

22 April 2020

Hunter Regulated River Water Source

Allocation update

Despite recent rainfall and minor system improvements, there has been insufficient improvement in resources to provide an allocation increase to general security access licence holders.

The Hunter regulated river received average rainfall in March 2020 with rainfall continuing into April. Glenbawn Dam received about 36 mm in March 2020, with a further 37 mm in April, while Glennies Creek Dam received rainfall of about 93 mm in March 2020, and 54 mm in April.

Apart from general security entitlements, all other categories of licence in the regulated river water source have received their maximum allocation for this water year (2019-20).

In response to recent queries from water users, a fact sheet has been published on 16 April 20 to further explain the water allocation process and answer some questions about annual allocations. The fact sheet predicts that at least 25 gigalitres (GL) of inflow by 30 June 2020 is required to enable a 10% general security allocation on 1 July 2020. Half of the years over last 120 years experienced at least this volume of inflow or more.

This fact sheet is available on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website - www.industry.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/295077/how-water-is-allocated-in-the-hunter-valley-regulated-river.pdf

Key facts

- Releases from Glenbawn and Glennies Creek dams are currently being made for essential requirements and irrigation demand.
- The planning horizon for high priority commitments, including town water supplies and major utilities for the Hunter regulated water source, is up to 3 years and is currently to June 2022.
- All Environmental Water Allowance and high priority water needs including major utility and towns are secure to June 2021, assuming the budgeted (minimum) future inflows arrive.
- All unused water carried forward in accounts into 2020-21 will likely be available for use.
- The opening general security allocation on 1 July 2020 will be subject to inflows during the remainder of this water year. At this stage general security water users are advised to plan for low or zero new allocation on 1 July 2020, but this may change if the recent wetter conditions (February/March) continue in coming months.
- In accordance with the water sharing plan clause 48(3), if less than 50% GS water is allocated, as appears likely, HS allocation will be reduced to at least 75%.

Current allocations

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Hunter Regulated River Water Source	100%	95%	 Stage 1

Dam levels (as at 21 April 2020)

Glennbawn Dam is about 40 per cent full – steady – holding about 301 gigalitre (GL).

Glennies Creek Dam is 37 per cent full – steady – holding about 106 GL.

These dams were just over half full at this time last year.

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. Currently, the Hunter regulated river water source is classified as Drought Stage 1 - indicating normal regulated river operations.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for April to June shows neither wetter nor drier than average conditions for the catchment. Day time temperatures are likely to be above average and night time 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

The next water allocation statement will be in late May 2020.

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

Resource Assessment Data Sheet

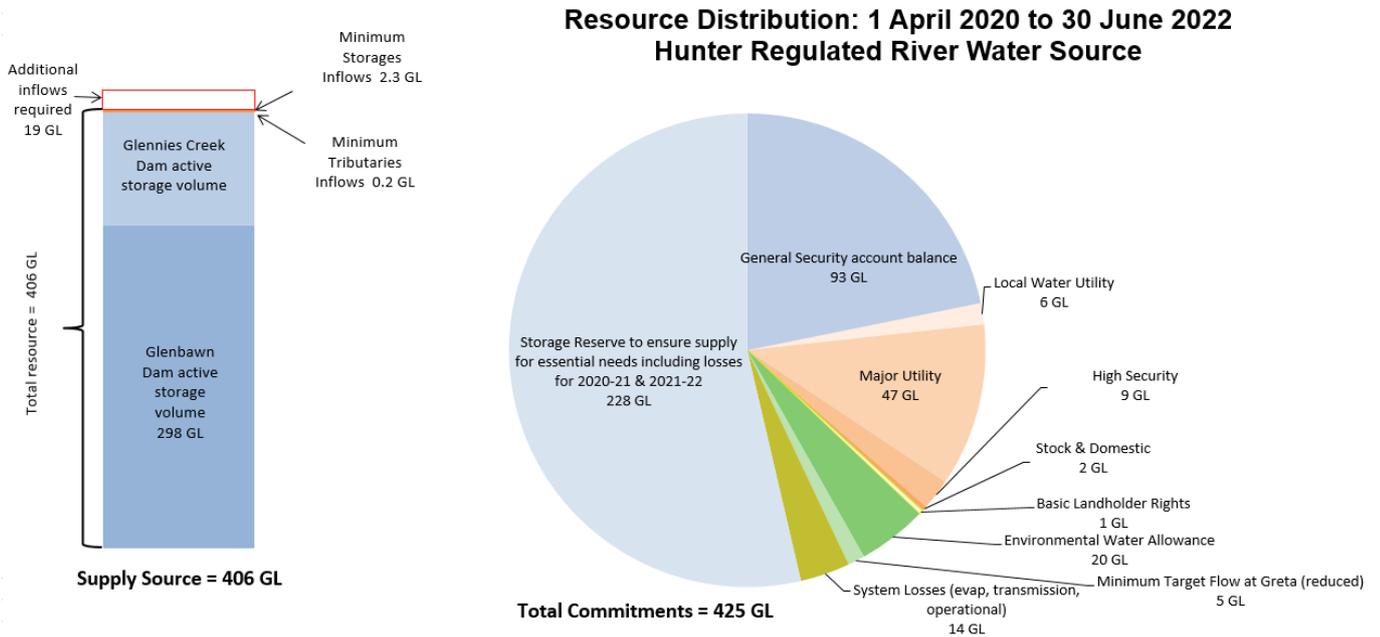
Resource Distribution (1 April 2020 to 30 June 2022)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource (as at 1 Apr 2020) ⁽¹⁾		403.67
Minimum storage & tributary inflows (1 Apr 2020 – 30 Jun 2020) ⁽²⁾		2.50
<i>less</i>		
General Security account balance	92.65	
Town Water (Local Water Utility)	6.21	
Major Utility	47.25	
High Security	8.95	
Basic Land Holder Rights	1.38	
Environmental Water Allowance (EWA)	20.00	
Domestic and Stock	1.42	
Minimum Flow Target at Greta	4.86	
Losses (evaporation, transmission, operation)	14.37	
Storage Reserve for 2020-21 & 2021-22 ⁽³⁾	227.85	
<i>equals</i>		
Additional inflows required ⁽⁴⁾		(18.77)

Notes:

- (1) Available Resource in the dams – is the total active storage volume in Glenbawn Dam and Glennies Creek Dam combined as at 1 April 2020.
- (2) Minimum forecast dam inflows from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 (2.3 GL) and minimum forecast usable tributary inflows (0.2 GL) from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- (3) Water required to be set aside in storages as reserve to meet essential supply requirements and system losses of 115 GL in 2020-21 (after accounting for minimum inflows in 2020-21) & 113 GL in 2021-22 (after accounting for minimum inflows in 2021-22). The essential supply includes EWA, towns, major utilities, high security, domestic use, basic rights net of minimum inflow and losses.
- (4) Additional inflows required over the 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2022 period (other than the budgeted inflows) to meet water availability shortfall. This small shortfall of about 19 GL is based on a very unlikely scenario and will be regularly reviewed and updated through to 30 June 22.

Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update



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