

5 June 2020

Namoi Regulated River Water Sources

Water allocation update

Allocations remain unchanged for the Upper and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source.

The catchment received scattered rainfall between 10 to 50 mm, resulting in small inflows to the upper storages of approximately 2 gigalitres (GL). Overall, resources continue to improve slowly, with the deficit now reduced to 35 GL as at the end of May.

Resource outlook for 2020/21

- Water for all critical needs is secure for the 2020/21 water year.
- **Local water utility, domestic** and **stock** water access licences can expect to receive a full (100 per cent) allocation on 1 July for the 2020/21 water-year.
- Given the persisting resource deficit, **high security** licence holders are likely to start the new water-year with at least 90 per cent allocation.
- Upper and Lower Namoi **general security** entitlement holders can expect zero allocation on 1 July. Furthermore, significant improvement in resources will be required in 2020/21 before water can be safely allocated to general security entitlements.
- However, **general security** licence holders in the Upper Namoi can expect full access to **carry over** water in accounts, up to the maximum limit of 0.5 megalitre per unit share.
- Water remaining in Lower Namoi general security accounts on 30 June will be also be available as carryover in 2020/21 up to the maximum limit.

This forecast is provided to assist water users in their planning for the new water year. River operations, water deliveries and further allocations will be dependent on inflows captured over the autumn and winter months. Conditions are being closely monitored and water users will be regularly updated on catchment and inflow conditions so that risks can be assessed.

Current allocations

2019/20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source	100%	50%	 Stage 2
Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source	100%	0%	 Stage 3

Storage levels (as at 3 June 2020)

- Split Rock Dam is approximately 4.6 per cent full – currently at about 21,280 ML.
- Keepit Dam is approximately 14.1 per cent full – currently at about 65,710 ML.

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach from one to four to manage extreme circumstances. Since February 2020, both Split Rock and Keepit storage volumes have increased. Upper Namoi catchment is at drought stage 2, the Lower Namoi catchment drought stage remains at Stage 3 (severe) level criticality.

Further information on drought stages can be found at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events

Key facts

- No changes to allocations.
- Minor resource improvement despite near average rainfall within the catchment in May.
- Actual inflows over the 34 months since making the last general security allocation for the Lower Namoi in August 2017 are about 41 GL less than the assumed minimums (Figure 1).
- Critical human needs for Manilla and Barraba townships are secure for the next 24 months under an assumed minimum inflow scenario, however contingency measures will be introduced to protect these supplies if extreme dry conditions return.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for June to August indicates an even chance of median rainfall conditions across the catchment, with day and night time temperatures likely to be warmer than average.

The Bureau states that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is most likely to remain neutral over winter but may cool towards La Niña levels by the end of winter. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral. The eastern Indian Ocean is likely to remain warmer than usual, maintaining the wetter than average winter outlook for Australia. However, caution should be exercised with using IOD forecasts issued during autumn, as they are less accurate than forecasts made at other times of the year.

Details can be found in: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/>

Resource Assessment data sheet as at 31 May 2020

Volumes in GL	Budget	Current	Additional	Balance
Storage Evaporation Loss	26.93	26.73	0.20	26.93
Essential Supplies	58.24	31.68	1.60	33.28
Upper Namoi General Security	6.98	6.98	0.00	6.98
Delivery Loss	5.13	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lower Namoi General Security	10.11	10.11	0.00	10.11
Peel Trade Account	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Additional Resource for Sharing	-	1.80	-1.80	0.00
Split Rock and Keepit active volumes	-	77.30		77.30

Inflow Recovery

The historical minimum inflow for 34 months prior to the current drought was 155 GL. The net reservoir inflows from the last allocation of August 2017 to end of May 2020 (34 months) were 114 GL. With the rain events that occurred in January 2020 through to May 2020, water resources continue to improve. This is shown below where the gap between actual inflow into storages (dashed line) and the minimum inflow budget since August 2017, represents the shortfall in the amount of water that was assumed available and allocated, and the water that became available.

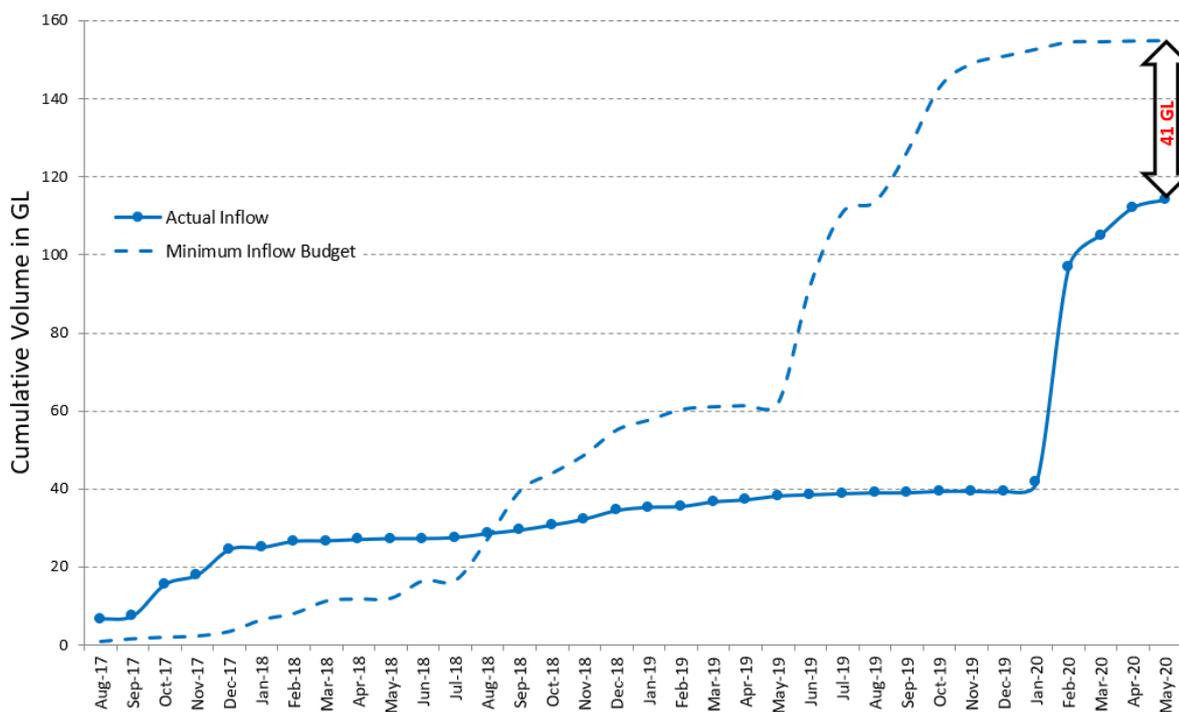


Figure 1: Cumulative inflows to the headwater storages since August 2017 and the planned minimum inflow sequence (budget).

Further information

The next water announcement for the Namoi Regulated River Water Source will be on 1 July 2020 and will provide opening water allocations for the 2020/21 water year. The next water allocation statement will be issued on Friday 7 August 2020.

Information on available water determinations and water sharing plans is available on the department's website: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water