

11 October 2019

Macquarie and Cudgegong valleys

Water allocation update

Allocations for the Macquarie-Cudgegong regulated river water sources **remain unchanged**.

There was just 2,000 megalitres (ML) of inflow to Burrendong Dam during September 2019. Total inflow to Burrendong Dam over the 25 months since the last general security allocation in August 2017, has been about 93,000 ML. The system continues to experience its worst ever drought inflow sequence, and resources are being managed to extend the supply of critical needs.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Cudgegong	70%	0%	 Stage 2
Macquarie	70%	0%	 Stage 4

A temporary water restriction remains in operation below Burrendong Dam in 2019-20 to limit water usage and protect critical supplies. Access to remaining water in general security carryover sub-accounts, including remaining EWA, has been restricted from 1 July 2019 until conditions improve.

Cudgegong regulated river access licences, including general security carryover, are not restricted, however no trading of water from above Burrendong Dam to below Burrendong Dam is permitted due to the critical water shortage downstream.

These restrictions can only be eased when sufficient inflows to assure high priority needs for the 2020-21 water year are captured in storage. With dry conditions continuing, water users are advised to plan their programs accordingly and to maximise water use efficiency.

Some operational drought contingency measures are now in place to extend delivery of existing limited water supplies in the Macquarie Valley. Temporary works to raise Warren Weir are now complete, and deliveries downstream have now ceased. Similarly, regulated releases into Duck Creek and Crooked Creek have also ceased.

Investigative works are being conducted to access inactive storage in Burrendong Dam. Additional drought contingency measures may be required to secure town supplies and other critical needs within the valley.

Storage levels (as at 10 October 2019)

- Burrendong is 4.4 per cent full – falling – currently at 84,000 ML (50,000 ML active)
- Windamere is 30 per cent full – steady – currently at 114,000 ML

Drought stage

The NSW Extreme Events Policy introduced a staged approach to managing extreme events, such as severe droughts or poor water quality events. The Macquarie regulated river water source continues to experience a critical Stage 4 drought event. Water supplies are being managed to meet high priority needs for as long as possible. Timely operational contingency measures are being introduced to extend critical water supplies.

The Cudgegong regulated river water source advanced to Stage 2 on 1 July 2019, reflecting the restricted trade dealings and 70 per cent high security allocation.

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

Key facts

- As a critical water saving measure, there will be no delivery of water to some sections of the regulated Macquarie River without tributary inflows, despite there being some water in users accounts. Water users may refer to WaterNSW for specific delivery advice.
- In the absence of significant system inflow, cease to flow conditions are likely to persist in the Macquarie River below Warren, and for Duck and Crooked Creeks.
- Trade between the Cudgegong and Macquarie valleys is closed due to the severe water shortage.
- If conditions remain very dry, a further bulk water transfer will occur in December 2019 leaving at least 70 GL in Windamere Dam. This is enough to secure supply for local demand in the regulated Cudgegong Valley for a number of years.
- Any tributary flows received downstream of Burrendong Dam will be managed adaptively to first relieve critical human and non-human needs.

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for October 2019 to January 2020 suggests rainfall is likely to be below average across most of the country.

In the shorter term, October is showing particularly strong chances of being much drier than usual across the catchment area.

The positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) remains a key climate driver of Australian climate for the coming months. This, combined with a forecast negative Southern Annular Mode (SAM) phase, is driving the warm and dry conditions forecast by the Bureau's climate model. For further details: www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary

Next announcement

The next water allocation statement for the regulated Macquarie-Cudgegong Valley will be on **Tuesday 12 November 2019**.

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