

25 November 2016

Lachlan Valley

Water availability and allocation update

Allocations

The total allocation for general security licence holders in the Lachlan Regulated River for 2016/17 water year **remains unchanged at 124 per cent of entitlement.**

All regulated river storages remain effectively full and since inflows cannot currently be stored, and there has been very little usage of previously allocated water, no additional allocation can be made at this time.

The resource assessment period now extends through to the end of the 2018/19 growing season. As a result, additional reserves are required compared to the previous assessment to ensure continuous supply through to May 2019.

There is a shortfall of 70,000 megalitres before an increase in allocation can be made. This shortfall will be reduced if water can be delivered from unregulated flows currently in the system or if the estimated usable contribution from the Lake Cowal system is exceeded.

This assessment includes usable water already in the system for November, and assumes a return to dry conditions in December.

General security water users are reminded of the Annual Use Limit that applies. A volume equivalent to **100 per cent of entitlement is the maximum amount that can be used in the 2016/17 water year**, plus any adjustments up or down for trade.

	High Security	General Security	Average Carryover
Lachlan valley	100%	124%	0%

Dam releases

WaterNSW is currently releasing water from Wyangala Dam to mitigate the impacts of low dissolved oxygen levels in the Lachlan River following recent flooding. A total of 15,000 megalitres of the Water Quality Allowance (WQA) has been released during November. The WQA is allocated 20,000 megalitres each year in accordance with water sharing plan rules and can be used for any water quality management purpose. Further releases are presently being made from held environmental water accounts to maintain a steady base flow as flooding subsides.

WaterNSW is planning to keep both on-route storages surcharged with the unregulated flows currently in the system.

Dam levels

- As of 24 November, Wyangala Dam was 97 per cent full – falling - holding 1,185,000 megalitres.
- Lake Cargelligo is surcharged to 154 per cent full (53,000 megalitres) and Lake Brewster is surcharged to 108 per cent full (157,000 megalitres).

Outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast a less than 30 per cent chance of median rainfall being exceeded in the Lachlan Valley during the three month period December 2016 to February 2017.

The current outlook reflects a negative Southern Annular Mode, which forces weather systems further north than usual, meaning Australia experiences higher pressures than normal. This is typically associated with reduced rainfall and higher temperatures.

Next announcements

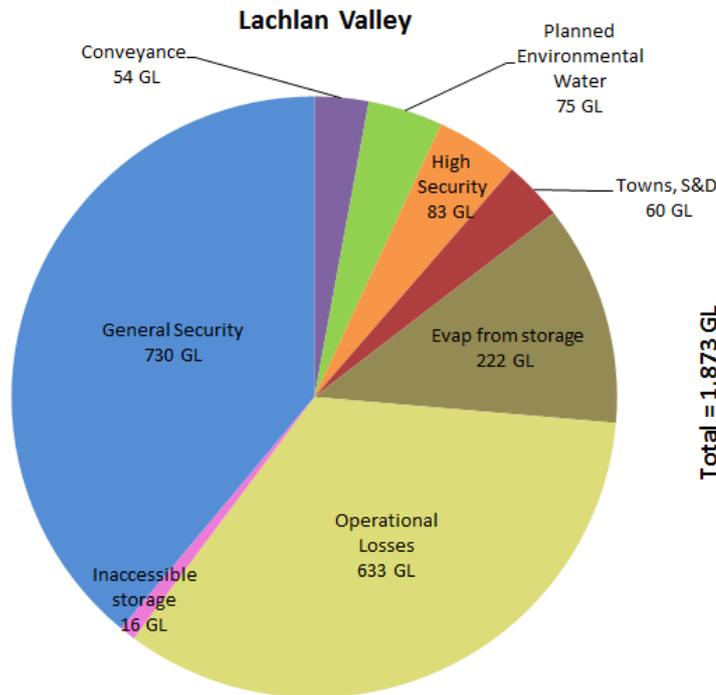
The next water allocation statement is scheduled for March 2017. However resource availability will be closely monitored and any significant improvements will be announced as applicable.

The March 2017 statement will include the water availability outlook for the 2017/18 water year.

Lachlan Resource Assessment Data Sheet

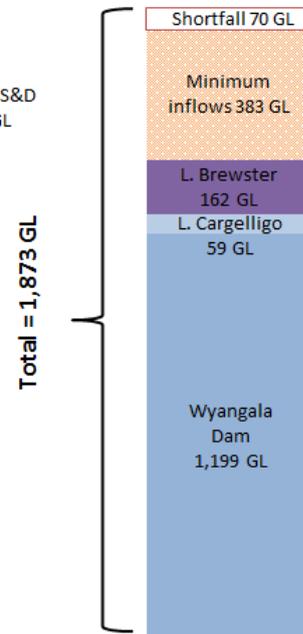
Resource Distribution: November 2016 to May 2019		
	Volume (GL)	
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾	1,803	
Less		
General Security	730 (124%)	
Carryover remaining in accounts ⁽²⁾	0	
Conveyance	54	
Planned Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	75	
High Security ⁽⁴⁾	83 (100%)	
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	60 (100%)	
Evaporation from storage ⁽⁵⁾	222	
Operational Losses (transmission, operations) ⁽⁶⁾	633	Total demand
Inaccessible storage	16	1,873

Resource Distribution November 2016 to May 2019



Total = 1,873 GL

Supply Distribution



Notes:

- (1) Total available resource: End of October estimated storage volume in Wyangala Dam, Lake Cargelligo and Lake Brewster, inflow recession in November, and minimum forecast inflows from 1 Dec.
- (2) Carryover remaining in accounts: Zero following account reset.
- (3) Planned environmental water: water allocated to the Water Quality Allowance and/or the Environmental Contingency Allowances under the water sharing plan. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water.
- (4) Towns, Stock, Domestic and High Security: reserves required to meet 100% of entitlement through to 31st May 2019.
- (5) It is assessed that the lakes are likely to be drawn down slowly in the current water year and will hold significant water until next summer, increasing storage evaporation.
- (6) 'Operational Losses': best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions to meet all demands. This mostly comprises natural transmission losses as water soaks into the riverbed. It is assumed that current tributary inflows will return to dry conditions from 1 Dec. This loss allowance is regularly refined as the year unfolds. In this assessment the total loss allowance for 2016/17 has been reduced by 50 GL. Of this reduction, about 30 GL is assessed as contributed by flows from Lake Cowal and 20 GL by water draining off the floodplain.

Further information

DPI Water website - www.water.nsw.gov.au