

31 January 2020

Hunter Regulated River Water Source

Allocation update

The Hunter Regulated River Water Source experienced its lowest December rainfall on record, with Glenbawn and Glennies Creek dams receiving just 1-2mm of rainfall. There was no storage inflow. As a result, the resource position has not improved - therefore there is **no change** to announced water allocations.

The continuing drought conditions, with extremely low inflows and record high temperatures, is resulting in higher system losses. If water availability conditions continue to deteriorate in coming months, drought management strategies will need to be escalated.

Good rainfall and inflow can occur at any time; however, it is statistically more likely in winter. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored and water allocation statements updated monthly, ensuring that any water that does become available is safely and swiftly allocated in accordance with statutory water sharing plans.

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

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

Dam levels (as at 28 January 2020)

Glenbawn Dam is 39 per cent full – falling – holding about 293 GL.

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

At this time last year Glenbawn was 57 per cent full and Glennies Creek 60 per cent full.

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. As the drought is now extending beyond the Basin and into coastal catchments, regulated coastal rivers are now being reported on the drought map on the DPIE website.

Currently, the Hunter Regulated River Water Source is classified as Drought Stage 1. However, this water source has experienced unusually dry conditions in recent months and as with most of NSW, storage levels have been falling.

Water users are advised to use water conservation measures to protect supplies. With inflows around NSW dropping below planned historical minimums, delivering all allocated water in

subsequent years becomes problematic. Drought stage is typically escalated and contingency measures are applied to protect high priority water needs including town water supplies.

If extreme dry conditions continue in the Hunter, the drought stage may need to be raised to Stage 2 or higher in May or June, and tighter water savings measures introduced. The department will continue to work closely with WaterNSW and water users in monitoring the drought situation over coming months and will provide more details in monthly water allocation statements.

Further information on drought stages can be found at:

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

Key facts

- Net inflow into both dams was effectively zero with a loss of 2.6 gigalitres (GL) for Glenbawn Dam and a loss of 2.3 GL for Glennies Creek Dam in December 2019.
- Releases from Glenbawn and Glennies Creek Dams were made in December 2019 to meet downstream essential requirements and irrigation demand.
- Recent inflows have been lower than historical minimums.
- The planning horizon for the Hunter resource assessment covers up to 3 years and currently runs through to June 2022.
- If inflows continue to deteriorate, essential supply requirements for the next water will not be guaranteed, prompting escalation of the drought stage and more stringent water savings.
- To ensure security of supply for high priority commitments, general security allocations may be very low or zero at the commencement of the 2020-21 water year (1 July 2020).
- Maximum carryover of general security water into 2020-21 is forecast and is being factored into the resource assessment. This will be closely monitored and updated in coming months.
- The resource situation will be exacerbated if water quality deteriorates and prompts the need to use the Environmental Water Allowance (maximum 20 GL).

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for February to April shows an even chance of rainfall conditions being above or below median, but 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 now also neutral. The positive IOD in the last half of 2019 contributed to the warm and dry conditions experienced across much of Australia.

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 for the Hunter Regulated River Water Source will be in late February 2020.

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

Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update



Resource Assessment Data Sheet

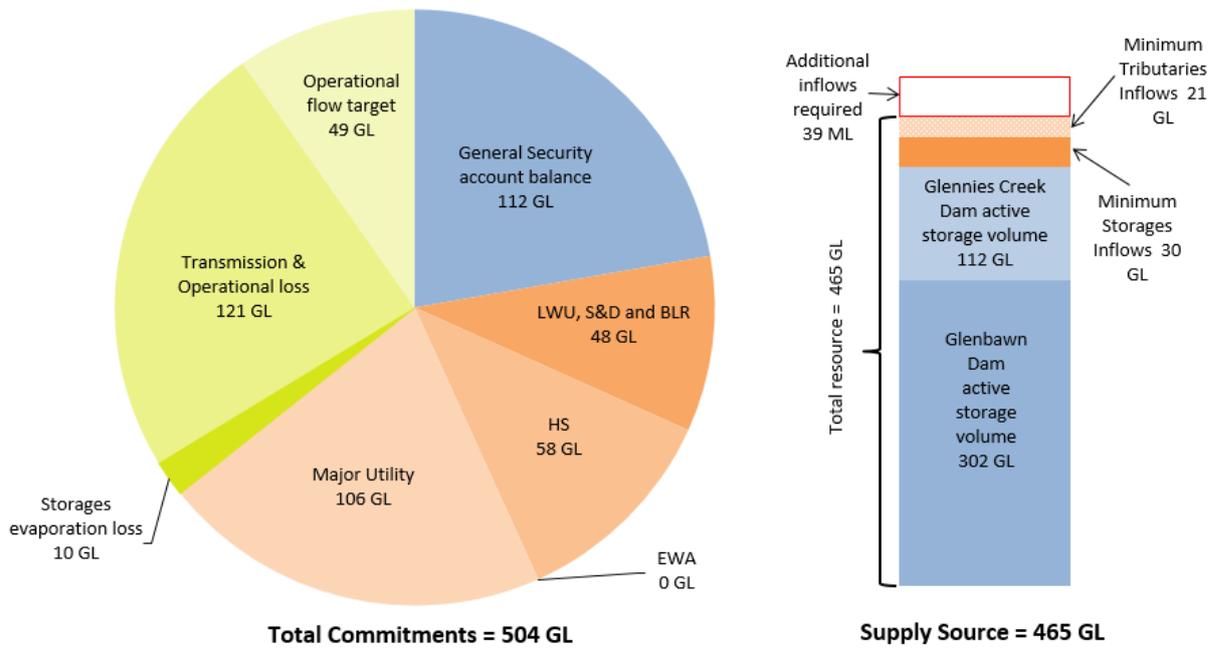
Resource Distribution (1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource ⁽¹⁾		414
Minimum storage inflows ⁽²⁾		30
Minimum tributary inflows ⁽³⁾		21
<i>less</i>		
LWU, S&D and BLR requirement ⁽⁴⁾	48	
HS requirement ⁽⁵⁾	58	
EWA requirement ⁽⁶⁾	0	
Major Utility requirement ⁽⁷⁾	106	
Storage evaporation loss ⁽⁸⁾	10	
Operational and Transmission loss ⁽⁹⁾	121	
Operational target flows ⁽¹⁰⁾	49	
General Security Account Balance ⁽¹¹⁾	112	
<i>equals</i>		
Additional inflows required ⁽¹²⁾		(39)

See notes below.

Notes:

- (1) Available Resource in the dams – is the total active storage volume in Glenbawn Dam and Glennies Creek Dam combined as at 1 January 2020 of 414 GL.
- (2) Minimum forecast dam inflows from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022 – reduced drought of record inflows to 10% in 2020-21 and to 30% in 2021-22.
- (3) Minimum forecast usable tributary inflows from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022 – reduced to 10% in 2020-21 and to 30% in 2021-22.
- (4) Water required to be set aside under the water sharing plan to provide for Town Water, Stock & Domestic and Basic Landholder Rights from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022.
- (5) Water required to be set aside under the water sharing plan to provide for High Security from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022.
- (6) Water set aside to provide for Environmental Water Allowance from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022. It is assumed at this stage that no EWA will be needed.
- (7) Water required to be set aside under the water sharing plan to provide for Major Utility from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022.
- (8) Water required to be set aside to account for evaporation from the storages.
- (9) Water required to be set aside to account for operational and transmission losses. NOTE: operational losses revised down slightly to account for leaner river operation during drought
- (10) Water required to be set aside to account for flow targets at Greta. NOTE: Flow target at Greta revised down for dry flow targets during drought as per the Water Sharing Plan.
- (11) Water required to be set aside to meet allocated general security remaining account water. Remaining general security account water (including carryover from 2018-19) estimated to be 112 GL.
- (12) Additional inflows required over the 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022 period to meet shortfall.

Resource Distribution: 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2022 Hunter Regulated River Water Source



Subscribe [here](#) to receive the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's monthly email update on water planning, management and reform in New South Wales.