

MEDIA RELEASE

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SA River Murray irrigation allocations projected to open at 62 per cent for 2026-27

South Australian River Murray irrigators are projected to receive minimum opening water allocations of 62 per cent at the start of the 2026-27 water year.

The projected opening allocation figure is based on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's (MDBA) 'worst-case' water availability. In this worst-case scenario, South Australia is projected to receive 1,246 gigalitres (GL), which is significantly below the state's annual Entitlement Flow of 1,850 GL.

This follows two consecutive years of low rainfall across the Murray-Darling Basin and low inflows into Basin storages.

Under the water allocation plan (WAP) for the South Australian River Murray, which was developed in partnership with irrigators and other stakeholders, allocations are made on a deliberately conservative basis – to avoid allocations going backwards over a water year.

This means improvements in irrigation allocations for 2026-27 are likely, with most inflows historically occurring between July and October.

However, there are no guarantees of improved water availability – with the three-month Bureau of Meteorology outlook indicating an increased chance of unusually low rainfall for parts of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Renee Thompson, the Department for Environment and Water's Water Delivery Manager, said management of the River Murray was vital to ensuring the sustainability of the resource.

"Our water resources are carefully managed to provide reliable water delivery for industry and regional communities alongside environmental and system requirements," Ms Thompson said.

"In mid-April each year, the Department for Environment and Water makes a projected opening allocation announcement for the following water year based on worst-case water availability information provided by the MDBA. This is to ensure irrigators are able to plan for the upcoming water year.

"This announcement is not the final determination for water allocations in the 2026-27 water year and we will be closely monitoring Basin conditions over the coming months."

Monthly updates to the volume of water available for allocation will be provided leading up to the start of 2026-27.

As the projected minimum opening allocation for 2026-27 is greater than 50 per cent, irrigators will not be eligible to carryover any unused allocation volumes from 2025-26 into 2026-27. This is consistent with the rules in the WAP.

For more information visit [the Department for Environment and Water's website](#) and the [Murray-Darling Basin Authority website](#).

