

15 April 2020

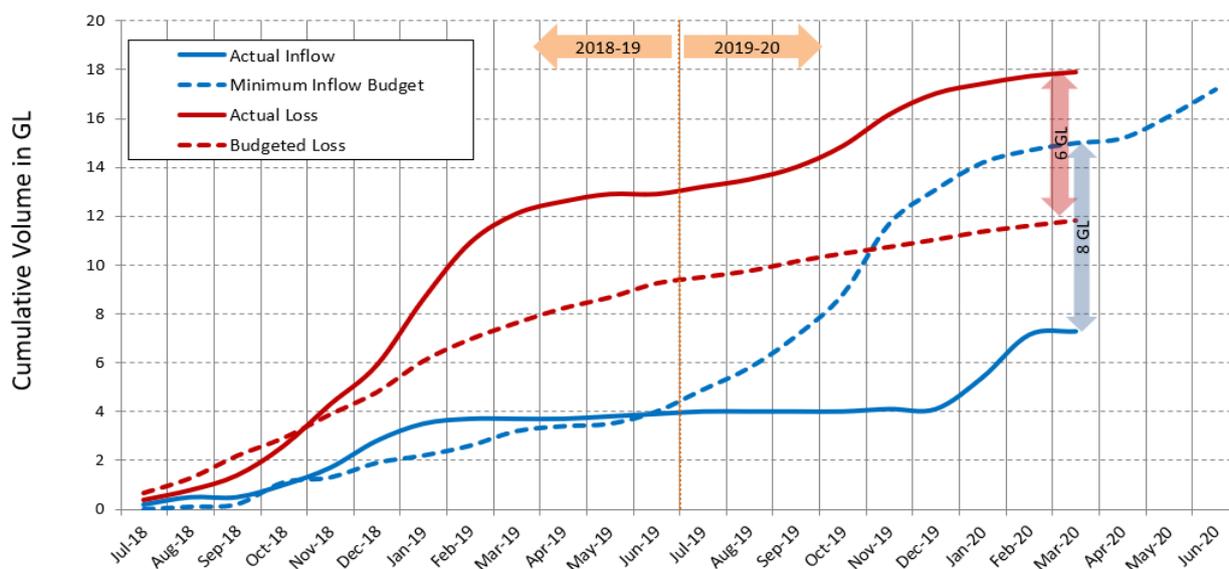
## Peel Valley

### Water allocation update

The catchment saw welcomed scattered rainfall in the first three months of the year, totalling approximately 300-400 mm. However, otherwise dry conditions have persisted locally, limiting inflows to Chaffey Dam from January through to the end of March to just 3.2 gigalitres (GL). Nearby storages, Split Rock and Keepit dams, have fared a little better from the recent rainfall.

Peel Valley water availability therefore continues to remain critically low. Chaffey Dam has experienced its worst 21-month inflow sequence on record with just 7.3 GL received since July 2018; less than half the previous record low inflow for this period of around 15.0 GL.

Figure 1 shows that inflows are now 8 GL below previous minimums (budget) and losses have tracked 6 GL higher than expected (budget), thus significantly affecting water availability.



**Figure 1: Cumulative inflow to Chaffey Dam and transmission loss since July 2018**

Chaffey Dam is currently holding approximately 17 GL and is 14 per cent full.

Table 1 lists the announced water allocation for the Peel Regulated River Water Source for the current water year. With no improvement to water availability, current allocations remain unchanged.

**Table 1. Announced water allocations for the Peel Regulated River Water Source**

Access licence type	2019/20	Drought Stage
Domestic and Stock	70%	Stage 4
Local Water Utility	70%	
High Security	50%	

Access licence type	2019/20	Drought Stage
Environmental Contingency Allowance	0%	
General Security	0%	
Aquifer (general security)	51%	

## 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. Drought contingency measures has been implemented to save water and extend critical supplies.

Further information on drought stages can be found at: [www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought)

## Key facts

- Storage inflows since July 2018 (21 months) have been approximately 7.3 GL. This is about half of the previous historical minimum of 15.0 GL.
- The Dungowan pipeline and temporary weir have been continuously used since they were commissioned on the 1 December 2019.
- Installation of emergency contingency measures, including a temporary weir at Dungowan and a pipeline from Chaffey to the Dungowan to Tamworth pipeline, will save water.
- Water held in Chaffey Dam is securing critical human needs.
- If there is no system recovery in coming months, reduced allocation to high priority entitlements can be expected on 1 July 2020, with no general security allocation (as occurred this year).

## Seasonal climate outlook

For the three months April to June, wetter than average conditions are likely for the Peel valley. April to June days and nights are likely to be warmer than average.

The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are currently neutral and are forecast to remain neutral into winter, but the tropical ocean to the west of Australia is forecast to remain warmer than average and will likely be the major influence on the climate in coming months.

Details can be found at: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/)

## Further information

The department will continue to closely monitor Peel water resource availability and will provide a routine statement update in July 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](http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water)

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