

7 November 2019

Namoi Valley

Water allocation update

Rainfall in the Namoi catchment in this water year has been well below average with no net inflows to the storages. Allocations **remain unchanged** for all water licence categories.

Upper Namoi drought criticality has been escalated to the maximum Stage 4 to reflect the critical water shortage conditions unfolding.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Upper Namoi Valley	75%	0%	 Stage 4
Lower Namoi Valley	75%	0%	 Stage 4

Keepit Dam is less than 1 per cent full, holding 10,200 megalitres (ML), and Split Rock Dam is less than 2 per cent full, holding about 8,500 ML.

These storages will need at least 85,000 ML of combined inflow before normal regulated river operations can resume.

Key facts

- Storage inflows since the last general security allocation in August 2017 have been just 39,000 ML. This is well below the previous minimum of 143,000 ML (August 2013 to October 2015).
- This year (since 1 July) 2,766 ML has been released from Split Rock Dam to meet 965 ML of general security orders and 75 ML of town water supply.
- Of this, 963 ML was released in October from Split Rock Dam to meet 287 ML of general security orders and 74 ML of town water supply.
- Transmission loss is now extreme, exceeding 160 per cent.
- For general security water users on the Upper Namoi, summer access to remaining account water will likely be restricted to secure water for towns and critical human needs.
- Higher priority users can expect, at best, an intermittent (pulsed) regulated supply from Split Rock Dam over summer, unless rainfall and inflows eventuate.
- No delivery from Keepit Dam has been possible this calendar year due to low water levels.
- Lower Namoi general security water access license holders are restricted from accessing any water in their accounts.
- The restrictions will be eased or removed once the inflow situation improves sufficiently. The temporary water restriction can be viewed at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions

Drought stage and restrictions

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach from one to four to manage extreme circumstances. The Upper Namoi drought criticality level has been escalated to the maximum Stage 4. Lower Namoi has been at Stage 4 since last February. The maximum stage is reflecting the critical water shortage conditions where access to water must be prioritised for critical human needs and town water supplies.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for November 2019 to January 2020 indicates that the Namoi catchment is likely to experience drier than average conditions across the catchment. Daytime temperatures over this period are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau indicates that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) will remain neutral until early 2020. Positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions are forecast for the remainder of spring. A positive IOD will likely result in below average spring rainfall and above average temperatures.

Details can be found at: www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/

Further information

The next monthly water allocation statement for the Namoi regulated river water source will be available in early December 2019.

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