

Amending the Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse

Private Carryover



This paper outlines the changes made to the private carryover policy included in the water allocation plan. The paper sets out the background information about why the changes have been made and how they affect authorisation holders.

Background

The Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse (the Plan) includes a private carryover policy that sets out how private carryover is calculated and who is eligible. Private carryover is a drought management measure and allows water to be stored in one year and used in another. It increases the volume of water available for irrigation in dry years, to support productive industries and resilient communities.

The provision of private carryover is possible through arrangements in the *Murray-Darling Basin Agreement*,

which allow the South Australian Government to store (defer) water in upstream (interstate) storages. This water can then be made available in a future water use year to individual water users for private carryover.

Some changes have been made to the policy in the Plan to provide clarity and to ensure it meets the requirements of the Basin Plan.



Who is eligible for private carryover?

When the Minister announces that carryover will be made available, water users will be eligible for private carryover if at the close of business on 30 June you:

- have South Australian water access entitlement shares in the All Purpose Consumptive Pool (Class 3)
- have unused water allocations available against eligible water entitlement shares, and
- provide the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) with a final water meter reading by no later than 31 July. If you do not have a water meter, you must contact DEW by 31 July to determine your underuse.

The maximum volume of private carryover that may be granted is 20 percent of an eligible water access entitlement share.

Why were the changes developed?

The Department has received feedback that it is not easy to understand when private carryover will be available and the uncertainty regarding carryover announcement dates can limit irrigators' capacity to make full use of carryover.

The private carryover policy has also been reviewed to ensure that all of our River Murray water allocation policies meet the requirements of the Basin Plan.

How were the changes developed?

Changes to the private carryover policy were developed in 2017-18 in consultation with the Board's River Murray Advisory Committee, a community-based committee that assists the Board in water policy development.

What does the 2017 Water Allocation Plan say?

In accordance with the 2017 Plan, the Minister determines the volume of water that can be made available for private carryover based on how much water has been stored in upstream storages (deferred water), and how much has been underused in total by South Australian Water Access Entitlement holders.

Carryover will only be made available by the Minister when the forecast risk of spill from the major upstream storages is less than 10 per cent during the year in which carryover is granted.

Water stored for carryover purposes is subject to net evaporative loss. A loss of 5% is deducted from the total carryover volume delivered to South Australia.

What are the proposed changes?

The proposed changes are as follows:

- The changes make carryover available in years when minimum opening allocations are less than 40 percent. This approach maintains the existing reliability of carryover and results in carryover being made available in the same years as it has been historically. However, it is easier to understand and incorporate into individual business planning processes than the risk of spill trigger in the 2017 Plan.
- The Minister may access water that was traded into South Australia between 1 April and 30 June in the previous water use year and remained unused on 30 June for carryover. This gives access to more water in total for carryover in more dry years.
- The method to account for net evaporative losses has been changed so that that individual carryover volumes are maximised. The loss of 5% from evaporation will be deducted at a bulk level, rather than at an individual level.
- In years where carryover is announced, the total allocation granted to an individual, including private carryover, will be capped at 100 percent of the volume held on entitlement. This represents a change from the approach taken in 2016-17 to ensure that water held in storage is available when it is needed most (during dry years), and to manage the risk of exceeding SDLs in that year. The change provides consistency with arrangements during the Millennium Drought and will help meet our Basin Plan compliance obligations.

To compliment changes made to the Plan, carryover announcements will aim to be made by mid-April. This would align with the announcement of minimum opening allocations for the upcoming water-use year and provide entitlement holders with time to trade water into or within South Australia following the announcement of the availability private carryover.



How do the changes affect water users?

The proposed changes do not effect who is eligible for carryover.

The changes simplify the carryover policy so that it is easier to understand when carryover will be granted.

Importantly, the changes aim to enable the full 20 percent of an eligible water access entitlement share to be delivered to all eligible entitlement holders in more years when carryover is available.

How can I provide feedback on the water allocation plan?

The Board will be consulting on the draft Plan until 5 pm on Friday 14 September 2018. The Board is inviting written responses about the content of the draft Plan from all interested parties. Feedback on the draft Plan will also be gathered at a series of drop-in sessions during the consultation period at locations along the River Murray. The dates and locations of these meetings will be advertised, and provided on the Natural Resources SAMDB website.

Where can I find out more?

For more information about the changes in the draft Plan, the following information sheets are available. They provide details about the key policy areas that are changing and why.

- What is changing in the Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse?
- Sustainable Diversion Limits
- Aboriginal Water Interests
- Allocating water from the River Murray
- Upper Pike River Anabranch
- Water Level Variability & Pumping Infrastructure
- Salinity Zoning Policy
- Environmental Land Management Allocations (ELMA)

Copies of the information sheets and the draft Plan are available on the Board's website, www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/rivermurraywap, or at Natural Resources offices located in Murray Bridge, Berri and Mount Barker.

Feedback

The period for feedback on the draft Water Allocation Plan for the River Murray Prescribed Watercourse closes at 5pm on Friday 14 September 2018.

Provide your feedback online:

<https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/river-murray-water-allocation-plan-18>

Written submissions can be directed to:

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