

20 March 2020

Hunter Regulated River Water Source

Allocation update

The Hunter Regulated River Water Source experienced average to above average rainfall in February 2020. Glenbawn Dam received about 179 mm of rainfall, while Glennies Creek Dam received about 192 mm of rainfall in February.

Despite some recent good rainfall and minor system improvements, there has been insufficient to provide an allocation increase to general security access licence holders at this time.

Apart from general security entitlements, all other categories of licence in the regulated river water source have already received their maximum allocation for this water year (2019-20).

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Hunter Regulated River Water Source	100%	95%	 Stage 1

Dam levels (as at 20 March 2020)

Glenbawn Dam is about 40 per cent full – steady – holding about 300 gigalitre (GL).

Glennies Creek Dam is 37 per cent full – steady – holding about 106 GL.

At this time last year Glenbawn was 55 per cent full and Glennies Creek 56 per cent full.

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach from one to four to manage extreme circumstances such as severe droughts or poor water quality events in the Murray-Darling Basin. As the drought extended beyond the Basin and into coastal catchments, regulated coastal rivers have been reported on the drought map on the DPIE website.

Currently, the Hunter Regulated River Water Source is classified as Drought Stage 1 - indicating normal regulated river operations. However, this water source has been experiencing dry conditions and storage depletion, as with most of NSW, until the recent minor improvements.

Further information on drought stages can be found at:

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events

Key facts

- Releases from Glenbawn and Glennies Creek Dams are currently being made to meet downstream essential requirements and irrigation demand.
- The planning horizon for high priority commitments, including town water supplies and major utilities for the Hunter regulated water source, is up to 3 years and is currently to June 2022.
- All Environmental Water Allowance and high priority water needs including major utility and towns are secure to June 2022, assuming at least the minimum (drought) future inflows arrive.

- The opening general security allocation on 1 July 2020 will be subject to inflows during the remainder of this water year and any unused account water that cannot be carried over. At this stage general security water users are advised to plan for low or zero new allocation on 1 July 2020, but this will increase if recent wetter conditions continue in coming months.
- All unused water carried forward in accounts into 2020-21 will likely be available for use.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for April to June shows drier than average conditions for some parts of the catchment, while other parts are likely to experience average rainfall conditions. Temperatures are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is neutral and is expected to remain neutral until the end of autumn. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is also neutral.

With both the ENSO and IOD indicators now in the neutral range, Australia's climate can be influenced by more local or short-term climate drivers.

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

Further information

The next water allocation statement will be in late April 2020.

Work is underway on a fact sheet to explain the Hunter allocations process and consider possible allocation scenarios, as requested at a recent meeting of the water users in Singleton.

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

Resource Assessment Data Sheet

Resource Distribution (1 March 2020 to 30 June 2022)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource (as at 1 Mar 2020) ⁽¹⁾		404.6
Minimum storage & tributary inflows (1 Mar 2020 – 30 Jun 2020) ⁽²⁾		2.9
<i>less</i>		
General Security account balance	94.7	
Town Water (Local Water Utility)	6.7	
Major Utility	42.3	
High Security	10.7	
Basic Land Holder Rights	1.8	
Environmental Water Allowance (EWA)	20.0	
Domestic and Stock	1.5	
Minimum Flow Target at Greta	6.5	
Losses (evaporation, transmission, operation)	19.1	
Storage Reserve for 2020-21 & 2021-22 ⁽³⁾	224.0	
<i>equals</i>		
Additional inflows required ⁽⁴⁾		(19.8)

Notes:

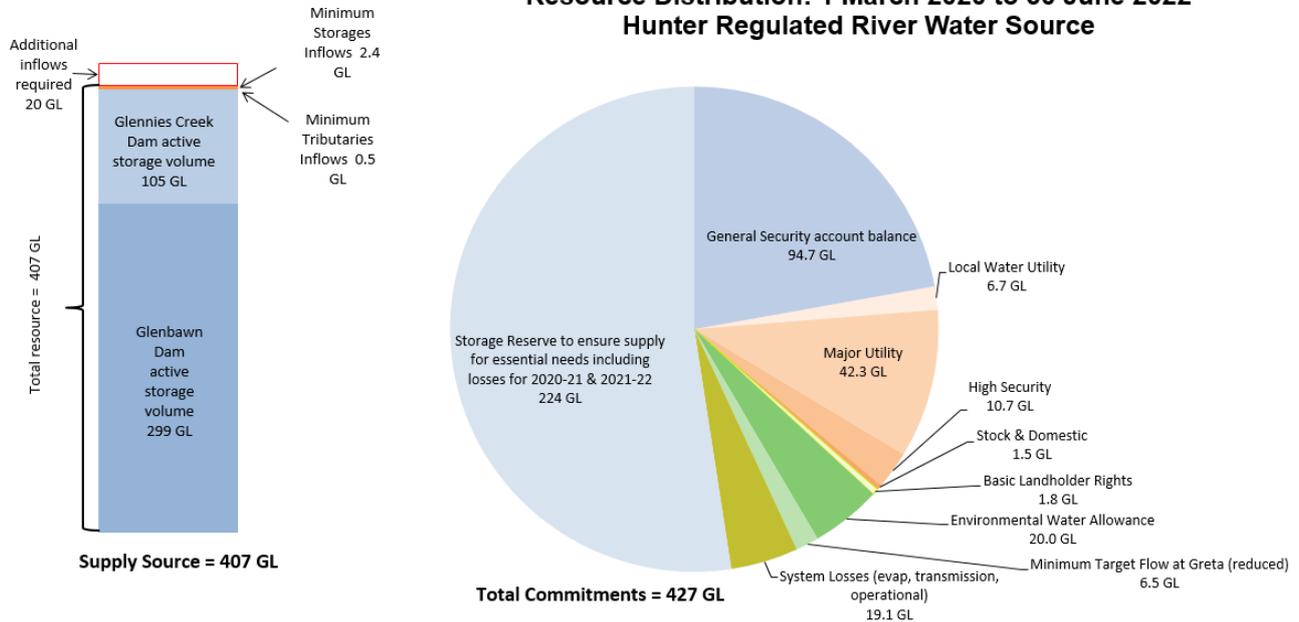
- (1) Available Resource in the dams – is the total active storage volume in Glenbawn Dam and Glennies Creek Dam combined as at 1 March 2020.
- (2) Minimum forecast dam inflows from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2020 (2.4 GL) and minimum forecast usable tributary inflows (0.5 GL) from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2020.
- (3) Water required to be set aside in storages as reserve (112 GL/year) to meet essential supply requirements and system losses in 2020-21 & 2021-22 (after accounting for minimum inflows in 2020-21 and 2021-22 water years). The essential supply includes EWA, towns, major utilities, high security, domestic use, basic rights net of minimum inflow and losses.
- (4) Additional inflows required over the 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2022 period to meet water availability shortfall. This small shortfall of about 20GL is based on very unlikely full utilisation of all allocated water and continuation of extreme dry for the entire period from now till 30 June 22.

Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update



Resource Distribution: 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2022 Hunter Regulated River Water Source



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