



13 May 2020

## Macquarie and Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source

### Water allocation update

As a result of significant inflows in April, there is now enough resource to repeal suspended water sharing plan rules, provide full allocation to all high priority products; including town water, domestic, stock and high security entitlements, ease the temporary water restriction on general security water users and lift the trade restrictions. Some improvements can flow immediately, while other changes are subject to administrative processes that will settle in coming weeks.

Macquarie River drought criticality has been eased from Stage 4 (Critical) to Stage 3 (Severe).

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Cudgegong	100%	0%	 Stage 2
Macquarie	100%	0%	 Stage 3

When the repeal of the suspended water sharing plan clauses is given effect, Planned Environmental Water, both active and translucent account water, will be available for use.

Local Water Utility (LWU), Stock & Domestic (SD) licences and High Security allocations have been lifted to 100 per cent of entitlement for 2019-20.

The temporary water restriction on Macquarie general security water accounts is being amended to allow the transfer of 30 per cent of the drought sub-account balance to the active account for use. Advice on the completion of this transfer will be provided in the next week or two.

Trade from the Cudgegong down to the Macquarie water source has been closed as an emergency drought measure to protect Burrendong Dam supplies and particularly water security in the Macquarie for critical needs. The restriction can now be lifted, allowing trade to resume in accordance within the water sharing plan. Advice on the completion of this lifting will be provided in the next week or two.

Given that general security water users have been prevented from accessing their water during the drought, protection from account reductions due to evaporation or spills from Burrendong Dam will be provided until the end of February 2021.

Despite the much-needed inflows, the impacts of a worst ever drought continue to be felt and resources must continue to be managed to build security and ensure the delivery of critical needs throughout next water year (2020-21) and beyond as a priority.

## Resource conditions

The total inflow into Burrendong Dam during April was 107,000 megalitres (ML). Tributary flows surplus to water orders have been managed under the Tributary Flow Management Plan, while also meeting the critical needs of the environment in some sections of the river. Temporary drought works at Warren Weir, Gunningbar Weir and Duck and Crooked creeks offtakes remain open to manage tributary flows.

All stock and domestic replenishments have now been completed. Delivery of stock and domestic replenishment flows in 2021 will largely rely on tributary flows in preference to dam releases.

The recent rainfall and resultant inflow have also allowed deferral of the planned Bulk Water Transfer to at least March 2021.

The Macquarie Regulated River Water Source has improved to Stage 3 drought criticality. Resources will continue to be carefully managed, including the use of contingency measures, to protect and prolong critical water supplies as a priority.

The Cudgegong Regulated River Water Source remains at Stage 2 drought criticality.

Despite some welcome relief, caution is advised. Businesses and landholders affected by the limited regulated river operations should continue with their water saving arrangements until normal regulated river operations can resume. Additional drought contingency measures may be needed if conditions deteriorate, so that critical needs including town water supplies can be met.

## Storage levels (as at 11 May 2020)

- Burrendong Dam is 20.8 per cent full – rising – holding about 275,000 ML
- Windamere Dam is 27.1 per cent full – falling – holding about 101,000 ML.

## Drought information sessions

The department, together with WaterNSW, will be holding public information sessions on drought outlook and water availability via webinars during May and June 2020. Presentations can be viewed live and a recording will be later available on the website. The Macquarie outlook will be discussed on a session scheduled for 28 May from 2 pm to 3 pm.

For more information on information session and registration go to:

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/information-sessions>

## Key facts

- All higher priority licence categories are forecast to receive full allocations on 1 July 2020.
- General Security licences below Burrendong Dam will soon be able to access 30% of the balance in carryover sub-accounts on 1 July 2019. Conditions will continue to be closely monitored and access to water improved if water availability continue to improve.
- Water held in Environmental Water Allowance (EWA) will soon be fully available.

- Should Burrendong Dam fill rapidly, GS and EWA carryover volumes will be immune to spill forfeiture until the end of February 2021.
- Unavailable GS carryover volumes in the suspended drought account will continue to be protected from evaporative reductions.
- Tributary flows from passing storms downstream of Burrendong Dam will continue to be managed adaptively to meet high priority commitments, including effluent replenishments where possible.

## Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for May to July indicates that the catchment is likely to experience wetter than average conditions. Daytime temperatures over this period are likely to be above average and night time temperatures are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau of Meteorology states that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is most likely to remain neutral over winter, but may cool towards La Niña levels by late winter or early spring. However, the current probability of a La Niña occurring is less than 50%, and the current ENSO Outlook remains at inactive. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral, however, a negative IOD could form during 2020. Negative IOD events typically increase the likelihood of above average winter-spring rainfall across southern Australia.

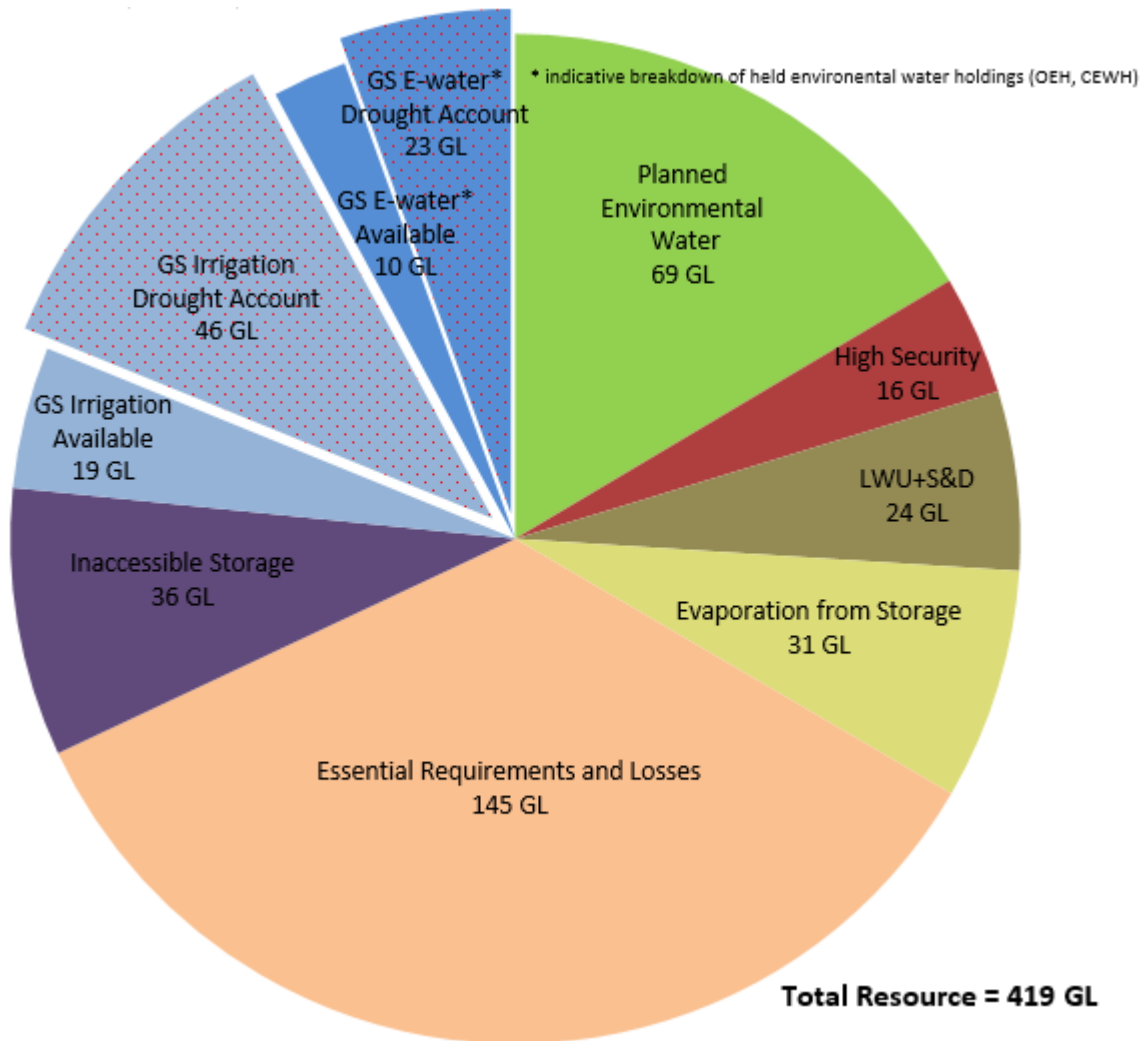
For further details: [www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/rainfall/summary](http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/rainfall/summary)

## Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the Macquarie-Cudgegong Regulated Rivers Water Source will be on **Thursday 11 June 2020**. This will be followed by opening allocation announcements on 1 July 2020 for the 2020-21 water-year.

# Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update



Resource Distribution (April 2020 to May 2021)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Total Available Resource <sup>(1)</sup>		259
<i>less</i>		
Carryover remaining in accounts <sup>(2), (7)</sup>	98	
Planned Environmental Water <sup>(3)</sup>	69	
Towns, Stock, Domestic <sup>(4)</sup>	24	
Inaccessible Storage <sup>(6)</sup>	36	
High Security <sup>(4)</sup>	16	
General Security 2019/2020 AWD <sup>(7)</sup>	0	
Essential Requirements (transmission, operations) <sup>(5)</sup>	145	
Evaporation from Storage	31	
<i>equals</i>		
Water available for allocation (or deficit)		(160)

### Notes:

- (1) Storage volume in Burrendong Dam plus minimum forecast dam inflows plus transfers from Windamere Dam is 259 GL. In order to deliver all remaining GS and EWA carryover allocations and current allocation to higher security licences, and to operate the river normally over the assessment horizon, 419 GL is required. This is resulting in a deficit of 160 GL before further allocations can be made.
- (2) Carryover remaining in accounts: volume remaining in carryover sub-accounts (excludes Cudgegong), discounted for evaporative losses.
- (3) Planned environmental water: water allocated to the Environmental Water Allowance (EWA) under the water sharing plan (WSP) to provide for the Macquarie Marshes and the riverine environment. Excludes 'licence-based' environmental water.
- (4) Towns, Stock, Domestic and High Security: reserves required to meet current allocation to these licence categories over the assessment horizon. This represents total entitlement below Burrendong Dam.
- (5) Essential Requirements: best estimate of the volume required to run the river under dry conditions over the next 13 months to meet all demands. This includes transmission losses and operational loss. It is conservatively assumed that forecast inflows correspond to dry conditions. This estimate is regularly refined as the year unfolds.
- (6) Inaccessible storage: Dead storage of 34 GL plus 2 GL to ensure valve operations at very low storage levels.
- (7) Held environmental water (HEW): as a trial, we are reporting held environmental water administered by the environmental water holders, with the associated portions of general security allocation also identified in the above pie chart. This reporting of held environmental water is indicative only, prior to reconciliation of usage and net trade, and is estimated to be 33 GL of GS and 0 GL of HS. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW DPIE Environment, Energy and Science (EES) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on environmental holdings can be found on individual agency websites. Delivery of this water is currently unavailable until conditions improve.

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