

08 March 2019

Peel Valley

Allocation and water availability update

Allocations for the Peel regulated river general security **remain unchanged at 38 per cent of entitlement.**

Conditions have been particularly hot and dry since the last statement in December 2018. Evaporation rates have been high and flow into the Chaffey storage is close to the historical minimum. There has been no improvement to surface water availability.

Similarly, the aquifer general security allocation remains unchanged at 69 per cent of entitlement.

Access licence type	2018/2019	Drought Stage
Regulated River (General Security)	0.38 ML/share	 Stage 1
Aquifer (General Security)	0.69 ML/share	
Environmental Contingency Allowance	1,900 ML	

Apart from those listed above, all other licence categories in the Peel regulated river, unregulated river and alluvium water sources have received full allocation for 2018-19.

Dam levels (as at 7 March)

Chaffey Dam is 29.7 per cent full – falling – currently holding about 32,000 megalitres (ML).

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduces a staged approach to managing extreme events, such as severe droughts or poor water quality events. The Peel Valley is assessed to be in Stage 1, as all account water can be delivered using normal river operations. However, the valley will likely escalate to a more severe stage in the next water year if no significant inflows arrive in coming months.

Further information on drought stages can be found at:

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events

Key facts

- As anticipated in previous assessments, transmission and operational losses have remained very high during this irrigation season.
- Chaffey Dam has received only 3,800 ML of inflow since July 2018. For context, less than 5 out of every 100 years experience this low level of inflow.

- System delivery will be ranked for high priority needs including town water, domestic, stock and high security water through 2019-20.
- Water supply for Tamworth can be maintained based on minimum historical inflows with the assistance of town water restrictions and other water conservation measures.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for March to May shows conditions are likely to be drier than average. Temperatures are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Outlook remains at El Niño WATCH. Sea surface temperatures have warmed and are around El Niño thresholds. There is an even chance of an El Niño event forming in autumn or winter. The Indian Ocean Dipole, which has little influence on the Australian climate from December to April, is neutral.

Preliminary water availability outlook 2019-20

Without a change to wetter conditions, Chaffey Dam is likely fall to around 20 gigalitres (GL) of water by June this year, meaning low allocations for 2019-20.

Town water, domestic and stock entitlements are likely to receive at least 70 per cent allocation on 1 July 2019.

High security entitlements are likely to receive at least 50 per cent allocation; while there will be no allocation for general security entitlement holders on 1 July.

Conditions are will be closely monitored and allocations will be increased in priority order in response to significant rainfall and system inflows.

Further information

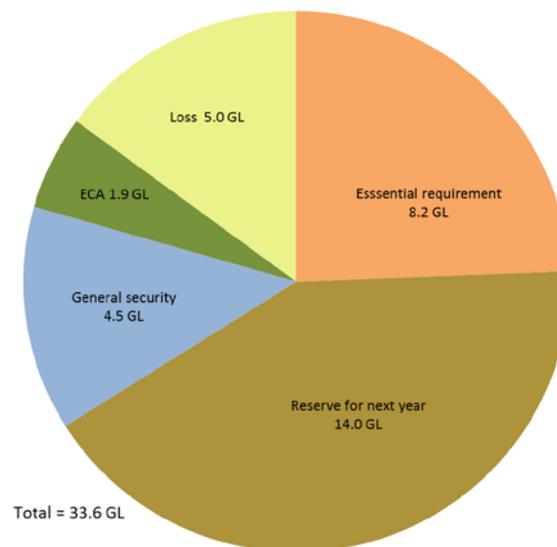
Resources are being constantly monitored and a monthly water allocation statement for the Peel regulated river will be provided to keep water users apprised of conditions and outlook.

Information on available water determinations and water sharing plans is available on the Department of Industry website - www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water

Resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution (March 2019 to June 2019)		Volumes (GL)
Available Resources ⁽¹⁾		30.6
less		
Essential Supplies ⁽²⁾		8.2
Reserve for 2019-2020 ⁽³⁾		14.0
General security balance		4.5
ECA balance ⁽⁴⁾		1.9
Evaporation, operational and transmission loss ⁽⁵⁾		5.0
equals		
Balance ⁽⁶⁾		-3.0

Resource Distribution(March 2019 to June 2019)



Notes:

- (1) Chaffey above dead storage, Dungowan below 50% and minimum inflow expected to June 2019.
- (2) Water set aside to provide for basic landholders rights, domestic and stock, local water utility, high security and associated transmission loss plus minimum storage release. All the relevant high priority licences received a full (100%) allocation on 1 July 2018. However, for this year only, the estimate for Essential Supplies is reduced by 4.9GL, being 30% of the TRC full Local Water Utility entitlement of 16.4GL.
- (3) Reserve set aside to meet the minimum allocation of 2019-2020 under the water sharing plan obligation at the repeat of the worst drought. This includes basic landholders rights, 70% domestic and stock, 70% local water utility, 50% high security and associated transmission loss plus minimum storage release. This also considers minimum inflow expected post drought offset by evaporation over 2019-2020.
- (4) Total ECA account balance. GS accounts include 0.47GL of Held Environmental Water (HEW).
- (5) Evaporation budget assumes historical high evaporation rates. The transmission loss is to run the river to deliver water orders based on current conditions and forecasts. ECA water delivery is measured at the dam wall therefore incurs no transmission loss.
- (6) Negative balance indicates a shortfall if all account water has been delivered. Historically, full utilisation of all account water has not happened.

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