

9 December 2020

Peel Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

The Peel catchment received well below average rainfall in November, receiving less than 25mm of rainfall. Net inflow into Chaffey Dam during November was just 1.2 gigalitres (GL). This small improvement, together with usage to date, allows the following allocations to be made:

- **Local water utility (LWU)** allocation to **increase by 10%** bringing the total allocation for the 2020/21 year so far to 90% of entitlement.
- **Domestic and Stock (D&S)** allocation to **increase by 10%** bringing the total allocation for the 2020/21 year so far to 90% of entitlement.

There is no new allocation for high security or general security water access licences, or the Environmental Contingency Allowance (ECA) at this time.

Apart from the above, there has been little change in resource availability for the Peel regulated river water source. It is estimated that another 6 to 8 GL is required in Chaffey Dam to fully provide for all high priority commitments, after which allocation to general security licences can commence. As of 7 December 2020, Chaffey Dam was holding approximately 36 GL, or some 33.4% full.

Table 1. Announced Water Allocations for the Peel Regulated River Water Source

Access licence type	2020/21	Drought Stage
Local Water Utility	90%	
Domestic and Stock	90%	Stage 2
High Security	50%	
Environmental Contingency Allowance	0%	
General Security	0%	
Aquifer (general security)	51%	

Drought stage

The storage improvement from last year and the favourable rainfall outlook prompted the Peel catchment drought stage to be eased from Stage 3 (Severe) to Stage 2 (Recovering) in November.

Further information on drought stages can be found at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/critical-valleys-in-drought

Key facts

- Chaffey Dam is holding approximately 36GL of water, some 33.4% full.
- Local Water Utility and Domestic and Stock allocations have increased by 10% to a total of 90% of entitlement for the current water year.
- Allocation for high security (currently at 50%), general security and ECA remains unchanged.
- With Chaffey Dam holding more than 20% capacity, Phase 1 of the authorisation under the Water Supply Critical Needs Act 2019 is currently in place.
- Delivery of all allocated water, including usage for Tamworth, is secure for the next 24 months based on the budgeted minimum inflows.
- Further resource improvement will first be used to fill the LWU and D&S allocations (currently 90%) then fill HS (currently 50%) after which GS can start to receive allocation.
- General security allocation can be expected when Chaffey Dam rises closer to 42 - 45GL.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for December 2020 to February 2021 indicates a better than even chance of exceeding median rainfall conditions across much of Australia. Maximum temperatures over this period are likely to be above the long-term mean and minimum temperatures are very likely to be above the long-term mean.

The Bureau of Meteorology's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) outlook continues to be at La Niña, which is likely to persist until at least the end of February 2021. Current La Niña conditions and a positive SAM are contributing to the increased chances of rainfall over Australia.

Details can be found at: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/ahead/outlooks/>

Resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution (as at 2 December)	Volumes (GL)
Available Resources ⁽¹⁾	37.1
less	
Essential Supplies ⁽²⁾	18.0
Reserve for 2021-2022 ⁽³⁾	14.0
General security balance	0.0
ECA balance ⁽⁴⁾	0.0
Evaporation, operational and transmission loss ⁽⁵⁾	5.1
equals	
Uncommitted Resources	0.0

Notes:

- ⁽¹⁾ Chaffey Dam above dead storage, Dungowan Dam above 50% and minimum inflow expected to June 2021.
- ⁽²⁾ Water set aside to provide for basic landholder rights, domestic and stock (D&S), local water utility (LWU), high security (HS) and associated transmission loss plus minimum storage release. D&S entitlements have been allocated 90%, LWU entitlements have been allocated 90%, and HS entitlements have been allocated 50% for the current water year.
- ⁽³⁾ Reserve set aside to meet the minimum allocation of 2021-22 under the water sharing plan (WSP) obligation at the repeat of the worst drought since the implementation of the WSP. This includes basic landholder rights, 70% domestic and stock, 70% local water utility, 50% high security and associated transmission loss plus minimum storage release. This also considers minimum inflow expected next year offset by evaporation over 2021-22.
- ⁽⁴⁾ Total ECA account balance (GS allocation in ML/share multiplied by 5000).
- ⁽⁵⁾ Evaporation budget assumes historical high evaporation rates. The transmission loss is to run the river to deliver water orders based on current conditions and forecasts. ECA water delivery is measured at the dam wall therefore incurs no transmission loss.

Further information

The department will continue to closely monitor Peel water resource availability and will maintain the monthly frequency of Peel Valley statements while conditions are likely to improve. The next statement will be on **14 January 2021**, or earlier, if conditions change significantly beforehand.

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

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