

14 February 2020

Lachlan Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

There is **no change to allocations** in the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source.

Based on end of January resource assessment a large system inflow, over 419 gigalitres (GL), is required before more general security water can be allocated. The planning horizon for the Lachlan resource assessment runs through May 2022, some 28 months. Given the current deficit, significant inflows are required to build for higher priority water needs before the next improvement to general security allocation.

The water level in Wyangala Dam has in recent days risen by about 3.8 per cent, from 8.3 per cent to 12.1 per cent as welcome rain in February has produced some useful inflows. More inflows are expected as recessions and further wet conditions continue. However, the regulated water source continues to experience minimal inflows since the last general security allocation in August 2017.

The department is investigating and implementing options to ensure all remaining supplies are prioritised and used efficiently and effectively in case drought conditions persist into 2020-21.

A Temporary Water Restriction under Section 324 of the *Water Management Act 2000* currently limits access to 43 per cent of the 1 July general security water account balance. The restriction is improving water security for higher priority needs, including towns. All water users are encouraged to be as efficient as possible with remaining account water to stretch the resource until rains return. Drought contingency measures are being implemented to enable the delivery of usable allocations to at least 31 March 2020 without needing to further restrict general security access.

From April 2020, normal delivery of remaining high security allocations may be available to Condobolin, but deliveries downstream of Condobolin will be for critical human needs only until conditions improve. In the absence of further inflows this water year, a possible further reduction in access to general security balances is possible after 31 March 2020. Any inflows will first be used to maintain a minimum storage level in Wyangala Dam of 5 per cent at the end of the 2019-20 water year to maintain critical supplies in 2020-21. These measures will ensure critical water needs including Local Water Utility supplies can be maintained into the 2020-21 water year. Flows in the regulated Willandra Creek were stopped over summer as an emergency water savings measure. Further potential contingency measures are detailed on the following page.

As Lake Brewster remains effectively empty, irrigation and environmental demand below Brewster Weir this water year is being delivered from Wyangala Dam. In ordering water, users must be mindful of additional travel times and delivery challenges, particularly those below Hillston. The Annual Use Limit this year (2019-20) is a volume equivalent to 100 per cent of entitlement.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Lachlan Regulated River Water Source	87%	0%	 Stage 3

Storage levels (as at 14 February 2020)

- Wyangala Dam is 12.1 per cent full – rising – currently at about 148 GL.
- Lake Cargelligo is 57.5 per cent full – rising – currently at about 24 GL.
- Lake Brewster is effectively empty.

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 Lachlan Regulated River Water Source is at Stage 3 drought criticality, reflecting the reduced water availability in 2019-20 described above. Conditions are being closely monitored and may warrant escalation to Stage 4, with tighter restrictions a possibility unless there is significant system improvement.

Some of the current and planned drought contingency measures for the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source are as follows:

Drought contingency measures for the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source

Measure	Details	Potential Savings	Implementation
No further replenishment flows	Stock and domestic replenishment flows have already been delivered to creeks in the lower Lachlan.	24 GL	January 2020
Flows ceased to Willandra Creek	Regulated flows to Willandra Creek ceased till March 2020	4 GL	December 2019
End of system flows reduced	Operating the lower end of the system at low flow targets to improve efficiency.	3 GL	November 2019
Flows ceased to Lake Cargelligo	Inflows to lake will cease in March 2020 after accommodating the peak tourism season.	4 GL	March 2020
Booberoi Creek operations	The combination of environmental releases and low flows will lead to some	1-3 GL	On-going

	efficiency savings. Creek flows may cease in Autumn/Winter 2020	2 GL	31 March 2020
Flows reduced to Wallamundry Creek system	Creek system will operate at low levels due to low main river levels and an inability to divert into the creeks.	3 GL	November 2019
Conservative use of the water quality allowance	The allowance will only be used if critical water quality risks emerge this summer.	10 GL	On-going

Further information on critical valleys in drought can be found at:

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

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for March to May 2020 indicates the likelihood of a wetter or drier than average autumn is roughly equal for much of Australia. However, parts of the northern Murray-Darling Basin have a slightly increased chance of being drier than average. Both daytime and overnight temperatures are also likely to be above average across Australia.

With major climate drivers neutral, local or short-term climate drivers, such as sea surface temperatures around Australia and active or break periods of the monsoon, are likely to have a greater influence on rainfall and temperature patterns. For further details:

www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

Next announcements

The next water allocation statement for the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source will be issued on **Friday 13 March 2020**.

Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update

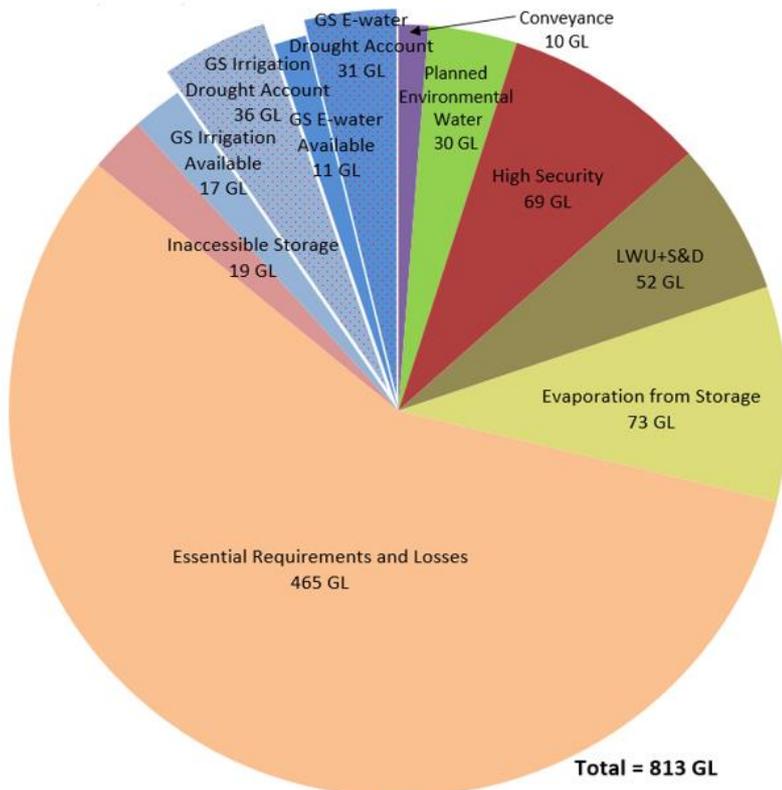


Lachlan Resource Assessment Data Sheet

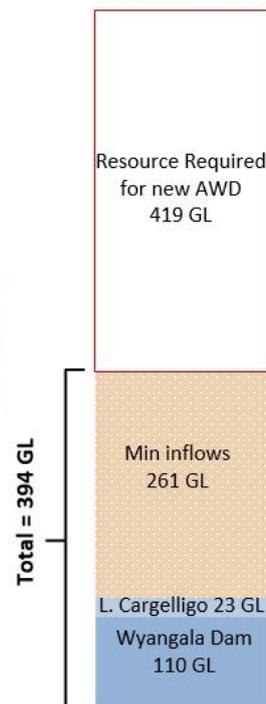
Resource Distribution (February 2020 to May 2022)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource ⁽¹⁾		394
<i>less</i>		
General Security 2019/2020 AWD ^{(7),(8)}	0 (0%)	
Carryover remaining in accounts ^{(2),(8)}	95	
Conveyance	10	
Planned Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	30	
High Security ⁽⁴⁾	69 (87%)	
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	52 (100%)	
Evaporation from storage ⁽⁵⁾	73	
Essential Requirements and Losses (transmission, operations) ⁽⁶⁾	465	
Inaccessible storage	19	
<i>equals</i>		
Water available for allocation (or deficit)		(419)

Resource Distribution: February 2020 to May 2022

Lachlan Regulated River Water Source



Supply Source⁽⁹⁾



Notes:

- (1) Total available resource: End of January 2020 storage volume in Wyangala Dam, Lake Cargelligo and Lake Brewster, plus minimum forecast inflows from now to May 2022.
- (2) Carryover remaining in general security accounts, including held environmental water. Due to a temporary water restriction currently in force only 57% of this volume is available for delivery.
- (3) Planned environmental water: water allocated to the Water Quality Allowance and/or the Environmental Contingency Allowances (EWA) under the water sharing plan. 30 GL (10 GL per year to May 2022 is currently set aside for WQA). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water. EWA allocation for 2019-20 is zero at this time.
- (4) Towns, Stock, Domestic and High Security: reserves are set aside to meet 100% of these high priority entitlements to 31 May 2022. Balances in high security accounts include water traded in from general security licences.
- (5) It is assessed that the lakes are likely to be drawn down slowly over the assessment period, increasing storage evaporation.
- (6) Essential Requirements and Losses: best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions through to May 2022 to meet all demands. This mostly comprises natural transmission losses as water soaks into river bed sands. The volume includes any S&D replenishment deliveries required in autumn 2020, 2021, and 2022. It is assumed that any current tributary inflows will return to dry conditions going forward. The loss allowance is updated regularly.
- (7) Volume represents the total cumulative AWD made to GS licences in the current water year.
- (8) Held environmental water (HEW): held environmental water administered by environmental water holders is being reported here, with the associated portion of general security allocation also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting is indicative only, prior to reconciliation of usage and net trade, and is estimated to be 42GL of GS, and 0.8GL of HS. These reported entitlements are managed by environmental holder groups, including the NSW DPIE - Environment, Energy and Science (EES) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on e-water holdings can be found on individual agency websites.
- (9) The supply source of total available water, explained in Note (1) above, is provided. Note that Lake Brewster is empty now. It also indicates the current shortfall required before a further AWD can be made.

The table below summarises the inflow scenarios based on applying priorities under *Water Management Act 2000*, leading to lower priority licences being impacted to the same extent or greater than higher priority licences. Please note that all values are estimates, subject to change, and will be updated in monthly water allocation statements.

Inflows needed to improve deliverability of carryover (as at 30 January 2020)

2019-20 inflow period	Estimated cumulative inflow required prior to easing of restrictions (GL)	Inflows received since 1 July 2019 (GL) <i>(to 1 Feb only)</i>	Additional inflows required to increase GS delivery to 75% and increase HS allocation to 92% (GL)	Additional inflows required for new GS AWD (GL) (no restrictions)
By end of February	175	9.7	209	419
By end of March	176	9.7	209	
By end of April	176	9.7	209	

Notes: Estimated water held in general security accounts on 1 July 2019 was 155,000 ML. Water delivery operations in 2019-20 provided under drought contingency planning (Stage 3). Minimum storage level of 5% is targeted at the end of the 2019-20 water year to maintain critical supplies in 2020-21 and beyond.

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