

14 January 2021

Peel Regulated River Water Source and Peel Alluvium Groundwater Source

Water allocation update

The Peel Regulated River catchment saw very much above average rainfall in December 2020, receiving 100 mm to 300 mm of rain. Net inflow into Chaffey Dam during December was approximately 7.6 gigalitres (GL), with storage volume increasing to 43.7 GL or 41% capacity at the end of the month. The much awaited improvement has allowed water allocation to general security water users for the first time since October 2018.

The resource assessment for January indicates that water can be allocated as follows:

- **Domestic and stock (D&S)** allocation in the Peel Regulated River Water Source to **increase by 10%** resulting in 100% allocation for the current water year.
- **Local water utility (LWU)** allocation in the Peel Regulated River Water Source to **increase by 10%** resulting in 100% allocation for the current water year.
- **High Security (HS)** allocation in the Peel Regulated River Water Source to **increase by 50%** resulting in 100% allocation for the current water year.
- **General Security (GS)** allocation in the Peel Regulated River Water Source to **increase by 16%** resulting in 16% allocation for the current water year. Environmental Contingency Allowance (ECA) account also increases by the same percentage, in accordance with the water sharing plan.
- **Aquifer General Security (GS)** allocation in the Peel Alluvium Groundwater Source to **increase by 7.8%** resulting in 58.8% allocation for the current water year.

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

Access licence type	2020/21	Drought Stage
Local Water Utility	100%	
Domestic and Stock	100%	Stage 1
High Security	100%	
General Security	16%	
Environmental Contingency Allowance	0.8 GL	

Table 2. Announced Water Allocations for the Peel Alluvium Groundwater Source

Access licence type	2020/21
Aquifer (general security)	58.8%

General security water users are encouraged to avail opportunity of pumping from the Peel River whenever an uncontrolled flow event is declared at their location.

Drought stage

With the significant storage inflows over December resulting in the increased storage volume in Chaffey Dam and the resumption of normal river operations, the drought stage criticality level for the Peel catchment has been downgraded from Stage 2 (recovering) to Stage 1 (normal operations).

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

- As of 12 January 2021, Chaffey Dam is holding approximately 44.6 GL of water, some 42% full.
- 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.
- The Peel Regulated River catchment is currently being run under normal operations and order on-demand has resumed.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for January to March indicates that rainfall is likely to be above average across the catchment. Maximum temperatures over this period show little shift towards being above or below average. Minimum temperatures for this period are very likely to be above average across the catchment.

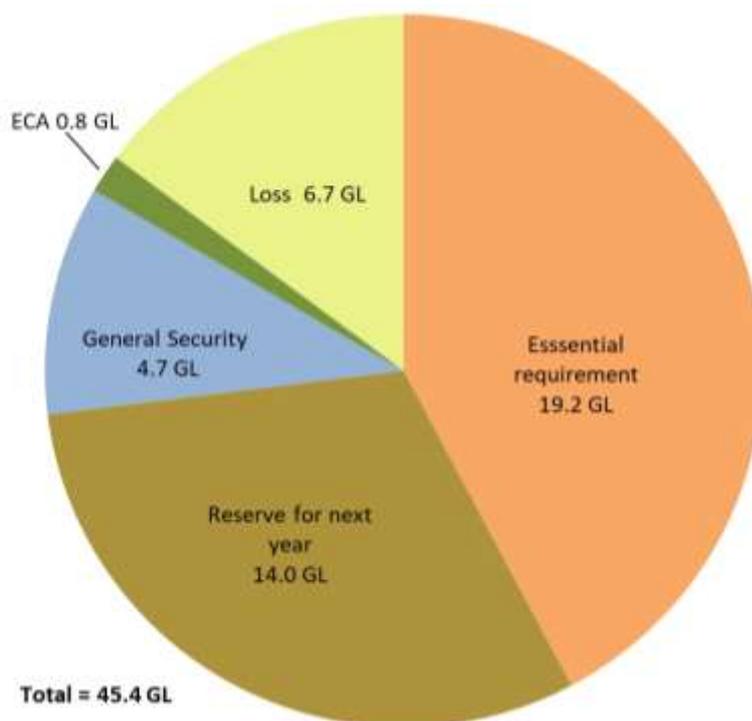
La Niña remains active but is likely to be nearing its peak. The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) is positive and likely to remain so over the 2020-21 summer. This typically enhances the La Niña wet signal in parts of eastern Australia.

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

Resource assessment data sheet

Resource Distribution (as at 1 January 2021)	Volumes (GL)
Available Resources ⁽¹⁾	45.4
less	
Essential Supplies ⁽²⁾	19.2
Reserve for 2021-2022 ⁽³⁾	14.0
General security balance	4.7
ECA balance ⁽⁴⁾	0.8
Evaporation, operational and transmission loss ⁽⁵⁾	6.7
equals	
Uncommitted Resources	0.0

See notes below.



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 100%, LWU entitlements have been allocated 100%, and HS entitlements have been allocated 100% 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 the Peel Regulated River Water Source water resource availability and will increase the frequency of Peel Regulated River catchment statements to monthly while conditions are improving. The next statement will be on **9 February 2021**, or earlier, if conditions change significantly beforehand.

Information on available water determinations and water sharing plans is available on the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's website: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water

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