

9 April 2020

Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source

Water allocation update

Allocations for the Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source **remain unchanged**.

Despite some limited recovery, the system continues to experience its worst ever drought inflows and remains at maximum Stage 4 drought criticality. Resources continue to be managed to prioritise the delivery of water for critical needs. Rainfall in the Macquarie-Cudgegong catchment in March and early April has ranged from 50mm to 200mm. While the much-needed inflows to Burrendong Dam and from downstream tributaries is welcome, on-going rainfall is needed to overcome the drought, allow the lifting of water restrictions and enable more water to be allocated.

The total inflow into Burrendong Dam since the last general security allocation in August 2017 (32 months ago) has been 165,000 megalitres (ML). This is just 31% of the previous record low inflow volume for the 32 months ending in March.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Cudgegong	70%	0%	 Stage 2
Macquarie	70%	0%	 Stage 4

A temporary water restriction remains in place below Burrendong Dam to limit water usage and protect critical supplies. Access to water in general security carryover sub-accounts, including the environmental water allowance (EWA), remains restricted until conditions improve.

Cudgegong Regulated River access licences, including general security carryover, are not restricted, however; no trading of water from above to below Burrendong Dam is permitted due to the critical water shortage downstream. Restrictions can only be eased when sufficient inflows to assure high priority needs for the 2020-21 water year are captured in storage. In the meantime, water users are advised to remain vigilant and maximise their water use efficiency.

Further welcome rainfall across the catchment in early April has produced about 58,000 ML of inflow to Burrendong Dam and an estimated 60,000 ML of downstream tributary flows. Tributary flow surplus to water orders have been managed under the Tributary Flow Management Plan, while also meeting critical human and environmental needs. Temporary drought works at Warren Weir, Gunningbar Weir and Duck and Crooked Creek offtakes have been adjusted to allow the passage of tributary flows. The recent rainfall and resultant inflow have also allowed the deferral of the planned Bulk Water Transfer to June 2021.

Important advice on estimated inflows required to trigger a possible lifting of suspensions to general security and EWA accounts is being prepared and will be provided in the next water allocation statement on Tuesday 12 May 2020.

All stock and domestic replenishments have now been completed, except for the unregulated sections of Crooked Creek. Flows are currently being diverted toward these sections.

Despite some relief, businesses and landholders affected by the limited regulated river operations should continue with their water saving arrangements until normal regulated river operations can resume. Works continue to be readied to access inactive storage in Burrendong Dam should that become necessary and additional drought contingency measures may also be needed to ensure critical needs and town supplies can be met into the future.

Storage levels (as at 9 April 2020)

- Burrendong Dam is 12.4 per cent full – rising – holding about 178,000 ML
- Windamere Dam is 26.8 per cent full – rising – holding about 100,000 ML.

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach to managing extreme events, such as severe droughts or poor water quality events. The Macquarie regulated river water source remains in Stage 4 – Critical Drought. Contingency measures are being implemented to protect and extend critical water supplies for as long as possible.

The Cudgegong Regulated River Water Source advanced to Stage 2 on 1 July 2019, reflecting the restricted trade dealings and the reduced (70%) high security allocation.

For further details on current drought status please see detailed drought response advice available here: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought

Key facts

- If conditions remain dry, a further bulk water transfer will commence in June 2021, leaving a minimum of 70 GL in Windamere Dam upon completion. This is enough to secure supply for local regulated Cudgegong demands for a number of years.
- Despite some water in accounts, there will be no delivery of water to some sections of the regulated Macquarie River from Burrendong Dam, unless assisted by rainfall events and unregulated tributary inflows. Water users should contact WaterNSW for local delivery advice.
- Tributary flows from passing storms downstream of Burrendong Dam will be managed adaptively to meet high priority commitments, including effluent replenishments where possible.

Climatic outlook

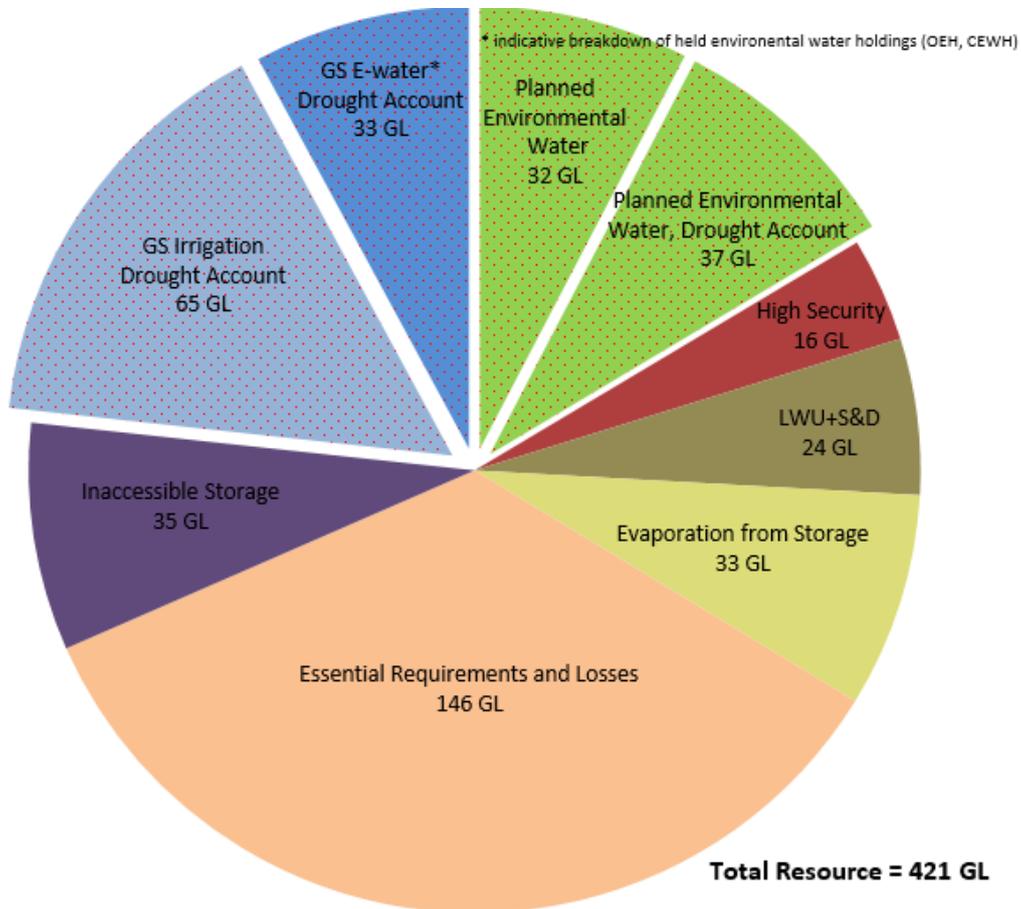
The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for April to June indicates that the catchment is likely to experience wetter than average conditions. Daytime temperatures over this period are equally likely to be above or below average and night-time temperatures very likely to be above average.

The Bureau of Meteorology indicates that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are neutral and likely to remain neutral to the middle of the year. With the major climate drivers neutral at this stage, Australia is less likely to see widespread deviation from average seasonal rainfall.

For further details: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/rainfall/summary

Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update



Resource Distribution (April 2020 to May 2021)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource ⁽¹⁾		148
<i>less</i>		
Carryover remaining in accounts ^{(2), (7)}	98	
Planned Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	69	
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	24	
Inaccessible Storage ⁽⁶⁾	35	
High Security ⁽⁴⁾	16	
General Security 2019/2020 AWD ⁽⁷⁾	0	
Essential Requirements (transmission, operations) ⁽⁵⁾	146	
Evaporation from Storage	33	
<i>equals</i>		
Water available for allocation (or deficit)		(273)

Notes:

- (1) Storage volume in Burrendong Dam plus minimum forecast dam inflows plus transfers from Windamere Dam is 148 GL. In order to deliver all remaining GS and EWA carryover allocations and current allocation to higher security licences, and to operate the river normally over the assessment horizon, 421 GL is required. This is resulting in a deficit of 273 GL before further allocations can be made.
- (2) Carryover remaining in accounts: volume remaining in carryover sub-accounts (excludes Cudgegong), discounted for evaporative losses.
- (3) Planned environmental water: water allocated to the Environmental Water Allowance (EWA) under the water sharing plan (WSP) to provide for the Macquarie Marshes and the riverine environment. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water.
- (4) Towns, Stock, Domestic and High Security: reserves required to meet current allocation to these licence categories over the assessment horizon. This represents total entitlement below Burrendong Dam.
- (5) Essential Requirements: best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions over the next 14 months to meet all demands. This includes transmission losses and operational loss. It is conservatively assumed that forecast inflows correspond to dry conditions. This estimate is regularly refined as the year unfolds.
- (6) Inaccessible storage: Dead storage of 34 GL plus 1 GL to ensure valve operations at very low storage levels.
- (7) Held environmental water (HEW): as a trial, we are reporting held environmental water administered by the environmental water holders, with the associated portions of general security allocation also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting of held environmental water is indicative only, prior to reconciliation of usage and net trade, and is estimated to be 33 GL of GS and 0 GL of HS. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW DPIE Environment, Energy and Science (EES) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on environmental holdings can be found on individual agency websites. Delivery of this water is currently unavailable until conditions improve.

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source will be on **Tuesday 12 May 2020**. This next statement will provide important advice on estimated inflows required to trigger a possible lifting of suspensions to general security and EWA accounts.

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