

22 January 2020

Peel Valley

Water allocation update

Rainfall (50-100mm) over the Peel catchment last week has produced minimal system inflows including less than 100 megalitres (ML) into storage due to the extreme dry catchment conditions.

Peel valley water availability therefore continues to remain critically low. Chaffey has experienced its worst 18 month inflow sequence on record. Inflows in the last 18 months since July 2018 have been critically low at just 4.1 gigalitres (GL). This is about one-third of the previous record low inflow of around 13.1 GL (Figure1). Transmission loss has been extreme too, exceeding the budgeted loss by about 50%, some 6 GL, further exacerbating the severe water shortage situation.

Now that the Dungowan pipeline and temporary weir have been commissioned with pumping commencing on 1 December 2019 savings should accrue from reduced transmission losses.

With rainfall forecast in January, and to protect potential natural flows from extraction, a temporary water restriction was announced to remain effective until the end of January. It affects water users including regulated river (high security access licences) and unregulated river access licence holders accessing water. Details of the temporary water restriction can be viewed at this [link](#).

Table 1 Announced Water Allocations for the Peel Regulated River Water Source

Access licence type	2019/20	Drought Stage
Local Water Utility	70%	
Domestic and Stock	70%	Stage 4
High Security	50%	
Aquifer (general security)	51%	
General Security	0%	
Environmental Contingency Allowance	0%	

Chaffey dam is 13 % full – steady – currently holding about 15,400 megalitres (ML).

Drought stage

The Peel regulated river water source is at maximum Stage 4 drought criticality and remaining resources are committed to meeting only the highest priority needs.

Further information on drought stages can be found at:

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought>

Key facts

- Storage inflows since July 2018 have been just 4.1 GL. This is much less than the previous historical minimum of 13.1 GL.
- Chaffey Dam releases of 7.7 GL since 1 July 2019 to provide 3.4 GL of essential supplies.
- Installation of emergency contingency measures, including a temporary weir at Dungowan and a pipeline from Chaffey to the Dungowan to Tamworth pipeline, will save precious water.
- Water held behind Chaffey dam is securing critical human needs.

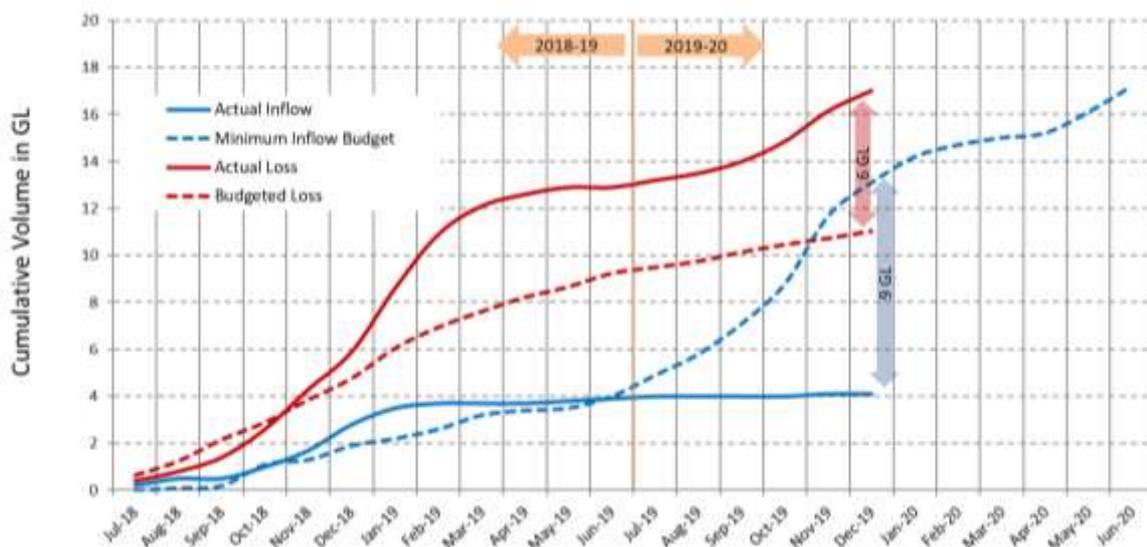
Climate outlook

The chances of wetter or drier than average condition to May are roughly equal for the Peel valley. Daytime temperatures for the same period likely to be above average, with February to April nights very likely to be warmer than average.

The positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and the negative Southern Annular Mode (SAM) phase have ended, meaning most climate influences are now neutral.

Details can be found in: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/>

Figure 1: Cumulative Inflow to Chaffey Dam and Transmission Loss since July 2018



Further information

The department will continue to closely monitor Peel water resource availability and will provide a routine statement update in April 2020; earlier if conditions change significantly beforehand.

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

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