

11 March 2020

Lachlan Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

There is **no change to allocations** in the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source.

Continued milder conditions, plus rainfall in February, contributed to some improved water availability in the Lachlan regulated river water source. Wyangala Dam storage level increased from 8.4% capacity to 12.8% as an average of 50 mm of rainfall fell across catchment areas in recent weeks. In addition, some of the river demands are being met with inflow from the downstream tributaries including the Belubula River.

The shortfall in the Lachlan River system reduced over the last month from 419 gigalitres (GL), but there remains about 342 GL to gain before new general security water can be allocated. Tight restrictions remain in place with the focus of ensuring that there is at least enough water to meet critical needs in the Lachlan Valley in 2020-21.

As a result of the minor resource improvements, the remaining unrestricted water in high security and general security accounts can now be delivered in the remaining months of this water year.

The planning horizon for the Lachlan resource assessment runs through to May 2022, some 27 months. Given the current resource deficit, any further inflows received are required to build security for the highest priority water needs before easing water restrictions and allocating further.

The department is investigating and implementing options to ensure all remaining supplies are prioritised and used efficiently and effectively in case drought conditions persist into 2020-21.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Lachlan Regulated River Water Source	87%	0%	 Stage 3

Storage levels (as at 9 March 2020)

- Wyangala Dam is about 12.8 per cent full – falling – currently at about 156 GL.
- Lake Cargelligo is about 82 per cent full – steady – currently at about 31 GL.
- Lake Brewster is effectively empty.

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 Lachlan Regulated River Water Source is at Stage 3 drought criticality, reflecting the reduced water availability in 2019-20 described above.

Conditions are being closely monitored and may warrant escalation to Stage 4 drought criticality and tighter water restrictions unless there is significant system improvement.

Some of the current and planned drought contingency measures for the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source are as follows:

Drought contingency measures for the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source

Measure	Details	Potential Savings	Implementation
No further replenishment flows	Stock and domestic replenishment flows have already been delivered to creeks in the lower Lachlan.	24 GL	January 2020
Flows ceased to Willandra Creek	Regulated flows to Willandra Creek ceased till March 2020	4 GL	December 2019
End of system flows reduced	Operating the lower end of the system at low flow targets to improve efficiency.	3 GL	November 2019
Flows ceased to Lake Cargelligo	Inflows to lake have now ceased	4 GL	March 2020
Booberoi Creek operations	The combination of environmental releases and low flows will lead to some efficiency savings.	1-3 GL	On-going
	Creek flows may cease in Autumn/Winter 2020	2 GL	31 March 2020
Flows reduced to Wallamundry Creek system	Creek system will operate at low levels due to low main river levels and an inability to divert into the creeks.	3 GL	November 2019
Conservative use of the water quality allowance	The allowance will only be used if critical water quality risks emerge.	10 GL	On-going, no delivery planned beyond March 2020

Further information on critical valleys in drought can be found at:

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for April to June 2020 indicates there's a slightly increased chance of being wetter than average. Both daytime and overnight temperatures are also likely to be above average across most of the country.

The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are currently neutral and are forecast to remain neutral through to mid-year, and hence are not influencing the outlooks. For further details:

www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

Next announcements

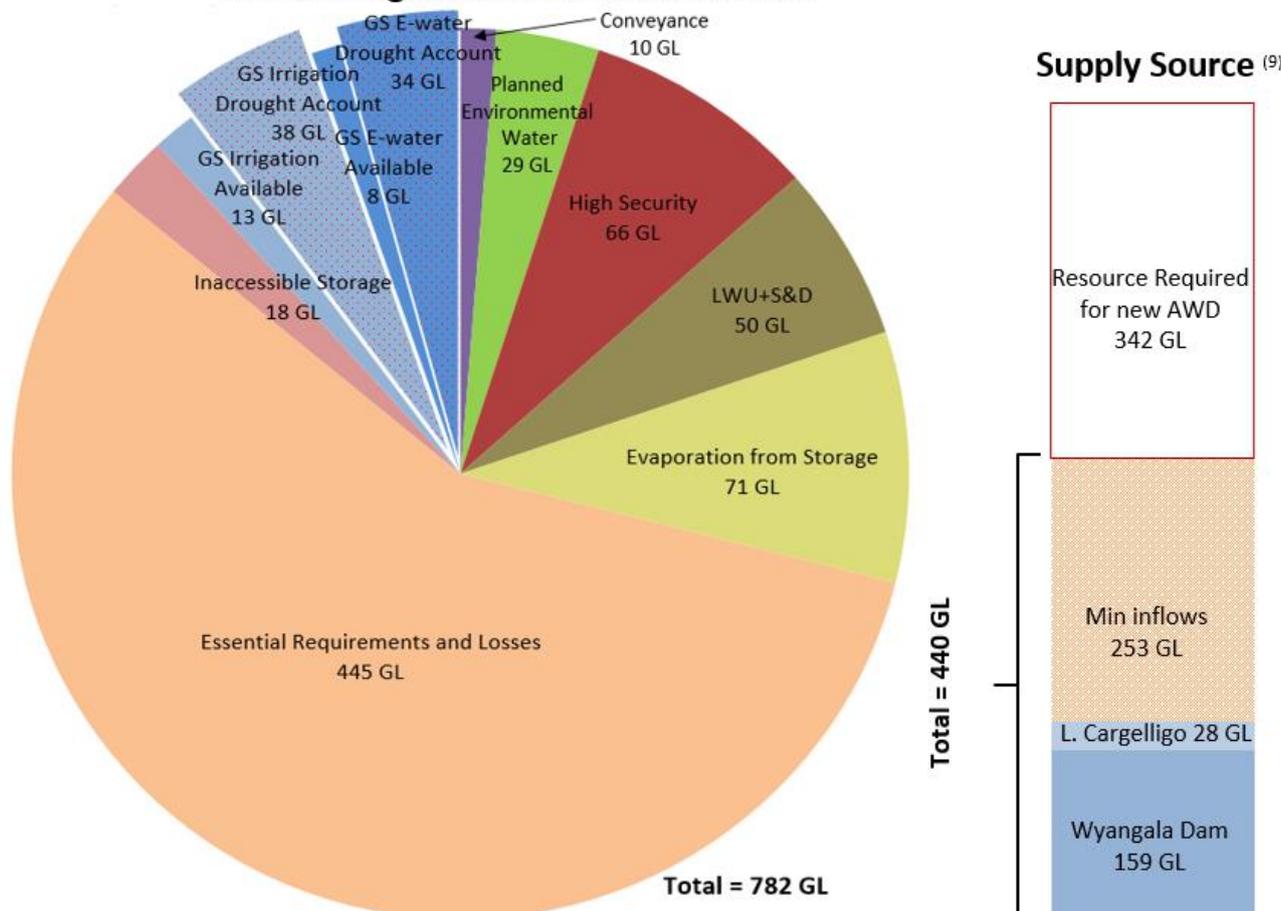
The next water allocation statement for the Lachlan Regulated River Water Source will be issued on **Friday 10 April 2020**

Lachlan Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (March 2020 to May 2022)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource ⁽¹⁾		440
<i>less</i>		
General Security 2019/2020 AWD ^{(7),(8)}	0 (0%)	
Carryover remaining in accounts ^{(2),(8)}	93	
Conveyance	10	
Planned Environmental Water ⁽³⁾	29	
High Security ⁽⁴⁾	66	
Towns, Stock, Domestic ⁽⁴⁾	50	
Evaporation from storage ⁽⁵⁾	71	
Essential Requirements and Losses (transmission, operations) ⁽⁶⁾	445	
Inaccessible storage	18	
<i>equals</i>		
Water available for allocation (or deficit)		(342)

Resource Distribution: March 2020 to May 2022

Lachlan Regulated River Water Source



Notes:

- (1) Total available resource: End of February 2020 storage volume in Wyangala Dam, Lake Cargelligo and Lake Brewster, plus minimum forecast inflows from March 2020 to May 2022.
- (2) Carryover remaining in general security accounts, including held environmental water. Due to a temporary water restriction currently in force only 57% of this volume is available for delivery.
- (3) Planned environmental water: water allocated to the Water Quality Allowance and/or the Environmental Contingency Allowances (EWA) under the water sharing plan. 29 GL (10 GL per year to May 2022 is currently set aside for WQA). Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water. EWA allocation for 2019-20 is zero at this time.
- (4) Towns, Stock, Domestic and High Security: reserves are set aside to meet 100% of these high priority entitlements to 31 May 2022 under the minimum inflow scenario. Balances in high security accounts include water traded in from general security licences.
- (5) It is assessed that the lakes are likely to be drawn down slowly over the assessment period, increasing storage evaporation.
- (6) Essential Requirements and Losses: best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions through to May 2022 to meet all demands. This mostly comprises natural transmission losses as water soaks into river bed sands. The volume includes any S&D replenishment deliveries required in autumn 2020, 2021, and 2022. It is assumed that any current tributary inflows will return to dry conditions going forward. The loss allowance is updated regularly.
- (7) Volume represents the total cumulative AWD made to GS licences in the current water year.
- (8) Held environmental water (HEW): held environmental water administered by environmental water holders is being reported here, with the associated portion of general security allocation also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting is indicative only, prior to reconciliation of usage and net trade, and is estimated to be 42GL of GS, and 0.6GL of HS. These reported entitlements are managed by environmental holder groups, including the NSW DPIE -

Environment, Energy and Science (EES) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on e-water holdings can be found on individual agency websites.

- (9) The supply source of total available water, explained in Note (1) above, is provided. Note that Lake Brewster is empty now. It also indicates the current shortfall required before a further AWD can be made.

The table below summarises the inflow scenarios based on applying priorities under *Water Management Act 2000*, leading to lower priority licences being impacted to the same extent or greater than higher priority licences. Please note that all values are estimates, subject to change, and will be updated in monthly water allocation statements.

Inflows needed to improve deliverability of carryover (as at 29 February 2020)

2019-20 inflow period	Inflows received since 1 July 2019 (GL) (to 29 Feb only)	Additional inflows required to increase GS delivery to 75% and increase HS allocation to 92% (GL)	Additional inflows required for new GS AWD (GL) (no restrictions)
By end of March	85	132	342
By end of April	85	132	
By end of April	85	132	

Notes:

1. Estimated water held in general security accounts on 1 July 2019 was 155,000 ML. Water delivery operations in 2019-20 have been provided under drought contingency planning (Stage 3).
2. A minimum storage level of 5% is targeted at the end of the 2019-20 water year to maintain critical supplies in 2020-21 and beyond.
3. **Volumes required to ease restrictions apply to the end of the current water year only. From 1 July 2020, significant inflows will need to be captured in storage before water currently in general security drought accounts can be made available for delivery.**

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