

21 October 2020

Belubula Valley

Water allocation update

There is **no change** to allocations in the Belubula regulated river water source. While inflows into Carcoar Dam have improved due to rainfall in recent months, they are still not enough to enable an allocation to general security (GS) licence holders. In this water year, Carcoar Dam has received 7,200 megalitres (ML) of inflow into the dam, which far exceeds the 2,680 ML received in the 2019-20 water year.

The resource distribution table below shows a deficit of 5,300 ML in meeting all current commitments, including high priority needs to June 2023. This must be overcome before water can accrue to general security entitlements. At present, downstream tributary inflows are meeting system needs, therefore the deficit is not impacting. However, if very dry conditions return, drought contingency measures including temporary water restrictions, may become necessary to address any deficit and protect critical water supplies.

The tributary inflows have provided water users with an extended period of unregulated flow conditions. Access to uncontrolled flows and supplementary take will continue to be made available until tributary flows recede.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Belubula	100%	0%	 Stage 2

Storage level (as at 20 October 2020)

Carcoar Dam is 31% full – steady – currently at about 11,330 ML.

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach to managing extreme events, such as droughts or poor water quality events. The Belubula system has been reduced to Stage 2 (recovering) drought criticality level. Temporary water restrictions were removed due to adequate tributary flow, but Carcoar Dam level remains low. Conditions will be closely monitored going forward and advice provided accordingly.

Further information on the NSW Extreme Events Policy and drought stages:
www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for October to December indicates likely wetter than average conditions across the catchment. Daytime temperatures are likely to be about average or cooler, while overnight temperatures are likely to be warmer than average.

The Bureau has declared a La Niña event, with models indicating that La Niña conditions are likely to persist until at least early 2021. Negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions are also likely to be negative for October. La Niña and negative IOD conditions typically increase the probability of above average rainfall in spring.

For further details: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

Belubula Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (October 2020 to June 2021)	Volume (ML)	Volume (ML)
Available Resource ⁽¹⁾		14,300
<i>less</i>		
High Security ⁽²⁾	1,095	
General Security balance	6,500	
Domestic and Stock ⁽²⁾	220	
Evaporation from storage ⁽³⁾	1,100	
Essential Requirements and Losses ⁽⁴⁾	5,300	
Storage reserve for 2021/22, 2022/23 ⁽⁵⁾	5,400	
<i>equals</i>		
Water available for allocation (deficit)		(5,315) ⁽⁶⁾

Notes:

- (1) Carcoar Dam volume as of end of September 2020, plus minimum historical dam inflows and usable tributary flows budgeted from now to June 2021.
- (2) Domestic, Stock and High Security: volume required to meet these high priority entitlements to 30 June 2021 in full.
- (3) Carcoar Dam storage is likely to increase slowly over the assessment period, increasing storage evaporation.
- (4) Essential Requirements and Losses: best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions through to June 2021 to meet all demands. This mostly comprises of natural transmission losses as water soaks into river bed, end of system flows and operational surpluses.
- (5) A minimum storage volume of 5,400 ML in Carcoar Dam on 30 June 2021 is required to ensure critical needs can be met through the 2021/22 and 2022/23 water years.
- (6) Over 5315 ML of system useful inflows are required in October 2020 to overcome deficits and enable an allocation to general security entitlements.

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the Belubula regulated river water source will be issued in **January 2021**, or earlier if there is a significant change in water availability conditions.

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