

1 October 2019

Belubula Valley

Water allocation update

There is no change to allocations in the Belubula regulated river water source. Minimal inflow conditions to Carcoar Dam persist, with just 3,680 megalitres (ML) received since the last allocation to general security licences in December 2016. This inflow volume is only 50% of the previous historical 32 month minimum inflow sequence.

The system has advanced to Stage 3 drought criticality, with Carcoar Dam now holding less than 7,700 ML. Stage 3 drought operations for the remainder of the current water year will target a minimum storage of 2,500 ML in Carcoar Dam on 1 July 2020 to ensure critical needs can be met under Stage 4 operations in 2020/21 should current drought conditions continue.

A **Temporary Water Restriction under Section 324 of the *Water Management Act 2000*** has been approved. It restricts access from 1 October 2019 to water in general security access licence accounts to 40 per cent of the account balance as at 30 September 2019. The remaining 60 per cent is moved to a drought sub-account and cannot be used.

Trade can continue however traded water will retain its characteristics; water sold from a restricted drought sub-account will be credited a restricted drought sub-account held by the buyer and cannot be used.

The restriction is now needed to provide security for on-going critical human and high priority needs and is consistent with the NSW Extreme Events Policy.

An indicative outlook on water availability and delivery arrangements for 2019/20 has been provided further below. The current assessment shows that only 2,700 ML of general security carryover is available for delivery from Carcoar Dam in 2019/2020.

Uncontrolled flow access from tributary events will continue to be assessed on an event basis and is likely to be available in the 2019/20 water year in accordance with the water sharing plan rules.

General security water users are advised that the Annual Use Limit for the 2019/20 water year is a volume equivalent to 100 per cent of entitlement. This is the maximum amount of water that can be used in the water year, plus any adjustments up or down for trade.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Belubula	100%	0%	 Stage 3

Storage level (as at 30 September 2019)

- Carcoar Dam is 21 per cent full – steady – currently at about 7,650 ML.

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 Belubula regulated river water source is now at Stage 3 drought criticality, reflecting the reduced water availability in 2019/20 described above. Conditions will be closely monitored going forward, and advice provided accordingly, with Stage 4 criticality possible should conditions deteriorate significantly beyond current expectations.

Further information on the NSW Extreme Events Policy and drought stages can be found [here](#)

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for October to January suggests rainfall is likely to be below average across most of the country.

In the shorter term, October is showing particularly strong chances of being much drier than usual.

The positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) remains a key climate driver of Australian climate for the coming months. This, combined with a forecast negative Southern Annual Mode (SAM) phase, is driving the warm and dry conditions forecast by the Bureau's climate model.

For further details: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/rainfall/summary

Next announcements

Unless conditions change unexpectedly this calendar year, the next water allocation statement for the Belubula regulated river water source will be issued in **January 2020**.

Belubula Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (October 2019 to June 2020)	Volume (ML)	Volume (ML)
Available Resource ⁽¹⁾		11,004
<i>less</i>		
High Security ⁽²⁾	584	
Stock & Domestic ⁽²⁾	220	
Evaporation from storage ⁽³⁾	1,000	
Essential Requirements and Losses (transmission, operations) ⁽⁴⁾	4,000	
Inaccessible storage ⁽⁵⁾	2,500	
<i>equals</i>		
Water available for General Security use in 2019/20		2,700 ⁽⁶⁾

Notes:

- (1) Total available resource: End of September 2019 storage volume in Carcoar Dam, plus minimum forecast dam inflows and usable tributary flows from now to June 2020.
- (2) Stock, Domestic and High Security: reserves are set aside to meet 100% of these high priority entitlements to 30 June 2020.
- (3) It is assessed that Carcoar Dam storage is likely to be drawn down slowly over the assessment period, increasing storage evaporation.
- (4) Essential Requirements and Losses: best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions through to June 2020 to meet all demands. This mostly comprises natural transmission losses as water soaks into river bed sands.
- (5) A minimum storage volume of 2,500 ML in Carcoar Dam on 30 June 2020 is required to ensure critical needs can be met in the 2020/21 water year.
- (6) 2,700 ML of the 6,756 ML remaining in general security accounts is currently deliverable this water year, this level of access equates to 40% availability.

Water availability outlook for 2019-20

Forecast conditions are indicative only and not guaranteed. Forecasts should be used with caution and can change, particularly when the projection is many months ahead.

- Water ordering procedures will resume from 1 October 2019, however only 40% of general security account balances on 30 September 2019 will be available for use until conditions improve.
- WaterNSW will liaise with Belubula water users to pulse releases from Carcoar Dam when delivering available water in order to maximise delivery efficiency.
- Conditions will be closely monitored going forward, with Stage 4 criticality possible should conditions deteriorate significantly beyond current expectations.
- Significant inflow is now required to build reserves for critical water delivery in the 2020-21 water year.

- With restrictions in place, and should sufficient inflows occur, any improvement in resource will be used to first meet essential supplies and high priority allocations for 2020/21, then relax restrictions, before further general security allocation can accrue. A relaxation of restrictions this water year is therefore dependent on the timing and volume of inflows to storage, and the nature of usable tributary events.
- Should Carcoar Dam be drawn down to 2,500 ML by 1 July 2020, no regulated delivery of general security water from Carcoar Dam will be available next year until the storage recovers.

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