

27 April 2020

Belubula Regulated River Water Source

Water allocation update

There is no change to allocations in the Belubula regulated river water source. Minimal inflow conditions to Carcoar Dam persist, with just 1,048 megalitres (ML) received this water year. Recent rainfall, particularly across the lower catchment, has filled most farm dams and re-started creek flows, however; further rainfall over the winter months is required to produce significant inflows to Carcoar Dam.

The system remains at Stage 3 drought criticality, with Carcoar Dam now holding less than 5,000 ML. Stage 3 drought operations for the remainder of the current water year are in place to maintain a similar storage level in Carcoar Dam on 1 July 2020 to ensure critical needs can be met under Stage 4 operations in 2020-21 should current drought conditions worsen.

A Temporary Water Restriction under Section 324 of the *Water Management Act 2000* is in place for the remainder of the current water year. It restricts access from 1 October 2019 to water in general security access licence accounts to 40 per cent of the account balance as at 30 September 2019. The remaining 60 per cent is moved to a drought sub-account and cannot be used.

Uncontrolled flow access from tributary events will continue to be assessed on an event basis and is likely to be available for the remainder of the 2019-20 water year in accordance with the water sharing plan rules.

An indicative outlook on water availability and delivery arrangements for the 2020-21 water year has been provided below. The outlook aims to encourage water users to take water if required from available tributary flows in preference to ordering from Carcoar Dam. This will increase the volume of water remaining in Carcoar Dam at the start of next summer and help to provide access to a higher proportion of remaining carryover allocations.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Belubula	100%	0%	 Stage 3

Storage level (as at 23 April 2020)

- Carcoar Dam is 13.3 per cent full – steady – currently at about 4,993 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 Belubula regulated river water source is now at Stage 3 drought criticality, reflecting the reduced water availability in 2019-20 described above. Conditions will be closely monitored going forward and advice provided accordingly, with Stage 4 criticality possible should conditions deteriorate significantly beyond current expectations.

Further information on the NSW Extreme Events Policy and drought stages can be found at - www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/what-we-do/legislation-policies/eep

Climatic outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology's seasonal outlook for May to July indicates that conditions are likely to be wetter than average across the catchment. Temperatures are likely to be average to warmer than average. The Bureau indicates the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) both remain neutral.

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

Water availability and deliverability outlook for 2020-21

Forecast conditions are indicative only and are currently similar to those experienced at the start of this water year.

- If dry condition continues, there is little scope of easing existing restrictions on general security water users any time soon. However, the department will endeavour to keep current unrestricted water available beyond 1 July 2020.
- In the absence of tributary inflows, usable allocations remaining in accounts as of 30 June 2020 can be only delivered upstream of The Needles from Carcoar Dam through to 30 September 2020.
- By 30 September 2020 a further resource assessment will be undertaken. Should drought conditions persist, additional water restriction may be necessary as appropriate from 1 October 2020 as had been done on 1 October 2019.
- If a reduced allocation to high security license is necessary on 1 July 2020, the reduction will not be any worse than that of general security account restriction.
- If inflow situation unexpectedly improves, this availability scenarios will be revised.

Next announcement

Unless conditions change unexpectedly this autumn, the next water allocation statement for the Belubula regulated river water source will be issued in **September 2020**.

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