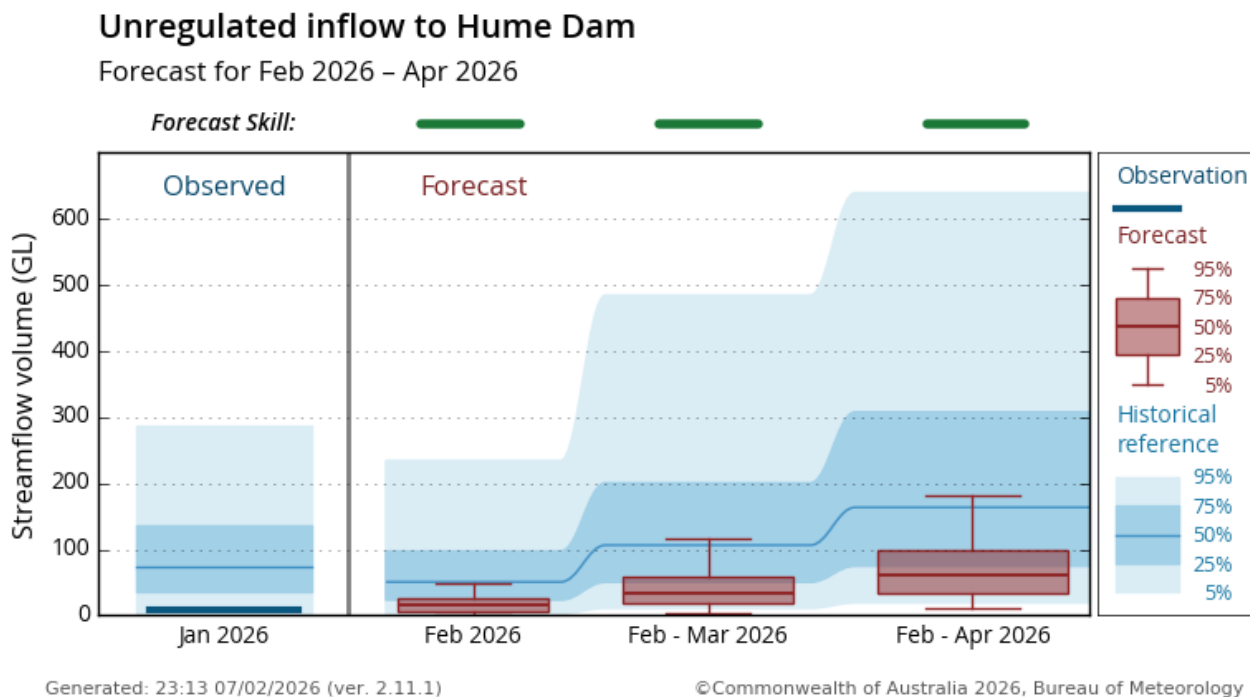
16 February 2026	Allocation increment	Account balance
General security	0%	515 GL

Inflow outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology issues a seasonal streamflow forecast for the unregulated inflow into Hume Dam (see the figure below). Though preliminary, this may suggest the potential inflows into Hume Dam in the coming months.

For the February to April 2026 period, the forecast quantiles sit considerably lower than their historical equivalents, suggesting that lower than historical inflows are likely for this period.

The graph for February to April 2026 is shown below, and updates can be found at: [Seasonal Streamflow Forecasts: Water Information: Bureau of Meteorology](#)



Storage volumes

31 January 2026	Full supply level (GL)	Dead storage (GL)	Total volume in storage (GL)	NSW share* (GL)	NSW share* (as %)
Dartmouth Dam	3,856	71	2,482	874	23%
Hume Dam	2,982	23	866	426	14%
Lake Victoria	677	100	417	146	25%
Menindee Lakes [#]	1,731	480 [#]	834	205	16%
Total				1,651 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.

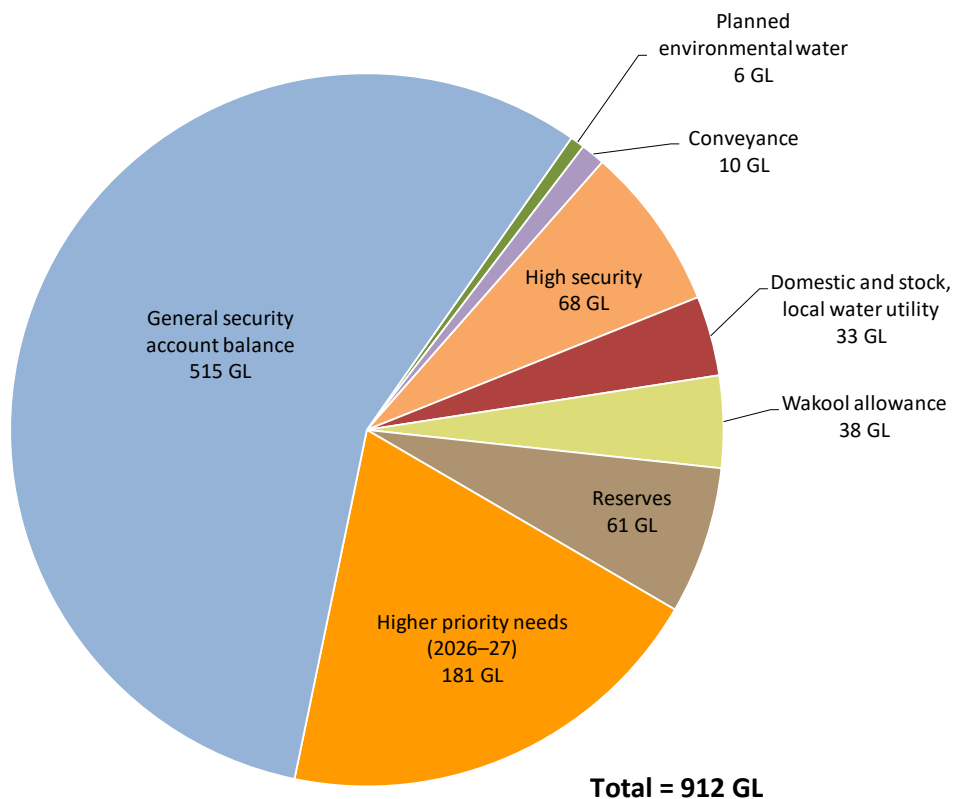
NSW Murray resource assessment data sheet

Resource distribution (15 February 2026 to 30 June 2026)	Volume (GL)
Available resource for allocation	912
Storage volumes NSW share ⁽¹⁾	1,651
Future resources ⁽²⁾	309
less Overheads and SA commitments ⁽³⁾	(1,048)
less	
Planned environmental water ⁽⁴⁾	6
Domestic and stock, local water utility balance ⁽⁵⁾	33
High security balance ⁽⁵⁾	68
Conveyance balance ⁽⁵⁾	10
General security balance ⁽⁶⁾	515
Wakool allowance ⁽⁷⁾	38
Critical human water needs ⁽⁸⁾	61
2026–27 higher priority reserve ⁽⁹⁾	181
equals	
Surplus (or deficit) ⁽¹⁰⁾	0

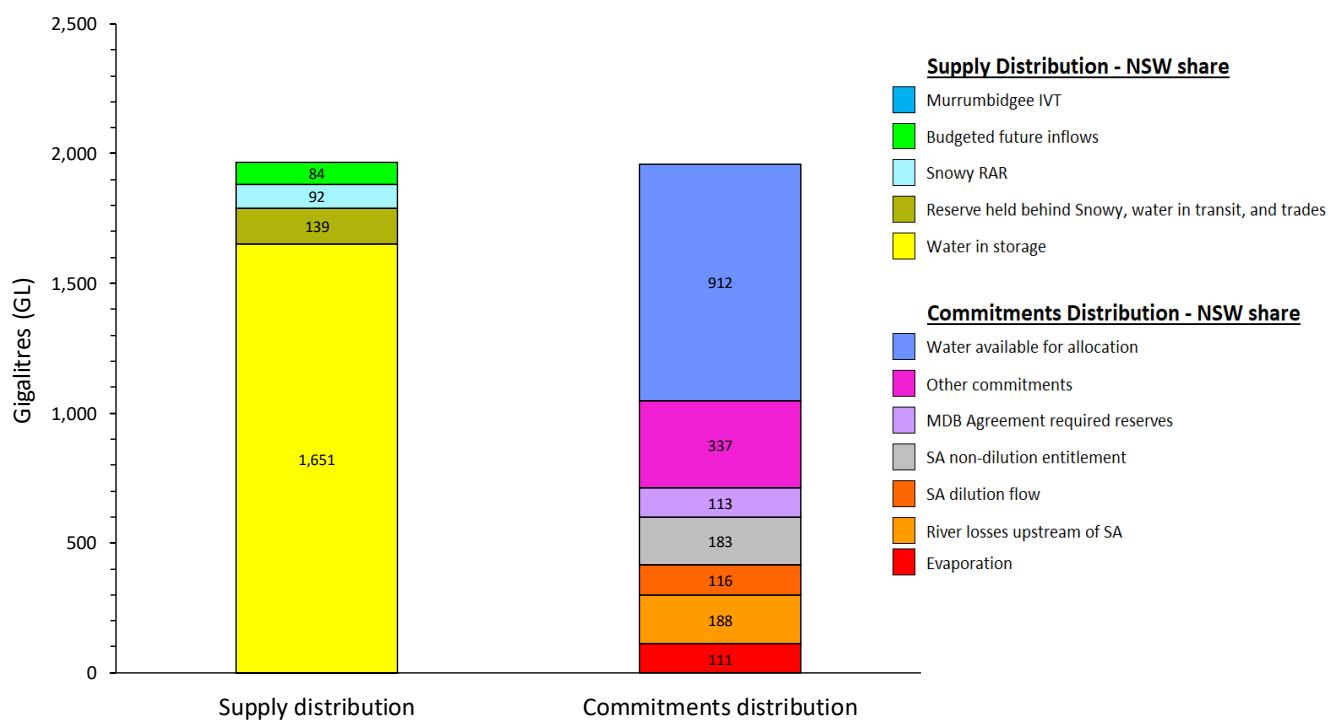
Notes:

- (1) The NSW share of active storage volume in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee and Lake Victoria as of 31/01/2026.
- (2) Budgeted minimum inflows (03/1998 to 05/1998); plus estimated inflow recessions; plus any usable flows in transit; plus water from inter valley trade; plus expected regulated inflow from Snowy Hydro till 30/4/2026; 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 NS Active Environmental Water.
- (4) The volume includes 6 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 31/01/2026 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 9/02/2026. 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 204 GL. This volume will be progressively reviewed and firmed over coming months.
- (10) Surplus (or deficit) of water available after accounting for all commitments.

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



NSW Murray and Lower Darling water balance - 15 February 2026



Notes:

- Water in storage: Active volumes of NSW share in Hume, Dartmouth, Menindee and Lake Victoria as of 31/01/2026.
- 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 31/01/2026.
- Evaporation: Water set aside for evaporation for the remainder of the year. Generally, this reduces as the year progresses. Of the total evaporation, approximately 61 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.

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	16
Conveyance	50	29	10 [#]
General security	527	277	180

[#]Provisional balance subject to reconciliation. Figure has been revised this assessment based on latest usage information.

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

Inter-valley trade (IVT)

In the Murray, trade across the Barmah Choke remains restricted to **'no net trade downstream'**. Downstream trade opens to the extent of the volume of any upstream trade. Water users are advised to monitor the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) website ([Barmah Choke trade rule | Murray–Darling Basin Authority](#)) for information about the trade balance and status of trade across the Barmah Choke.

Temporary trade between the Lower Darling and the Murray is open and will likely remain open until the system next falls below 480 GL. Trade within the Lower Darling Regulated River Water Source also remains open.

Trade out of Murrumbidgee is open and trade into the Murrumbidgee is closed. The Murrumbidgee IVT account balance is in deficit as of 12 February 2026. The deficit had allowed the continuation of delivery to River Murray users to avert a likely shortfall during the extreme heat wave from late January. The deficit needs to be recovered prior to opening trade into Murrumbidgee.

Water users should monitor the WaterNSW website (www.waternsw.com.au) for daily information about the IVT account balance, the status of trade, and other important information.

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

*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 4 February 2026)

- Water from the Darling system is being used to meet current demands while preserving Lakes Wetherell and Pamamaroo to maximise future availability for River Murray and Baaka/lower Darling users.
- Transfers of water are being made to Lake Victoria utilising a range of sources.
- Recent Inter-Valley Transfers from the Murrumbidgee system have supported Murray flows.
- Delivery shortfall risk (Wakool-SA border) is currently low following MDBA's proactive heatwave response measures.
- The risk of system shortfall is currently negligible while shared resources remain in Menindee.
- 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 published on **Monday 2 March 2026 at 2:30 pm.**

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](#)