

Opening Water Allocation

Engagement Roundup
16 July 2025

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Water Group

NSW Water Allocations Framework



- *Water Management Act 2000*
- Water sharing plans
- Water licensing and accounting system
- Available Water Determination: s59(1)(a), *the Act*

- Conditions for water use (unless exempt)

Water access licence > Allocation > Works > Access rules

Opening Water Allocations



- On 1 July, the department announces opening water allocations.
- Allocations are made to water access licence **categories** at **water sources**.
- Methods differ for **groundwater**, **unregulated** river and **regulated** river water sharing plans.
- Groundwater allocation depends on how much extraction has taken place relative to long term limits.
- Unregulated river allocation is generally 100%, but access is subject to actual river flow.
- Regulated river allocation depends on the volume of water that can be captured (regulated).
- Full allocations are made to all higher priority licences (towns, high security) on 1 July, except in severe drought, noting they mostly forfeit their unused allocation on 30 June each year.
- General security allocation varies widely from year to year. GS allocation is the focus of today's talk.

General Security Allocations

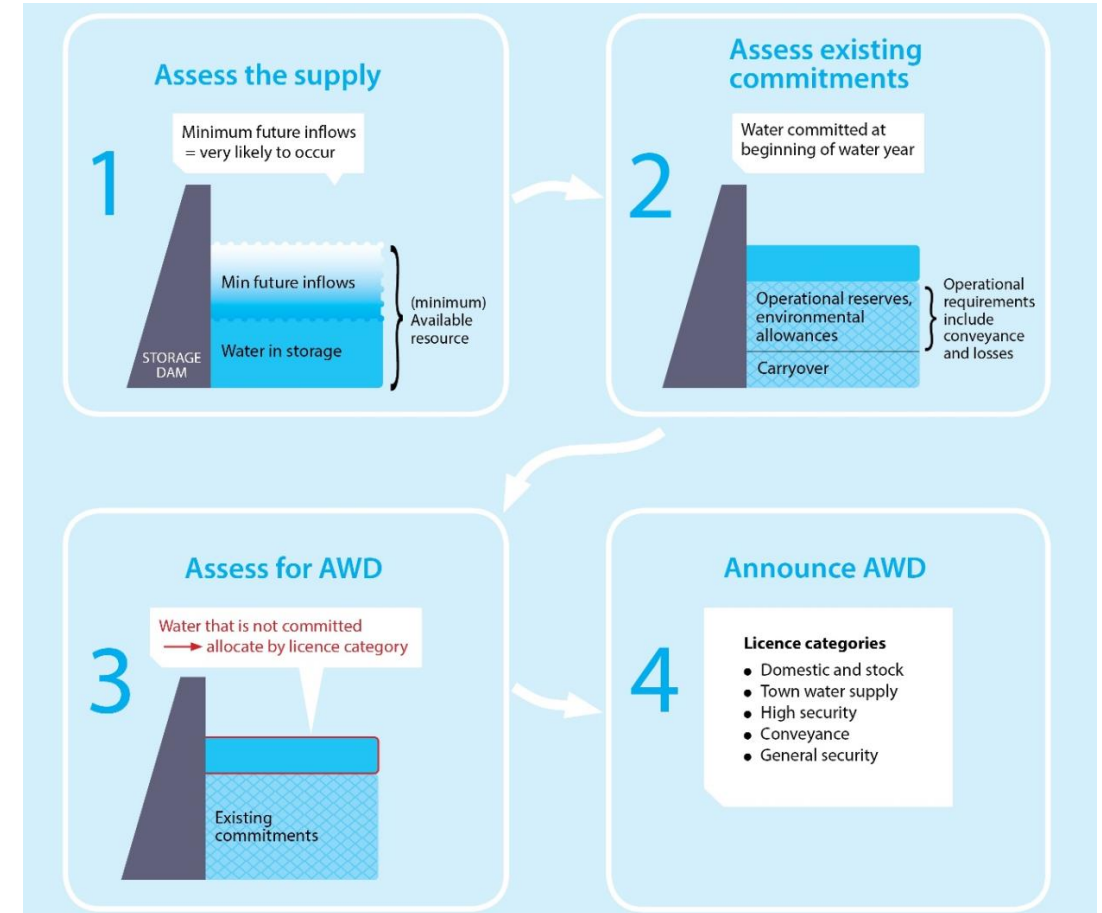
- Allocation to general security licences occurs after all higher priority commitments have been met.
- General security users can normally carryover their closing account balance into next year subject to respective plan rules.
- Routine (typically monthly) resource assessments continue throughout the water year to identify surplus, incrementing allocation where appropriate, typically to general security licences.
- The rules to control water use varies across water sharing plans:
 - Maximum allocation in a year, and carryover into next year
 - Maximum account balance at any time in a year
 - Maximum extraction/usage in a year
 - Long term extraction limits

Resource Assessment > Water Allocation

Surplus = Current Storage + Future Inflow

– Commitments – Overhead

- Surplus is allocated away in priority order.
- Allocations are based on low risk. Assumes dry outlook: low future inflow, high overhead.
- Assessed monthly. Surplus found when inflow is higher and/or delivery loss is lower than budgeted.
- Priorities and accounting rules are given in the water sharing plan. Little discretion.
- Allocated water is owned by the licence holders.



Water Sharing Priorities

| Categories | Description | Allocation |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Planned environmental water | Based on plan rules, no licence | Credited prescribed full volume on 1/7 Or credited based on given formula |
| Rights–domestic, native title | Exempt use | No allocation necessary |
| Domestic and stock Major water utilities Local water utilities High security | Higher priority access licences | Sufficient reserve is maintained for prescribed full allocation on 1/7. Usually forfeits un-used water on 30/6. |
| General security | General access licence | Surplus of above is allocated here. Generally, can carry over un-used water from 30/6 to 1/7. |
| Supplementary Floodplain harvesting | Lower priority licence | Allocation limits annual usage only. Actual take is subject to flow rules. |

Last Water Year 2024/25



WY 2024/25 began with major irrigation dams at 75% full on average but have decreased now to average about 56% full.

All higher priorities had received full opening allocation.

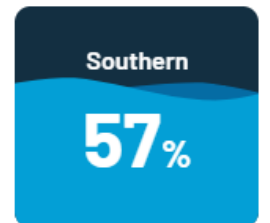
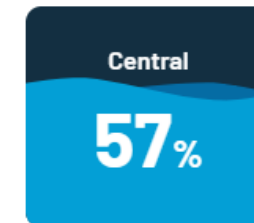
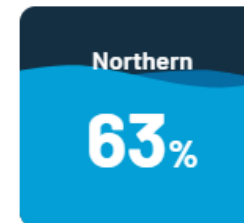
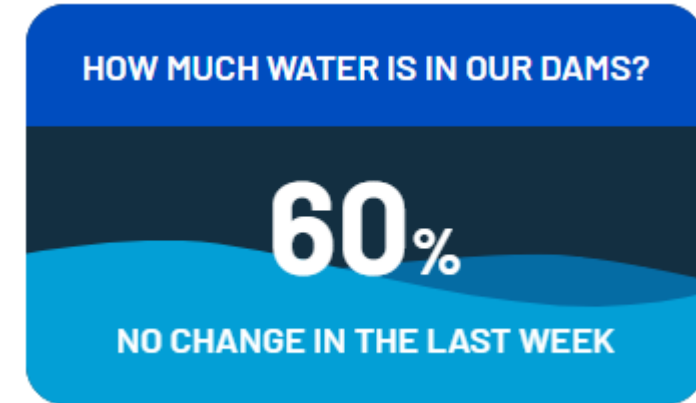
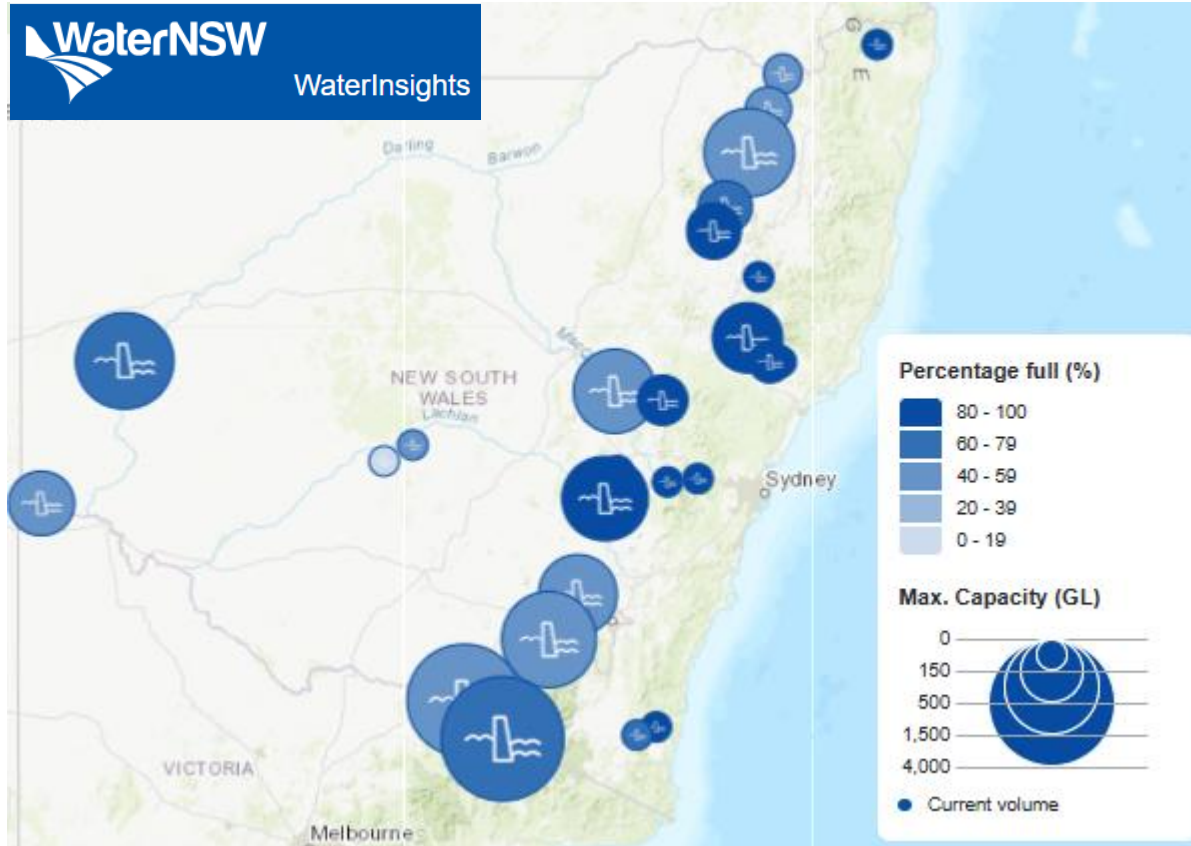
By June water users on all coastal rivers (except Bega Brogo) received their maximum allocation.

Several major rivers experienced lower allocations than the year before (23/24).

| Regulated Rivers General Security | 1 July 2024 W Year start | 30 June 2025 W Year ending |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| NSW Border GS A | 10% | 100% |
| NSW Border GS B | 0% | 10% |
| Richmond | 100% | 100% |
| Gwydir | 1% | 35% |
| Upper Namoi | 100% | 100% |
| Lower Namoi | 0% | 91% |
| Peel | 60% | 100% |
| Hunter | 100% | 100% |
| Paterson | 100% | 100% |
| Macquarie-Cudgegong | 7% | 38% |
| Belubula | 0% | 0% |
| Lachlan | 6% | 9% |
| Murrumbidgee | 28% | 41% |
| Lower Darling | 100% | 100% |
| NSW Murray | 35% | 110% |
| Bega-Brogo | 40% | 60% |

Major Rural Storages

13/7/25



<https://www.watarnsw.com.au/nsw-dams/nsw-storage-levels/regional-nsw-dam-levels>

Opening Allocation of 2025/26



All critical environmental and human needs are secure for the 2025/26 water year.

All users across all groundwater sources received their maximum allocations.

All users across all unregulated water sources received their maximum (100%) allocations.

All town supplies and domestic and stock users received their maximum (100%) allocation.

All general security users on regulated coastal rivers, except Bega-Brogo Rivers, received their maximum (100%) allocation. Inland: all water users on Upper Namoi, Peel and Lower Darling water sources received their maximum (100%) allocation.

Full allocation (100%) to supplementary licence holders except Lower Namoi (37%).

Current Allocations – reg rivers

As of 15/7/25

| Regulated River Water Sources | High Security | General Security Allocation | Average General Security Account Balance | Supplementary |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|--|---------------|
| NSW Border Rivers | 100% | 30% (A class) | 37% (A class) | 100% |
| | | 0% (B class) | 42% (B class) | |
| Richmond | 100% | 100% | 100% | N/A |
| Gwydir | 100% | 0% | 69% | 100% |
| Upper Namoi | 100% | 100% | 89% | N/A |
| Lower Namoi | 100% | 5% | 148% | 37% |
| Peel | 100% | 100% | 100% | N/A |
| Hunter | 100% | 100% | 123% | 100% |
| Macquarie | 100% | 10% | 79% | 100% |
| Cudgegong | 100% | 10% | 126% | 100% |
| Lachlan | 100% | 3% | 81% | N/A |
| Belubula | 100% | 0% | 98% | 100% |
| Murrumbidgee | 95% | 9% | 26% | 100% |
| Lower Darling | 100% | 100% | 96% | 100% |
| NSW Murray | 97% | 1% | 32% | 100% |
| Bega Brogo | 100% | 40% | 40% | 100% |

Water Allocation Statements (1/7/25)



Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Water Allocation Statement



1 July 2025

Opening Water Allocations 2025/26 – NSW Regulated Rivers

Water availability and allocation update

The NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water today announced opening water allocations for regulated river water users for the 2025/26 water year.

Opening allocation 2025/26

Opening allocations (1 July) are mostly about ensuring licence categories that cannot carryover water in accounts from one water year to the next are provided with a new annual allocation. All critical environmental and human needs are secure for the 2025/26 water year. Resource assessments and allocations for others including general security water users will continue as usual with end-of-month (June) resource assessments undertaken and allocation statements provide in the first weeks of July.

Opening Water Allocations 2025/26 – NSW Regulated Rivers



Tabulation of 1 July 2025 Regulated River Water Allocations

| Water Source | 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] | 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 |
| | | |

Water Allocation Statements (routine)

10 July 2025

Macquarie and Cudgong Regulated Rivers Water Source

Water allocation update

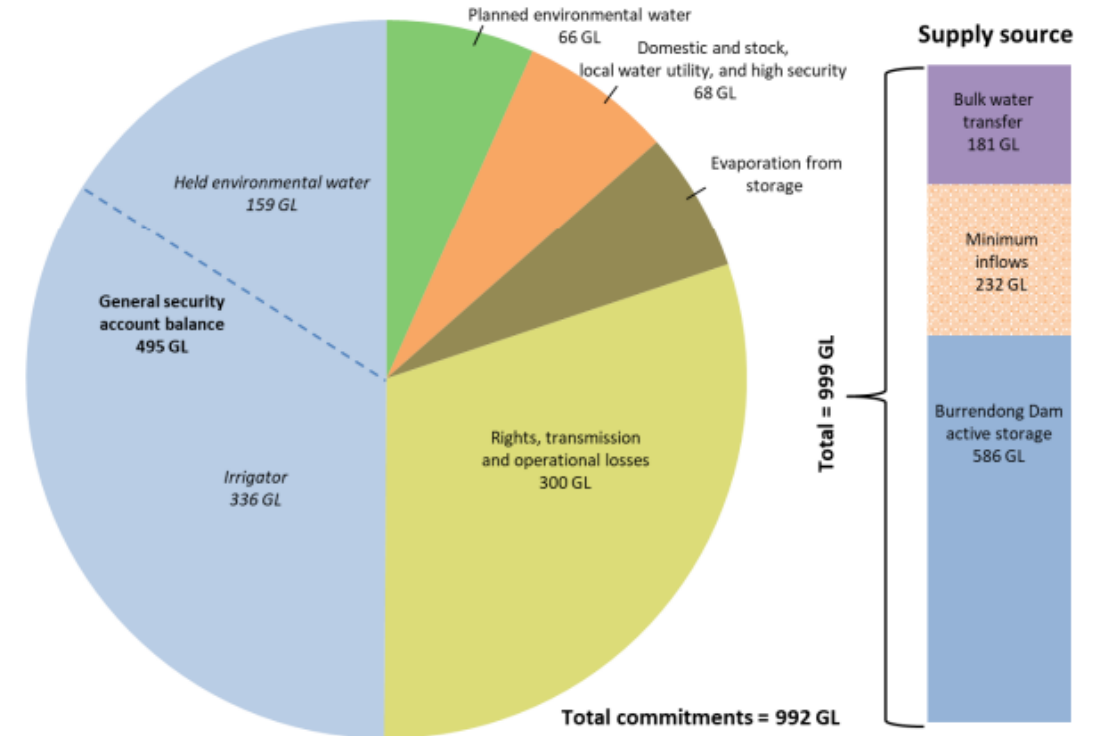
General security (GS) licenses in the Macquarie and Cudgong Regulated Rivers Water Source have received an allocation increment of 10% of entitlement. Both the Macquarie and the Cudgong environmental water allowance (EWA) have also increased by the same percentage, in accordance with the water sharing plan.

All higher priority licences have received their maximum (100%) allocation on 1 July 2025. Supplementary and floodplain harvesting licences also received their maximum (100%) opening allocation.

The allocation increment is possible due to good inflows, losses staying below the budget and the forfeiture of closing balances from applicable accounts at the end of last water year.

The increment takes the GS account balance for the Macquarie River water users to 495 gegalitres (GL), or an average 81% of entitlement. The total volume on GS accounts for those on the Cudgong River is now about 23 GL or 124% of entitlement on average.

Resource distribution as of 30 June 2025 Macquarie and Cudgong Regulated Rivers Water Source



Water Allocation Statements (routine)

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
Water Allocation Statement



8 May 2025

Lachlan Regulated River Water Source

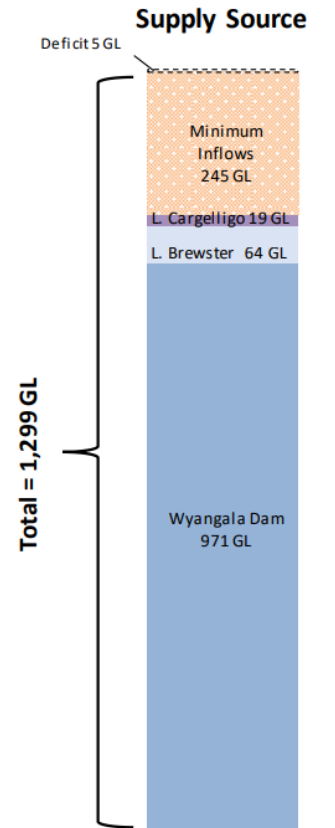
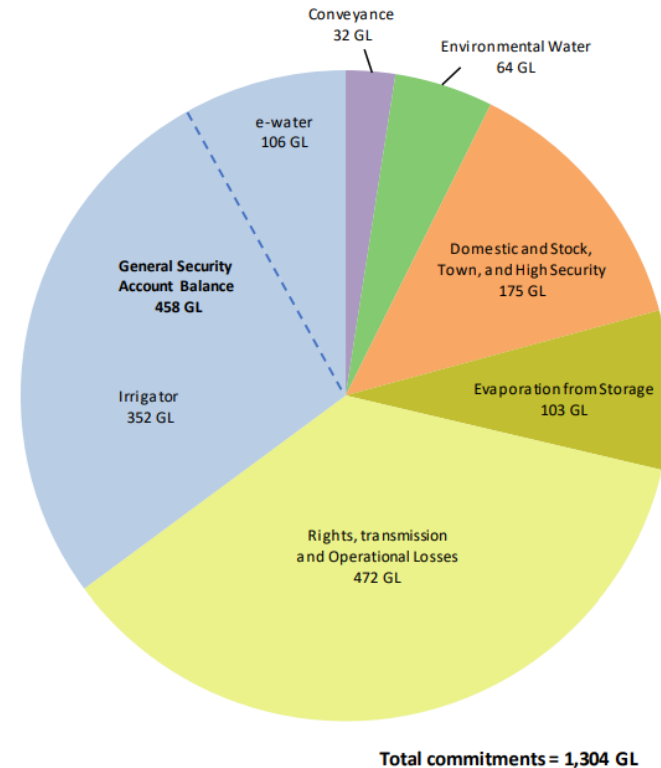
Water allocation update

There is no increase in allocation to General Security (GS) licences in the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source. The general security account balance is 458 gigalitres (GL), or an average of 77% of entitlement.

There has been no improvement in resources since the last assessment, resulting in no allocation increase. Combined inflows since January 2025 have been very low, with the total for the last four months being the lowest since the most recent drought.

This resource assessment is based on information to 30 April 2025. Any changes in resources from this date forward will be captured in the next resource assessment.

Resource Distribution as at 30 April 2025 Lachlan Regulated River Water Source



Water Allocation Statements



[Home](#) > [Our work](#) > [Allocations and availability](#) > [Allocations](#) > [Water allocation statements](#)

Visit here for regular statements:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-availability/allocations/water-allocation-statements>

[Sign up](#) for updates

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[FAQs](#)

Frequently asked questions

Answers to frequently asked questions about the 1 July 2022 state-wide opening allocations.

[Home](#) > [Our work](#) > [Allocations and availability](#) > [Allocations](#) > [Frequently asked questions](#)

1 July 2025

Frequently asked questions about how water is allocated to all categories of licensed water users at the start of the new water year on 1 July.

[How is water shared and water allocations determined in NSW regulated rivers?](#)



[Has rainfall this year helped with water availability and water allocations?](#)



What are water allocation statements?

Water allocation statements are issued to announce allocations for a specific water source and licence category. These statements may also be issued to provide a summary of current allocations, outlook and possible future water availability scenarios for major river valleys and systems.

When an opportunity to access a supplementary flow event occurs, the department approves such events and WaterNSW issues 'Supplementary announcements'.

During times of drought, the prevailing drought stage for each river valley is included in statements. The drought stage is determined in accordance with the critical trigger levels outlined in the incident response guides (IRGs) developed by the department. Further information on the IRGs is available at [extreme events](#).

Water allocation statements for the current year and past six years can be accessed below.



Water allocation statements

Receive email updates on water allocations and availability across various sources.

[Subscribe now](#)

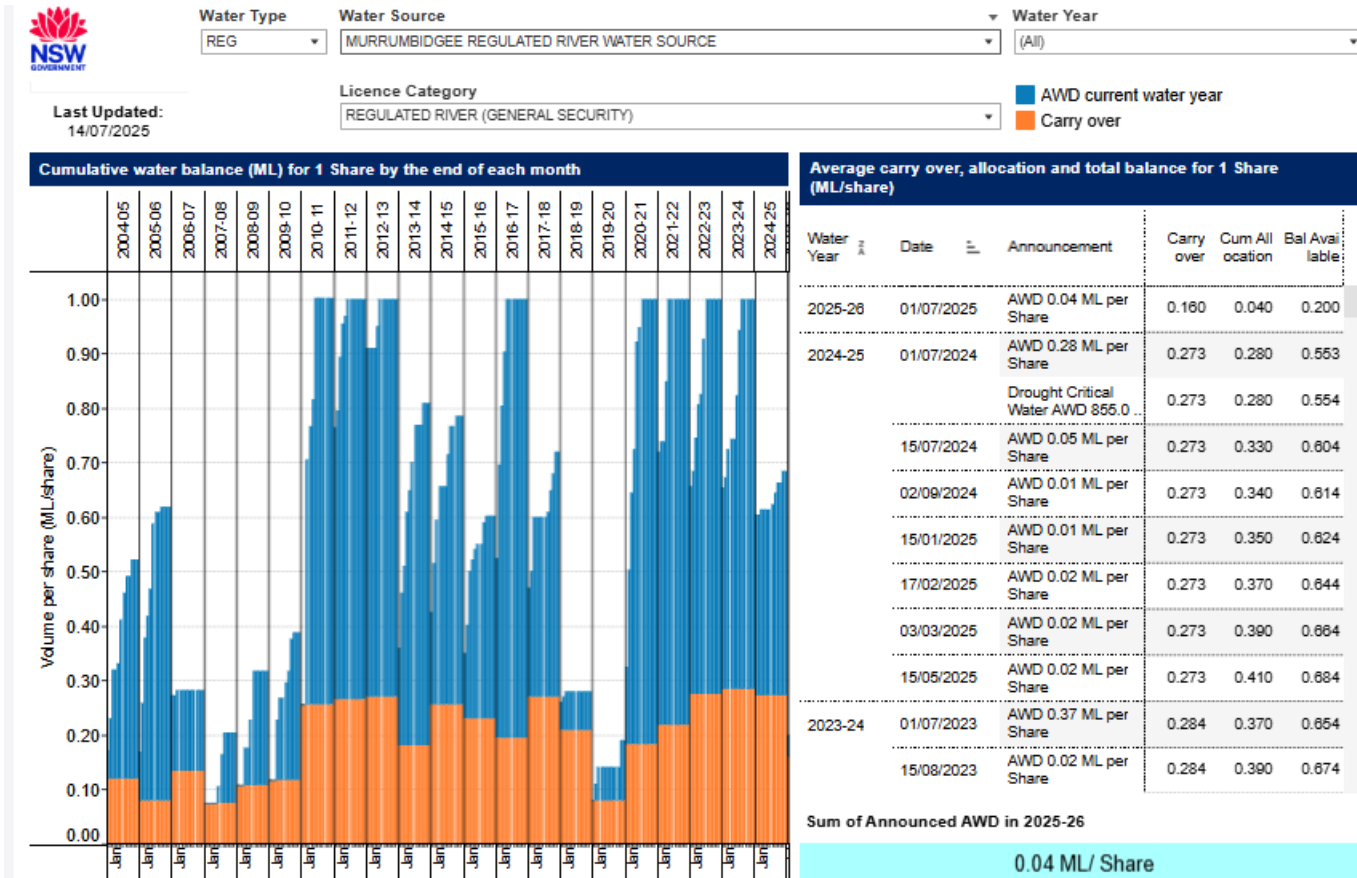
2025

| Date and time | Water source |
|---------------|---|
| 10/07/2025 | Macquarie-Cudgegong Valleys (PDF, 1.3 MB) |
| 08/07/2025 | Lachlan Valley (PDF, 1.3 MB) |
| 07/07/2025 | Namoi Valley (PDF, 1.2 MB) |

Our work

| | |
|--|---|
| Allocations and availability | ^ |
| Allocations | ^ |
| Water allocation statements | |
| Summary of current water allocations | |
| How water is allocated | |
| Allocations dashboard | |
| Available water determinations | |
| Frequently asked questions | |
| Extraction limits | ▼ |
| Water accounting | ▼ |
| Drought, floods and extreme events | ▼ |
| Controlled allocations | ▼ |
| Temporary water restrictions | ▼ |
| Northern Basin First Flush | |

Water Allocation Dashboard



Find allocation history:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-availability/allocations/allocations-dashboard>

Find dashboards on:

Share components

Usage

Utilisation

Trade

Water Allocation Guides



Water allocation guides explain how allocations are determined for major NSW regulated river systems:

<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/our-work/allocations-availability/allocations/how-water-is-allocated/resource-assessment-process>

Water allocation guides for major river valleys

To help people understand the way in which water is allocated to the various priorities and licence types, the department is developing guides on how the water allocation process works in each of the major regulated river valleys – see respective guides below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Peel Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 442KB) | → |
| Namoi Regulated River Water Sources (PDF. 529KB) | → |
| Gwydir Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 1,002KB) | → |
| Hunter Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 486KB) | → |
| Murray Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 1,271KB) | → |
| Lachlan Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 995KB) | → |
| Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 558KB) | → |
| Murrumbidgee Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 1,078KB) | → |
| NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 619KB) | → |
| Lower Darling Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 296KB) | → |
| Belubula Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 342KB) | → |
| Paterson Regulated River Water Source (PDF. 440KB) | → |

Questions

Ask questions on this month's topic in the meeting chat

Send other queries to water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au

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