

6 March 2020

Namoi Regulated River Water Sources

Water allocation update

Water availability in the Namoi catchment has improved due to good rainfall over the dam and its catchments. However, after the extended period of extreme dry conditions, the improvement is insufficient to increase the current water allocations at this time. As a result, Upper and Lower Namoi general security allocation this water year **remains unchanged at 0 per cent** and Upper and Lower Namoi high security allocation **remains at 75 percent of entitlement**.

The Namoi Regulated River Water Sources received very much above average rainfall during February. The upper catchment received about 100 to 200 mm of rain, resulting in relatively good inflows to the upper storages of about 55 gigalitres (GL). The wet weather more than halves the resource shortfall from 95 GL to 43 GL. However the storages remain at low levels, therefore the drought criticality levels currently remain unchanged.

Because of the recent rise in storage levels and good downstream tributary inflows to the river, all Upper and Lower Namoi **temporary water restriction orders have now been repealed or have expired**. The drought stage criticality has also eased from Stage 4 to Stage 3.

Information on current restrictions is listed here:

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions>

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Upper Namoi Regulated River Water Source	75%	0%	 Stage 3
Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Source	75%	0%	 Stage 3

Keepit Dam is about 11.3% full, holding 53,800 megalitres (ML), and Split Rock Dam is about 4% full, holding about 18,900 ML.

Key facts

- Delivery of the remaining carryover account volumes is currently occurring, utilising downstream tributary inflows.
- Despite a rise in Split Rock volume, no allocation to Upper Namoi general security users will be possible until the high security users are fully allocated.
- Critical requirements for Manilla township are now secure for the foreseeable future under a minimum inflow scenario.

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach from one to four to manage extreme circumstances. Since last month, both the Split Rock and Keepit dam volumes have increased. Critical requirements are now secure with improved connectivity. Limited delivery to general security water is being met from the recent river flow. Hence, both the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi drought stages are now eased from stage 4 (critical) to stage 3 (severe).

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

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for March to May indicates that the chances of a wetter or drier than average autumn (March to May) are roughly equal for the Namoi catchment. Both daytime and night-time temperatures over this period are likely and very likely (respectively) to be above average.

The Bureau of Meteorology states that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the southern Oscillation Index (SOI) are neutral and likely to remain neutral through autumn. With the major climate drivers neutral at this stage, Australia is less likely to see widespread deviation from above average or below average seasonal rainfall.

Details can be found in: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/> **Resource Assessment data sheet as at 29 February 2020**

Volumes in GL	Budget	Current	Additional	Balance
Storage Evaporation Loss	25.07	6.21	18.85	25.07
Essential Supplies	58.24	0.00	24.23	24.23
Upper Namoi General Security		1.42	0.00	1.42
Delivery Loss	3.82	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lower Namoi General Security		11.32	0.00	11.32
Peel Trade Account	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Additional Resource for Sharing	-	43.08	-43.08	0.00
Split Rock and Keepit active volumes	-	62.04		62.04

Inflow Recovery

The historical minimum inflow for 31 months prior to current drought has been 155 GL. The net reservoir inflows from the last allocation of August 2017 to end of February 2020 (31 months) were 97 GL. The combined inflow to Split Rock and Keepit dams entered into a record low inflow period since September 2018. On a positive note the February rainfall events produced the highest one-month inflow since August 2017.

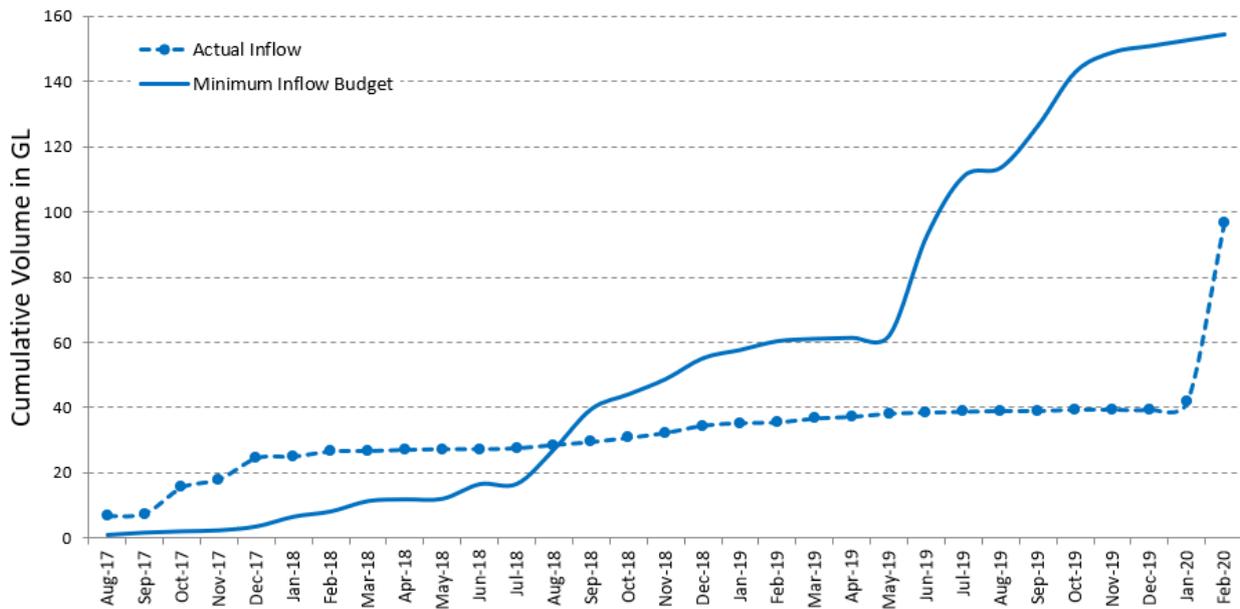


Figure 1: Cumulative inflows to the upper storages since August 2017 and the minimum inflow budget.

Further information

The next monthly water allocation statement for the Namoi Regulated River Water Source will be available in early April 2020.