South Australia's River Murray Water Allocation Statement

Issued 17 May 2021

Key messages

- The projected minimum opening allocation for South Australian River Murray irrigators for the 2021-22 water year has risen to 94 percent.
- This is based on a worst case water availability assessment provided by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, which projects that the minimum amount of water that will be delivered to South Australia as part of its Entitlement in the 2021-22 water year is 1,460 gigalitres (GL).
- Projections show that in every scenario other than the worst case, the opening allocation on 1 July 2021 is likely to be 100 percent.
- Carryover will not be available in 2021-22. As the projected minimum opening allocation announced on 15 April 2021 was greater than 50 percent, the carryover trigger for 2021-22 was not met. This means that any water volumes rolled over from a previous year will no longer be available.
- The Department for Environment and Water (DEW) commissioned an independent review into South Australia's River Murray allocation announcement process. The review found that the current allocation announcement process was working well. However, additional practical actions were identified to further improve the products that DEW produces for water users.
- The report can be found on the DEW's website, along with an explanation of the steps being taken to address the recommendations.
- To help irrigators manage their water, DEW has launched the SA River Murray Water Calculator. This Calculator has two main features:
    - Personal Water Calculator – to help you better understand how much water you could have under different water availability circumstances to help you plan for the season ahead.
    - State Water Calculator – to help you better understand how the water available to South Australia is shared.

Government of South Australia
Department for Environment and Water

Water availability projections

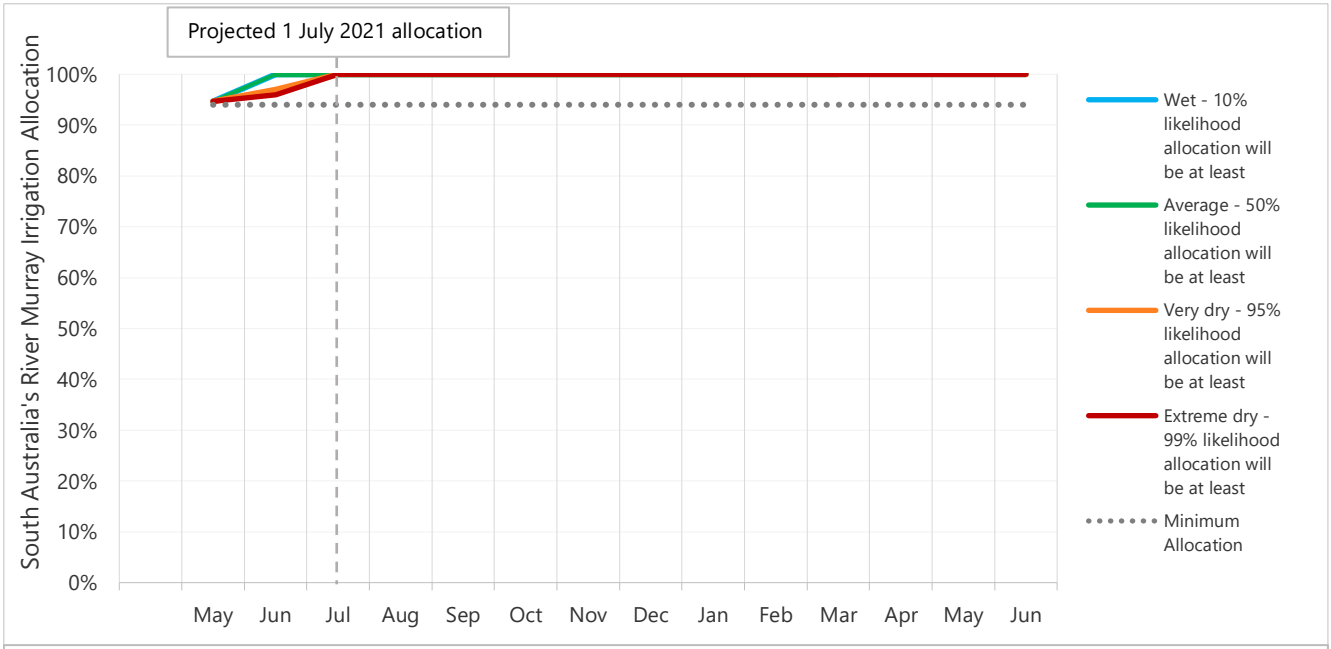
Projections show that in every scenario other than the worst case, the opening allocation on 1 July 2021 is likely to be 100 percent (Table 1).

Table 1 - Projected 1 July 2021 allocation under a range of water availability conditions for Class 3 (High Security)

	Worst case	Extreme dry	Very Dry	Average	Wet
Projected Class 3 (High Security) allocation on 1 July 2021	**94%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Water availability projections help water users better understand the likelihood of future water allocations and provide a guide about future allocation increases based on River Murray system modelling and South Australia's River Murray Water Allocation Framework. By comparing allocation forecasts to the climate outlook, water users can make informed choices for planning purposes, depending on the level of risk they are comfortable with.

The reliability of the outlook will generally improve as the forecast period reduces. Forecast conditions are best estimates only and not guaranteed water availability. The projections are created using the worst case water availability assessment from the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) as the starting point. Historical inflow and climate conditions over the last 30 years, in combination with current policy and operational settings, are then used to create unique inflow sequences (Figure 1 and Table 2).



Based on MDBA water availability assessment as at 30 April 2021.

This data is provided for information only. Historical performance is not necessarily an indicator of future outcomes. Projections are based on historical climate variability across the last 30 years. The Government of South Australia accepts no liability for any loss resulting from the use or reliance on any of this data or information.

Figure 1 - Projected water allocation scenarios for SA River Murray Class 3 (High Security) entitlements | 17 May 2021

Table 2 - Projected water allocation scenarios for SA River Murray entitlements Class 3 (High Security) | 17 May 2021

SA River Murray Irrigation Allocation Scenarios Class 3 (High Security) | May 2021	1 Jul 2021 Opening Allocation	1 Sep 2021	1 Nov 2021	1 Jan 2022	1 Apr 2022
	Projected Allocation as a Percentage				
Worst case -minimum allocation	94	94	94	94	94
Extreme dry conditions - 99% likelihood allocation will be at least	100	100	100	100	100
Very dry conditions - 95% likelihood allocation will be at least	100	100	100	100	100
Average conditions - 50% likelihood allocation will be at least	100	100	100	100	100
Wet conditions - 10% likelihood allocation will be at least	100	100	100	100	100

Correct as of 17 May 2021. Based on the end-April 2021 worst case water availability assessment provided by the MDBA and the historical inflow and climate conditions over the last 30 years.

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Interstate Allocations and Outlooks

Information on current River Murray allocations and projected allocations for 2021-22, in both New South Wales and Victoria, can be found at the website links below:

- NSW allocation information
- Victorian allocation information

Private carryover

In accordance with the Water Allocation Plan for the South Australian River Murray Prescribed Watercourse, access to private carryover is only available to eligible users when the projected minimum opening irrigation allocation is 50 percent or less. As the worst case projected minimum opening allocation for 2021-22 announced on 15 April 2021 was greater than 50 percent **private carryover will NOT be available in the 2021-22 water year.**

South Australia's River Murray private carryover policy was updated in April 2020 to allow carryover volumes to 'rollover' into a future dry year. The policy states that water in a rollover account will only be available if the minimum opening allocation for following water year is 50 percent or less. As the worst case projected minimum opening allocation for 2021-22, as announced on 15 April 2021, was 82 percent, **any water in a rollover account will no longer be available**.

Further information on the carryover policy is available here.

Water allocation framework

The Water Allocation Plan for the South Australian River Murray Prescribed Watercourse (Water Allocation Plan) details how water is allocated. The Water Allocation Plan is a 220 page document, so to help you more easily understand how water is allocated, including during dry times, a 5 page factsheet is available.

The SA River Murray Water Calculator also helps you better understand how the water available to South Australia is shared. It improves the transparency of water sharing arrangements within South Australia by showing how much water is allocated for different purposes (Figure 2).

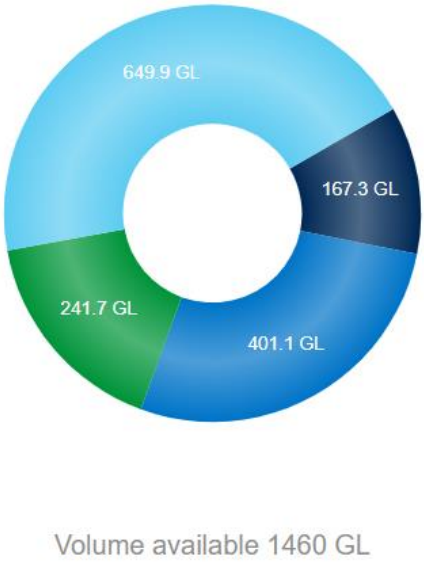


Figure 2 – Output from the SA River Murray Water Calculator illustrating how water is shared in South Australia when 1,460 GL is available.

Irrigation

This water is used to support productive irrigation businesses and communities in South Australia.

All Purpose – Class 3
High Security **94%**
All Purpose – Class 8
Environmental Land Management **94%**

Critical human water needs and town water supply

This water is used to support critical human water needs in both urban and rural areas across South Australia. This water underpins the water security of the majority of South Australians, including those in metropolitan Adelaide.

All Purpose – Class 1 & 5
Stock, Domestic, Industrial **100%**
Metropolitan Adelaide – Class 6
Urban Water Supply **77%**
All Purpose – Class 2
Country Towns **94%**

Environment

This water is held by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office and the South Australian Government for environmental purposes. Water for the environment benefits wetlands and floodplains along the length of the River Murray and supports the health of the Lower Lakes and Coorong.

All Purpose – Class 1
Stock, Domestic, Industrial **100%**
All Purpose – Class 3
High Security **94%**
Class 9
Wetland / Environment **100%**

Running the river

This includes water set aside to meet the conveyance requirements to "run the river", as well as water that "remains in the river" to contribute to environmental outcomes. Conveyance water is required to deliver Critical Human Water Needs and water for all River Murray water users.

Water held in storage

As at 14 May 2021, there was 4,736 GL (51 percent of capacity) held in the major Murray-Darling Basin storages. This is 16 percent more than the same time last year (3,249 GL) and slightly less than the long-term average held in storage at the end of April of 5,424 GL (59 percent of total capacity). Around 100.7 GL is currently held in storage for potential South Australian private carryover demand in future years.

Table 3 - Water held in Murray-Darling Basin storages as at 14 May 2021

Storage	Full Supply Volume	Current Volume		SA Private Carryover Volume
	GL	GL	%	GL
Dartmouth Dam	3,856	2,453	64	100.7
Hume Dam	3,005	1,284	43	0
Lake Victoria	677	227	34	0
Menindee Lakes*	1,731	772	45	-
Total	9,269	4,736	51	100.7

For more information on Murray-Darling Basin storages visit this MDBA webpage.

*The MDBA can access and manage water in the Menindee Lakes once the volume rises above 640 GL and until it falls below 480 GL. Once the water level falls below the 480 GL trigger point, New South Wales manages the water in accordance with its priorities, including to best meet local demands. For more information on Menindee Lakes visit this MDBA webpage.

Significant rainfall occurred across the catchments of northern New South Wales and southern Queensland during late March 2021 and is continuing to provide substantial inflows into the Barwon-Darling system. This event will provide significant inflows to the Menindee Lakes system. For more information visit this WaterNSW webpage.

Climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's mid-range rainfall outlook across the Murray-Darling Basin shows a slightly greater chance that much of southern and eastern inland Australia will be wetter than average for the three months from June to August (Figure 3). In June to August, temperatures are likely to be warmer than average (Figure 4). Recent rainfall over parts of eastern Australia has eased the dry conditions experienced over the last several years, as evident in the rainfall deficiencies in most regions (Figure 5).

The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has recently returned to a neutral state. Model outlooks indicate neutral ENSO conditions for the months ahead. A neutral ENSO state has little influence on Australian climate and means other climate drivers or more local effects are more likely to affect Australia's weather and climate. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral. Three out of five international models suggest the possibility of negative IOD thresholds being reached in winter or spring. A negative IOD increases the chances of above average winter-spring rainfall for much of southern Australia. It should be noted that model accuracy is low at this time of the year, so the current outlooks should be viewed with caution.

For more detailed information on the climate outlook visit this BoM webpage.

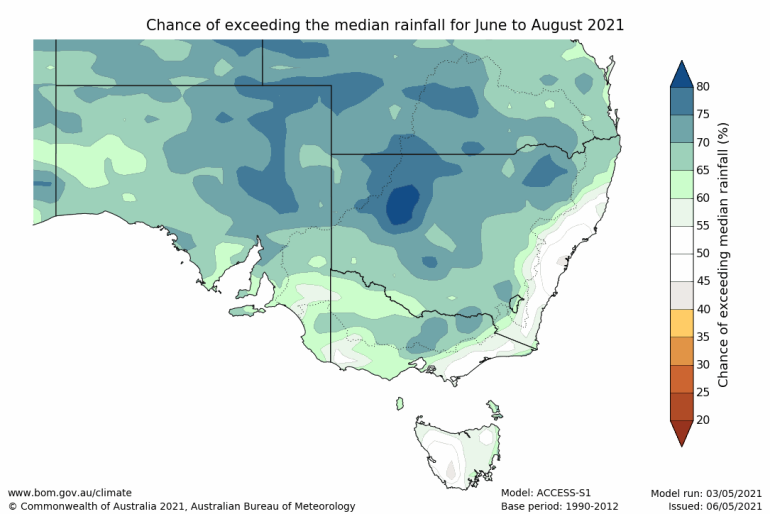


Figure 3 - Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook. Rainfall, June-August 2021

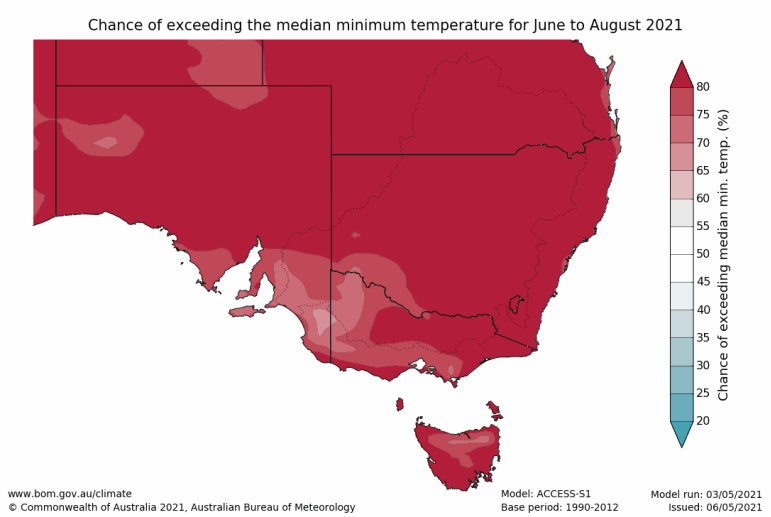


Figure 4 - Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook. Temperature, June-August 2021

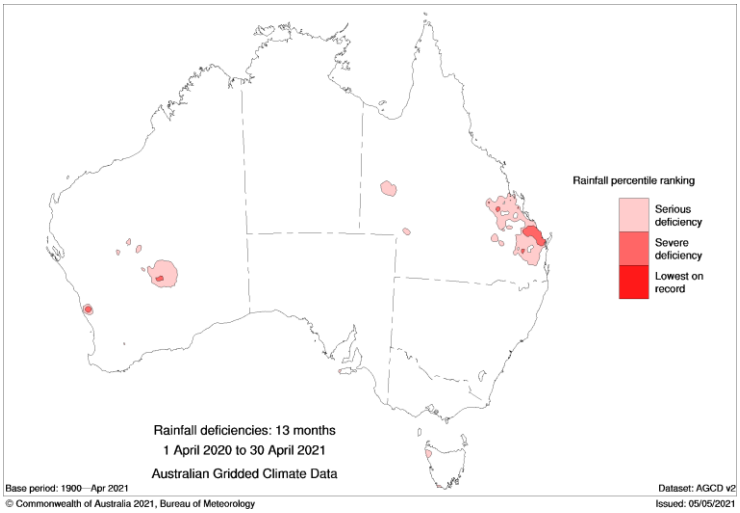
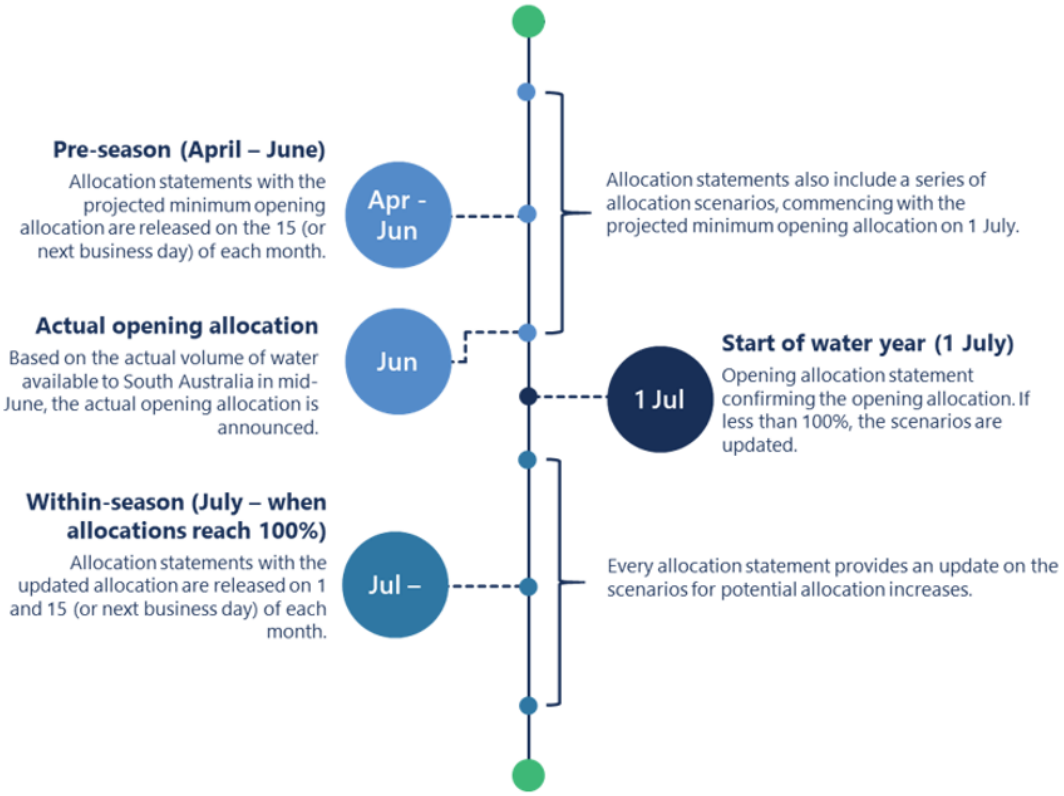


Figure 5 - Bureau of Meteorology rainfall deficiency April 2020 to May 2021

Next announcement

The next announcement will be provided on **Tuesday 15 June 2021**. Thereafter, updated water allocation information will be provided every two weeks while water allocations are less than 100 percent.



Further information

For more information on South Australia's water allocations visit the DEW website.

To sign up to receive the weekly River Murray Flow Report click here.

To speak with someone about your water allocation or account:

- Drop into the water licensing office at 28 Vaughan Terrace, Berri SA.
- Call the water licensing office on (08) 8595 2053.
- Email water licensing on DEW.WaterLicensingBerri@sa.gov.au.