# Water Allocation Statement

8 February 2019

## NSW Border Rivers
### Water allocation update

Allocations to the NSW regulated river general security (A and B classes) access licences **remain unchanged.**

Inflow conditions are still well short of providing water for general security allocation. There has been just 14 GL of inflow to storage received since 1 October 2018, which is less than 25 per cent of the long term average inflow for this period.

All high priority licences in the regulated river system had received their maximum allocation for the 2018/19 water year on 1 July 2018.

Despite the prevailing dry conditions and falling storage levels, deliverability in the Border Rivers regulated water source for 2018/19 is currently secure. Nevertheless, WaterNSW advises that under continued minimum inflows future deliveries, including essential supplies, will be grouped together under block releases to save water by reducing operational (delivery) volumes.

| 2018-19 | High Security | General Security A Class | General Security B Class | Drought Stage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NSW Border Rivers | 100% | 32.8% | 0% | Stage 2 |

**Dam levels (8 February 2019)**

- Pindari Dam is currently 9 per cent full – falling – holding 29 gigalitres (GL). This compares with about 63 per cent at this time last year.
- Glenlyon Dam is currently 18 per cent full – falling – holding 45 GL. This compares with about 60 per cent at this time last year.

**Drought stage**

The NSW Extreme Events Policy has been released for all surface and ground water sources in the NSW Murray Darling Basin. This introduces a staged approach to managing extreme events such as severe droughts or poor water quality events. Incident Response Guides (IRGs) are being developed for each valley as part of water resource plans to identify triggers and types of actions taken in each stage.

The NSW Border Rivers regulated river water source is assessed to be in Stage 2. Water users are advised that if dry condition persists, future deliveries, including essential supplies, will be grouped together (block releases) to improve delivery efficiencies.

An explanatory section on drought stages has been provided at the end of this statement.

**Climatic outlook**

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for February to April shows no clear indication of drier or wetter conditions. Temperatures are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau's El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Outlook remains at El Niño WATCH as key atmospheric and ocean indicators are neutral. There is an even chance of an El Niño event forming in autumn or winter. The Indian Ocean Dipole, which has little influence on the Australian climate from December to April, is neutral.

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

## Further information

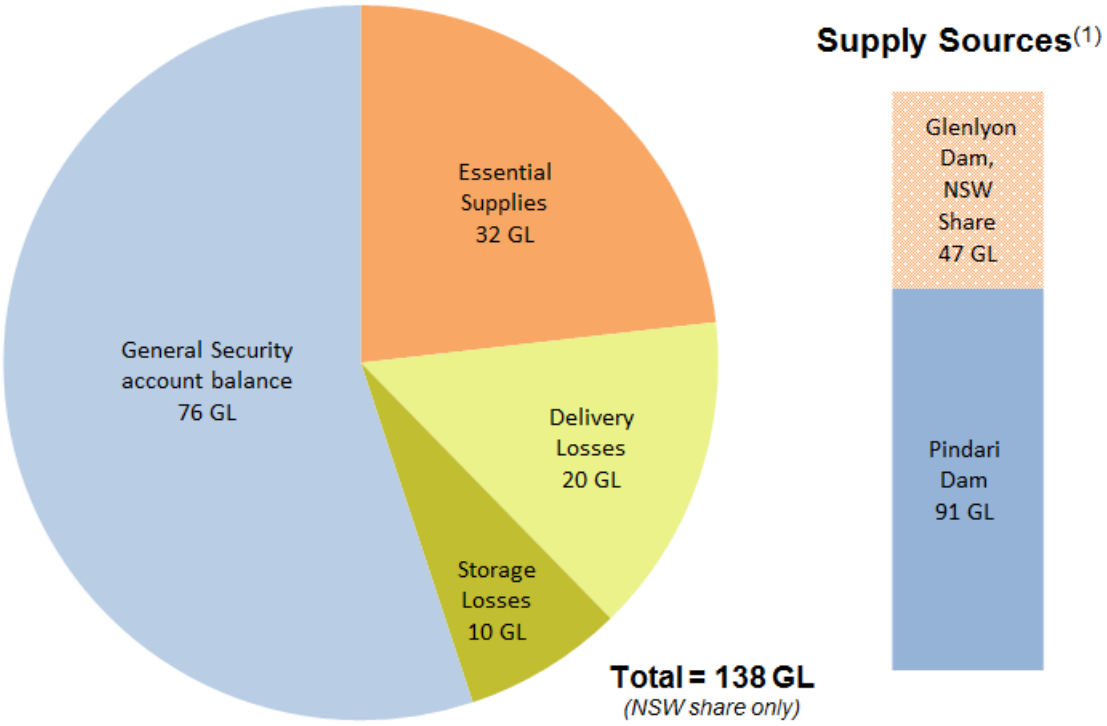
Information on available water determinations and water sharing plans is available on the Department of Industry website: **www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water**

## NSW Border Rivers Resource Assessment

| **Distribution of NSW Resources (as at 1 January 2019)** | |
|---|---|
| | **Volume (GL)** |
| Total available resource (NSW) (1) | 138 |
| **Less** | |
| Storage losses (2) | 10 |
| Essential supplies (3) | 32 |
| General security account balance (4),(6) | 76 |
| General security delivery losses(5) | 20 |

***See notes below***

## Resource Distribution as at 1 January 2019
## NSW Border Rivers




### Notes:

(1) This includes Pindari Dam and the NSW share of Glenlyon Dam, at the time of the assessment. In accordance with the *New South Wales - Queensland Border Rivers Intergovernmental Agreement 2008* NSW has access to 57% of available resources in Glenlyon Dam.

(2) Storage loss – evaporation losses based on forecast storage depletion over next 2 years.

(3) Essential supplies – water required to be set aside under water sharing plans to provide for domestic, stock, towns, high security, replenishment, delivery loss and operational requirements. This commitment is offset by the minimum forecast inflows to storage.

(4) General security account balance.

(5) General security delivery losses – budgeted at 30 per cent to deliver the existing general security account water.

(6) The general security account balance is inclusive of about 1 GL of held environmental water (HEW) administered by environmental water holder/s. The HEW volume is indicative only and prior to reconciliation of usage and net trade. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH).

### Drought stage trigger levels

The drought stage is determined in accordance with critical trigger levels for this valley as outlined in the Lachlan Incident Response Guide developed by NSW Department of Industry-Water. A drought stage can range from Stage 1 (normal operations) to Stage 4 (critical drought). It is informed by routine water resource assessment results and is triggered by the degree to which water use priorities can be met within the water source. A summary of each drought stage is provided in the table below.

These drought stages are focused on the ability of the regulated river to deliver existing and high priority commitments within the valley. This is distinct from the drought phases determined by the NSW Department of Primary Industries in their Combined Drought Indicator, which is focused on categorising seasonal conditions based on rainfall, soil water, plant growth and drought direction for individual parishes in NSW.

For further details: **www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events**

### Drought stage trigger levels for surface water – general principles

| Criticality | Evidence base for surface water | Broad intent of measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage 1**<br>Normal management | Can deliver all account water under normal river operations practices. | Provide certainty for water use planning.<br><br>Long term water security and emergency/drought contingency planning. |
| **Stage 2**<br>Drought management | Unable to deliver 100% of high priority account water **and** maximum expected use of general security under normal river operations practices. | Operational measures in the current water year to reduce transmission losses and prevent potential future failure to supply water in accounts.<br><br>Drought response readiness (Local Water Utilities (LWUs)). |

| Criticality | Evidence base for surface water | Broad intent of measures |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage 3**<br><br>Severe drought/water shortage<br><br>  | Only able to deliver restricted high priority demands **and** restricted remaining general security account water. | Restricting access to account water, restricting trade, and suspending some WSP rules in addition to increased operational measures to prevent potential future failure to supply water in accounts.<br><br>Drought management/restrictions (LWUs). |
| **Stage 4**<br><br>Critical drought/water shortage<br><br>  | Only able to deliver restricted town water supply, stock and domestic and other restricted high priority demands. | Suspension of some WSP rules. Severe restrictions required to prioritise remaining supplies for critical human water needs.<br><br>Emergency drought management measures/restrictions (LWUs). |