

26 February 2020

Hunter Regulated River Water Source

Allocation update

Despite recent coastal rainfall and some inflows into the Hunter system, there is insufficient improvement in water availability to provide an allocation increase.

Weather conditions and inflows are being closely monitored to assess water availability and potential water allocations, including meeting commitments on 1 July for the 2020-21 water year.

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

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

Dam levels (as at 26 February 2020)

Glenbawn Dam is 40 per cent full – rising slowly – holding about 300 GL.

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

At this time last year Glenbawn was 56 per cent full and Glennies Creek 58 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 extended beyond the Basin and into coastal catchments, regulated coastal rivers have been reported on the drought map on the DPIE website.

Currently, the Hunter Regulated River Water Source is classified as Drought Stage 1 - indicating normal regulated river operations. However, this water source has been experiencing exceptionally dry conditions in recent months and as with most of NSW, storage levels had been falling, until the recent minor improvements.

Water users are advised to use water conservation measures to protect supplies. Should inflows drop 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, during severe water shortages.

If the recent improvement becomes short-lived and longer-term dry conditions return 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 water availability 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 for Glenbawn Dam in the first half of February 2020 was 5,872 ML. Glennies Creek Dam received 2,365 ML.
- Releases from Glenbawn and Glennies Creek Dams are being made to meet downstream essential requirements and irrigation demand.
- The planning horizon for high priority commitments, including town water supplies for the Hunter resource water availability, covers up to 3 years and currently runs through to June 2022.
- If the prolonged dry conditions experienced recently return, ensuring security of supply for high priority commitments becomes paramount, while general security allocations may be very low or zero at the commencement of the 2020-21 water year (1 July 2020).
- The resource situation may 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 March to May shows likely drier than average conditions for the catchment. Temperatures are 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 also neutral.

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 March 2020.

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

Resource Assessment Data Sheet

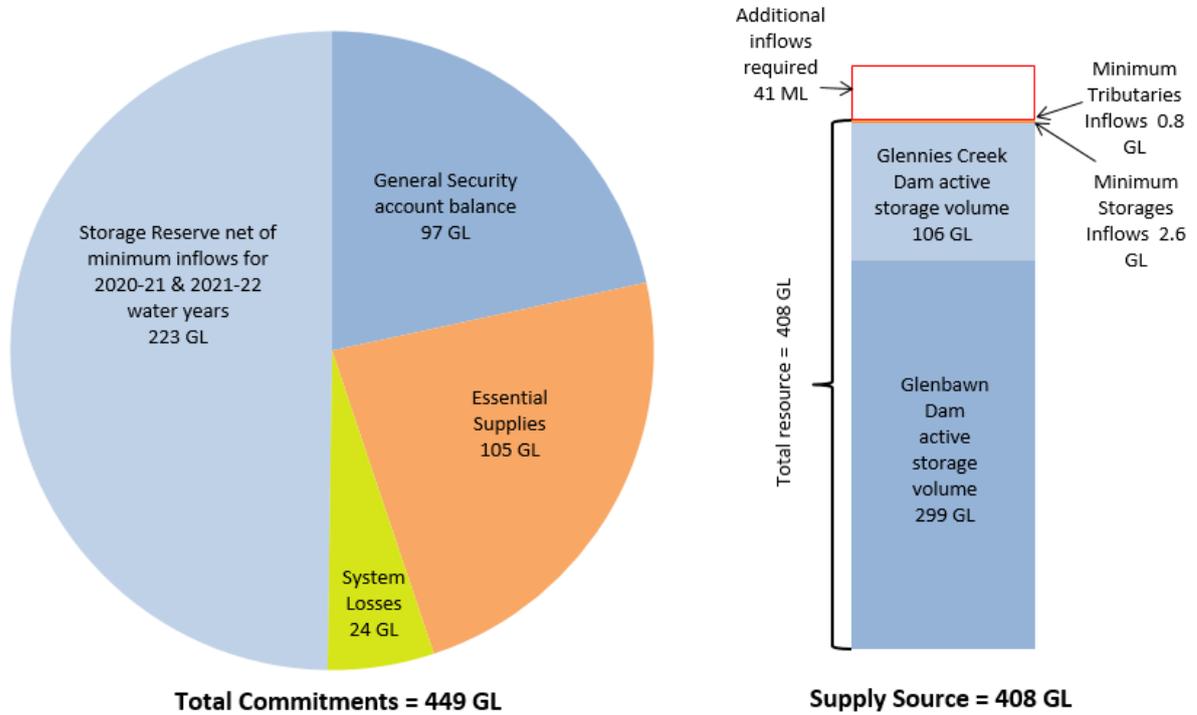
Resource Distribution (21 February 2020 to 30 June 2022)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource (as at 20 Feb 2020) ⁽¹⁾		404.1
Minimum storage inflows (1 Feb 2020 – 30 Jun 2020) ⁽²⁾		2.6
Minimum tributary inflows (1 Feb 2020 – 30 Jun 2020) ⁽³⁾		0.8
<i>less</i>		
ES requirements ⁽⁴⁾	104.6	
System supply losses ⁽⁵⁾	24.0	
General Security Account Balance ⁽⁶⁾	96.9	
Storage reserve to ensure ES & System Losses for 2020-21 & 2021-22 net of minimum inflows ⁽⁷⁾	223	
<i>equals</i>		
Additional inflows required ⁽⁸⁾		(41)

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 20 February 2020.
- (2) Minimum forecast dam inflows from 1 February 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- (3) Minimum forecast usable tributary inflows from 1 February 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- (4) Water required to be set aside under the water sharing plan to provide for Town Water, Major Utility, High Security, Stock & Domestic, Environmental Water Allowance, Basic Landholder Rights and Minimum flow targets at Greta from 1 February 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- (5) Water required to be set aside to account for system supply losses of evaporation from the storages, transmission losses and operational losses from 1 February 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- (6) Water required to be set aside to meet allocated general security remaining account water. Remaining general security account water (including carryover from 2018-19) is estimated to be 97 GL.
- (7) Water required to be set aside in storages to meet essential supply requirements and system losses net of minimum inflows for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 water years.
- (8) Additional inflows required over the 21 February 2020 to 30 June 2022 period to meet water availability shortfall to cover the planning horizon of 21 February 2020 to 30 June 2022.

Resource Distribution: 21 February 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.