

# South Australia's River Murray Water Allocation Statement

Issued 17 April 2023



## Key messages

- The projected minimum opening allocation for South Australian River Murray irrigators for the 2023-24 water year is 100 percent.
- This is based on a water availability assessment provided by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority which shows that, under a "worst-case" scenario, South Australia will receive its full annual River Murray Entitlement of 1,850 gigalitres (GL). This is well above the 1,496 GL at which irrigators reach allocations of 100 percent.
- With the projected minimum opening allocation being greater than 50 percent, carryover of allocations from 2022-23 will not be available in 2023-24.
- As the projected minimum opening allocation is 100 percent for the 2023-24 water year, no more allocation announcements are scheduled for the 2023-24 water year. In mid-June 2023 the volume of water available for allocation will be gazetted and allocations issued for use from 1 July 2023.

## Interstate Allocations and Outlooks

Information on 2023-24 River Murray allocations in both New South Wales and Victoria, can be found via the website links below:

- [NSW allocation information](#)
- [Victorian allocation information](#)



## Private carryover

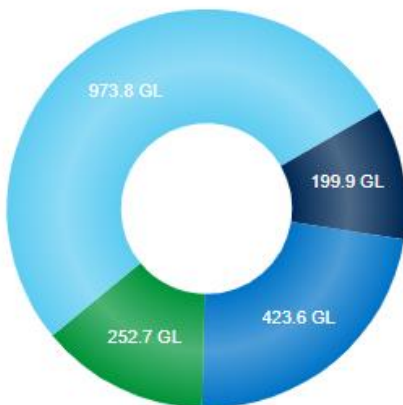
In accordance with the [Water Allocation Plan for the South Australian River Murray Prescribed Watercourse](#), access to private carryover is only available to eligible users when the projected minimum opening irrigation allocation is 50 percent or less. As the worst case projected minimum opening allocation for 2023-24 is 100 percent, **private carryover will NOT be available in the 2023-24 water year.**



## 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 transparency of the water sharing arrangements within South Australia by showing how much water is allocated for different purposes (Figure 1).



Volume available 1850 GL

Figure 1 – Output from the SA River Murray Water Calculator illustrating how water is shared in South Australia when 1,850 GL is available.

### Irrigation

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

**All Purpose – Class 3**

High Security 100%

**All Purpose – Class 8**

Environmental Land Management 100%

### 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 100%

**All Purpose – Class 2**

Country Towns 100%

### Environment

This water is held by the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder 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 100%

**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 6 April 2023, there was 8,270 GL (89 percent of capacity) held in the major River Murray system storages. This is 50 percent more than the long-term average held at the end of March (5,505 GL).

The South Australian Storage Right that is established in the *Murray-Darling Basin Agreement 2008* (the Agreement) is an important element of South Australia’s water security framework. Schedule G of the Agreement sets out the arrangements for how South Australia can defer and store part of its annual Entitlement in the River Murray system storages, such as Dartmouth and Hume Dams and Lake Victoria, to meet critical human water needs and private carryover.

Due to wetter than average climatic conditions over the previous two years, Dartmouth Dam reached full capacity in August 2022 and all 336.2 GL that was held under the South Australian Storage Right spilt and was unable to be recaptured in downstream storages. Since then, there has been no opportunity to re-capture any of South Australia’s Entitlement flow and the private carryover volume has reverted to zero.

South Australia’s Deferred Water Storage and Delivery Plan seeks to defer 70 GL between November 2023 and April 2024. The timing and volume for these deferrals will continued to be assessed by DEW based on the latest resource conditions. The current Deferred Water Storage and Delivery Plan can be found at: <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/river-murray/river-management-information/south-australias-storage-right>.

Table 1 identifies the water held in River Murry system storages and its purpose. Volumes stored are adjusted for net evaporation losses and spills until delivered to South Australia.

Table 1 - Water held in Murray-Darling Basin storages at 6 April 2023

Storage	Full Supply Volume	Current Volume		SA Private Carryover Volume
	GL	GL	%	GL
Dartmouth Dam	3,856	3,720	96	0
Hume Dam	3,005	2,663	89	0
Lake Victoria	677	385	57	0
Menindee Lakes*	1,731	1,502	87	0
Total	9,269	8,270	89	0

For more information on Murray-Darling Basin storages visit this [MDBA webpage](#).

\*The total storage volume of Menindee Lakes at full supply level is 1,731 GL, with an ability to surcharge the lakes with seasonal inflows to a volume of 2,050 GL. This is a combined storage volume consisting of Lake Cawndilla, Lake Menindee, Lake Pamamaroo and Weatherill and Tandure lakes. Individual storage data is available via [Real-time Data from WaterNSW](#).

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## Climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's rainfall outlook across the Murray-Darling Basin shows that much of the Basin is likely to very likely to be below median from May to July 2023 (Figure 2). Over the same period, temperatures are likely to very likely to be above median maximum temperatures (Figure 3). Rainfall over the last 12 months has meant there are very few areas in the Basin that have rainfall deficiencies (Figure 4).

In April 2023, the Bureau of Meteorology reported the El Niño-Southern Oscillation is currently neutral (neither La Niña nor El Niño). International climate models suggest that neutral El Niño-Southern Oscillation conditions are likely to persist through the southern hemisphere autumn. However, there are some signs that El Niño could form later in the year, and the Bureau of Meteorology reports a 50% chance of El Niño in 2023.

Warmer than average sea surface temperatures persist around south-east Australia, New Zealand and the west coast of Australia, but close to average temperatures prevail around northern Australia. Australia's climate has trended towards a greater proportion of rainfall from high intensity short duration rainfall events, especially across northern Australia. Southern Australia has seen a reduction of 10 to 20% in cool season (April–October) rainfall in recent decades.

For more detailed information on the climate outlook visit this [BoM webpage](#).

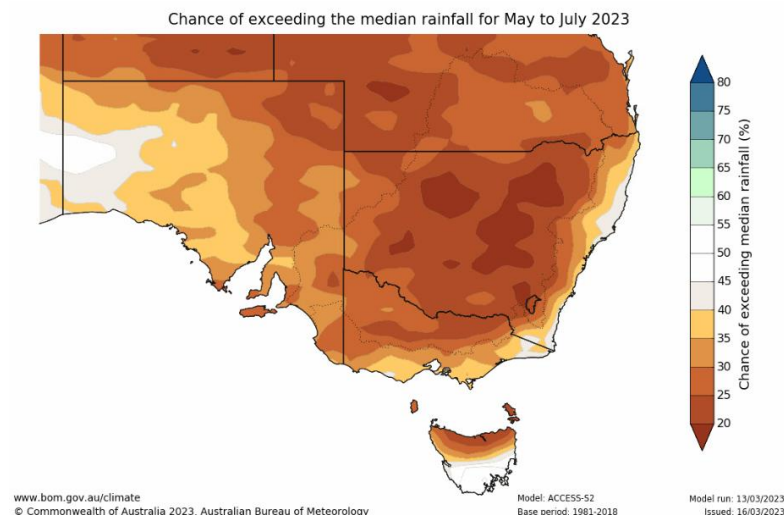


Figure 2 - Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook. Rainfall, May-July 2023

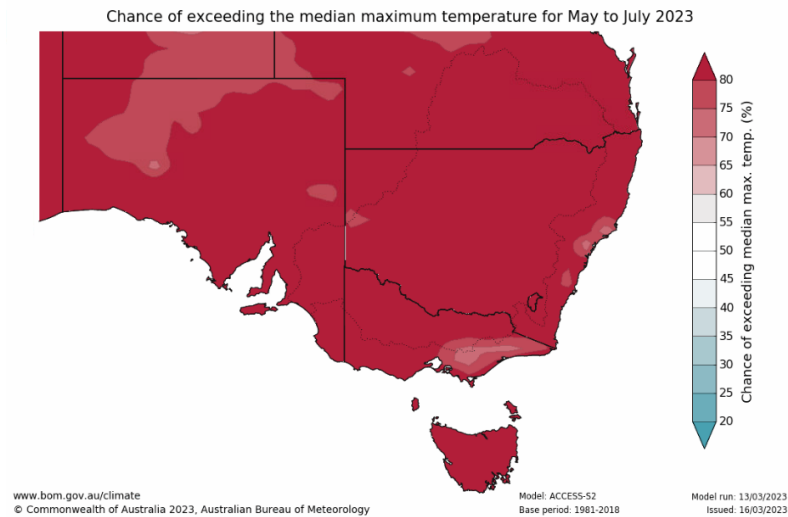


Figure 3 - Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook. Temperature, May-July 2023

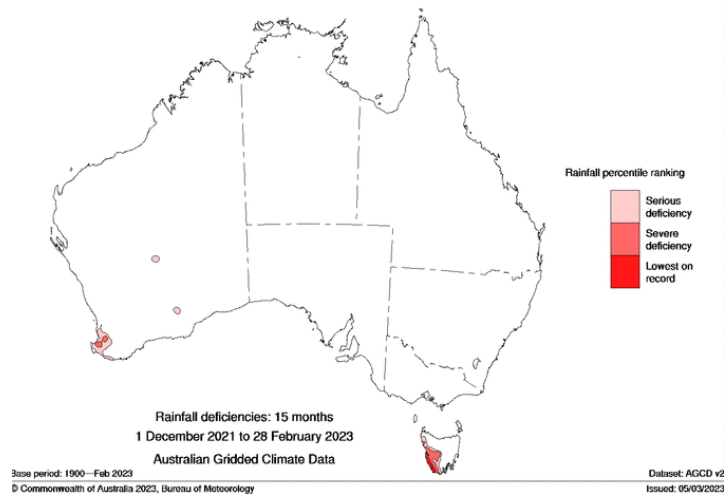


Figure 4 - Bureau of Meteorology rainfall deficiency December 2021 to February 2023



### Next announcement

As the projected minimum opening allocation is 100 percent for the 2023-24 water year, no more allocation announcements are scheduled. In mid-June 2023 the volume of water available for allocation will be gazetted and allocations issued for use from 1 July 2023.



## 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 2 Wade Street, Berri SA.
- Call the water licensing office on (08) 8595 2053.
- Email water licensing on [DEW.WaterLicensingBerri@sa.gov.au](mailto:DEW.WaterLicensingBerri@sa.gov.au).