

Spillable water

Helping water users understand what spillable water means

What is spillable water?

Water entitlement holders in the Murray, Goulburn and Campaspe systems are able to carryover water and store more water than their full water entitlement volume when there is space in the storages.

Spillable water refers to any allocations above your water entitlement volume. A spillable water account is a feature of the allocation account linked to your water share.

Once your full water entitlement volume is reached (through the effects of carryover and seasonal determinations), any further allocation increases are recorded as spillable.

Spillable water accounts allow you to use extra dam space when it's not needed to support other entitlements. When the dams are full, spillable water has to make way for inflows to support new allocations to all water shares.

What actually happens when 'excess water is set aside as spillable'?

If the dam (Hume for Murray, Eildon for Goulburn or Eppalock for Campaspe) has greater than a 10 per cent risk of spilling, the spillable water is quarantined from use or trade – and is at risk of being diminished by spills – until the risk of spill is declared to be lower than 10 per cent.

But if the risk of spill is less than 10 per cent and the Resource Manager has made the declaration, the spillable water remains in your allocation account and your total balance can exceed your water entitlement.

There are two scenarios:

- spill risk is above 10 per cent (no low risk of spill declaration), and
- spill risk is below 10 per cent (low risk of spill declaration is made).

What triggers a low risk of spill declaration?

To make the low risk of spill declaration, the Resource Manager for northern Victoria will assess current volumes in store, forecast inflows and expected releases.

If the Resource Manager determines there is a low risk (less than 10 per cent probability) of the storage spilling later in the season then the declaration can be made.

If the Resource Manager determines there is a greater than 10 per cent risk of the storages spilling, the declaration cannot be made.

This process will continue until either the storage spills or the risk declines to the threshold level. For this reason, the declaration depends entirely on seasonal conditions.

The Resource Manager will endeavour to make the declaration as early as possible in the season, but it is possible the declaration may not be made until well into the irrigation season.

A spill at which storage counts as a spill?

- Campaspe system - Lake Eppalock
- Murray System – Hume Dam
- Goulburn System - Lake Eildon

Spills at other storages in your system have no impact on your spillable water account volume.

What happens if the storage spills after the low risk of spill declaration has been made?

Once the low risk of spill declaration has been made, all of your allocation – including the water in your spillable account – is made available in your allocation account. Your spillable water account balance is therefore reduced to zero.

A spill later in the season has no impact on the volume in your allocation account.