Water Allocation Statement

Water availability and allocation update

7 April 2020

Gwydir Regulated River Water Source

Allocations

The Gwydir catchment continued to receive some relatively good rainfall in March, increasing the storage volume by about 6.6 gigalitres (GL) to a total of about 170 GL. Downstream tributary inflows added about 8 GL. This improvement has ensured a full essential supply account and some recovery to the delivery loss account.

The improvements in the last two months have been welcome, but not enough to fully offset the extreme dry conditions experienced over the past 26 months. More sustained rainfall and runoff is required to bring enough recovery to allow for new water allocations. General security allocations **remain unchanged** at zero per cent of entitlement for the 2019-2020 water year.

Since the last general security allocation in early February 2018, there has been around 116 gigalitres (GL) of inflow into Copeton Dam. Despite the improvements, **this is the second lowest 26-month inflow volume on record**. The lowest inflow was a century ago with 63GL in 26 months to March 1920.

The system deficit has decreased again in March 2020 from about 9 GL to about 4 GL, inching us closer to being able to announce new allocation.

2019-20	High Security	General Security	Drought Stage
Gwydir Regulated River Water Source	100%	0%	Stage 2

Dam levels (as at 6 April 2020)

Copeton Dam is about 11.6 per cent full – steady – currently holding about 174 GL.
This time last year the storage was similarly placed at 11.7 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. The Gwydir Regulated River Water Source has been eased to Stage 2 criticality based on improving conditions and outlooks, however; the situation is being closely monitored in case dry conditions return.

Further information on drought stages can be found at: www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/extreme-events

Key facts

- Copeton Dam received 124 mm of rainfall in March 2020.
- Inflows into Copeton Dam were 7.7 GL in March 2020.
- Downstream tributary inflows were 8 GL in March 2020.
- Copeton Dam storage volume increased by about 6.6 GL in March 2020, as a result of some helpful good inflows into storage.
- The deficit in the regulated system has been reduced from 9 GL to 4 GL.
- The general security and ECA delivery loss account is on its way to recovery as a result of the February and March 2020 inflows.
- Essential supply requirements are secure for 2020-21. However, if extreme dry conditions return, drought contingency measures may be needed once again to secure critical human needs beyond 2020-21.

Seasonal climate outlook

The Bureau of Meteorology seasonal outlook for April to June indicates likely wetter than average conditions. Daytime temperatures over this period are equally likely to be above or below average and night time temperatures are very likely to be above average.

The Bureau of Meteorology states that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are neutral and likely to remain neutral to the middle of the year. With the major climate drivers neutral at this stage, Australia is less likely to see widespread deviation from average seasonal rainfall.

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

Further information

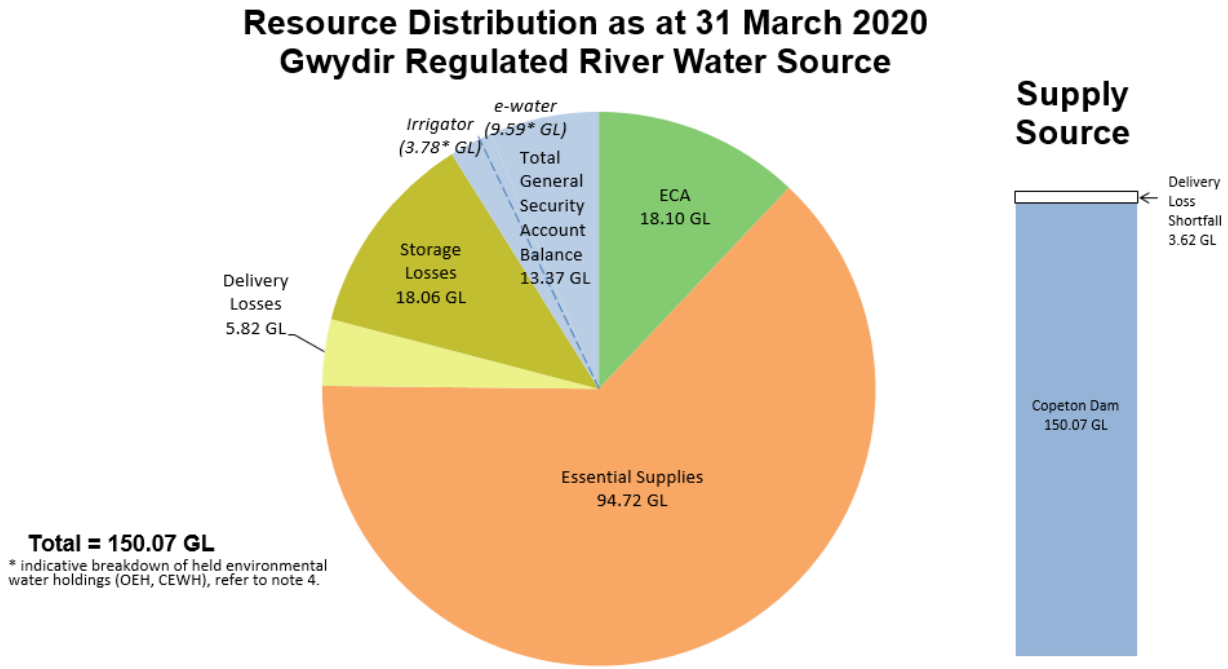
The next monthly water allocation statement for the Gwydir Regulated River Water Source will be available on 7 May 2020.

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 (as at 31 March 2020)	Volume (GL)	Volume (GL)
Available Resource[1]		150.07
less		
Storage Losses[2]	18.06	
Essential Supplies[3]	94.72	
Environmental Contingency Allowance (ECA)	18.10	
Delivery Losses[5]	5.82	
General Security Held Environmental Water (HEW) Account Balance[4]	9.59	
General Security Irrigator Account Balance	3.78	
equals		
Water available for allocation		0.00

See notes below.



Notes:

(1) Available Resource – is the total active storage at Copeton Dam at the time of assessment.

(2) Storage Losses – evaporation based on forecast storage behaviour over 2 years at maximum historical rates.

(3) Essential Supplies – water required to be set aside under the water sharing plan to provide for Towns, Stock, Domestic, High Security and riverine environments. Includes stock and domestic replenishments, delivery loss allowance and end-of-system flow requirements. This is offset by minimum forecast inflows to storage.

(4) Held environmental water (HEW) – water administered by environmental water holders is being reported here, with the associated portion of general security allocation also identified in the above pie chart and table. The reporting of held environmental water is indicative only, prior to reconciliation of usage and net trade. General Security HEW estimated to be 9.59 GL and High Security HEW is estimated to be 0.66 GL. These entitlements are held and/or managed either singly or jointly by various environmental holder groups, including the NSW environment water holder and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEWH). Details on environmental holdings can be found on individual agency websites.

(5) Delivery Losses - this account reflects the water needed to deliver general security water. Zero balance means that water must be borrowed to continue the delivery of general security water, in accordance with prior practice. The payback of any borrow will occur before further general security allocation. However, in extreme situations, 'dam wall debit' becomes necessary where water users are debited the ordered volume at the dam and a reduced volume is available at the point of off-take. Effectively water users are 'paying' their own delivery costs.

Resource Assessment as at 31 March 2020

Volumes in GL	Budget	Current	Additional	Balance
Storage Loss	18.06	17.49	0.57	18.06
Essential Supplies for next 24 months	94.72	91.90	2.82	94.72
Delivery Loss (256 GL max)	9.44	0.21	5.61	5.82
ECA (90 GL max)	-	18.10	0.00	18.10
General Security (764.5 GL max)	-	13.37	0.00	13.37
Additional Resources for Sharing	-	9.00	-9.00	0.00
Total	-	150.07	0.00	150.07

General Security	Value	Unit
Incremental Increase CREDITED	0.00	GL
Available Water Determination	0.0000	ML per unit share

About 1.1 GL was released from Copeton Dam in March 2020. A combination of dam releases and downstream tributary inflows was utilised to meet demand of 2.23 GL of essential supply and 0.14 GL of general security.

Essential Supply demand	2.23 GL
General Security demand	0.14 GL
Total demand	**2.37 GL**
Release from Copeton Dam to meet demand	1.10 GL
Downstream tributary flows utilised to meet demand	1.27 GL

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