

20 February 2020

Richmond Regulated River Water Source

Allocations

This water allocation statement for the Richmond regulated river water source is being published to confirm water availability after a significant shift in catchment conditions.

Toonumbar Dam fell to below 20 per cent full in early February 2020 and drought management initiatives were being readied. However, after some heavy rainfall on the north coast of NSW, the Toonumbar catchment is now wet and the storage has risen to about 60 per cent full.

Full allocations already announced for all entitlement holders in 2019-20 are confirmed and fully deliverable this year, while high priority commitments for 2020-21 are also assured.

Recent and forecast weather conditions indicate a possible shift in weather patterns following months of extreme dry weather. If Toonumbar storage levels are maintained or increased in coming months, there will be a strong possibility of full general security allocation for 2020-21.


Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach from one to four to manage extreme circumstances such as severe droughts or poor water quality events in the Murray-Darling Basin. Regulated coastal rivers are now being reported on the drought map on the DPIE website.

Given the recent water availability improvements, the drought criticality level of the Richmond regulated river has been eased to the lowest level, Stage 1, indicating normal river operations.

Further information on drought stages can be found at:

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

| 2019-20 | High Security | General Security | Drought Stage |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|---|
| Richmond Regulated River Water Source | 100% | 100% |  Stage 1 |

Dam levels (as at 19 February 2020)

Toonumbar Dam is about 60 per cent full – holding 6,700 megalitres (ML). This time last year the storage was about 81 per cent full.

Key facts

- The first half of February 2020 saw 150-300 mm of rainfall across the catchment.
- This resulted in net inflows into Toonumbar Dam of 4,500 ML – increasing storage volume to about 6,900 ML or about 62 per cent full.
- The drought criticality level has eased from Stage 2 to Stage 1 – normal operations.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for March to May shows an even chance of median rainfall conditions on the coast. Temperatures are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is neutral and is expected to remain neutral until the end of autumn. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is also neutral.

With both the ENSO and IOD indicators now in the neutral range, Australia's climate can be influenced by more local or short-term climate drivers.

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

Further information

A water allocation statement for the Richmond regulated river water source is published annually on 1 July and updated if there any significant changes in catchment conditions or water availability.

The next water allocation statement for the Richmond regulated river water source will be in May 2020 and will confirm likely 1 July 2020 water allocations for the 2020-21 water year.

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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