



Water Availability Update

The DoI Water's latest update on Lachlan water availability can be downloaded [HERE](#).

Not surprisingly, given the prolonged hot, dry start to the year, inflows of more than 39,000 ML are needed before there can be a new AWD for general security. The Resource Distribution diagram at the bottom of the page shows the position as at the start of April, and the shortfall of 39,000 ML to meet existing commitments. This also assumes that all water currently in general security accounts will be delivered over the next two years to May 2020.

The update also states that the Annual Use Limit for general security in **2018/19 will be 100%**.

The Department also included an estimate of the chance of additional AWD, based on historical inflow scenarios, as below:

Conditions	New AWD by 31 October 2018	New AWD by 31 January 2019
Dry (20% of years)	No additional AWD	No additional AWD
Median	27%	31%
Wet (20% of years)	120%, and a dam spill	120%, and a dam spill

Each individual general security account will also hold the volume carried forward into the 2018/19 water year.

To those setting up your GS water availability for 2018/19, please note that not all water currently in your Hold sub-account is guaranteed to transfer to your Take sub-account for 2018/19. This will be governed by the limit of 100% of entitlement in the Take account, so water can only transfer from the Hold to the Take account until the balance in the Take account reaches 100%. This is illustrated in the example below, and please get in touch if you have any questions.

EXAMPLE

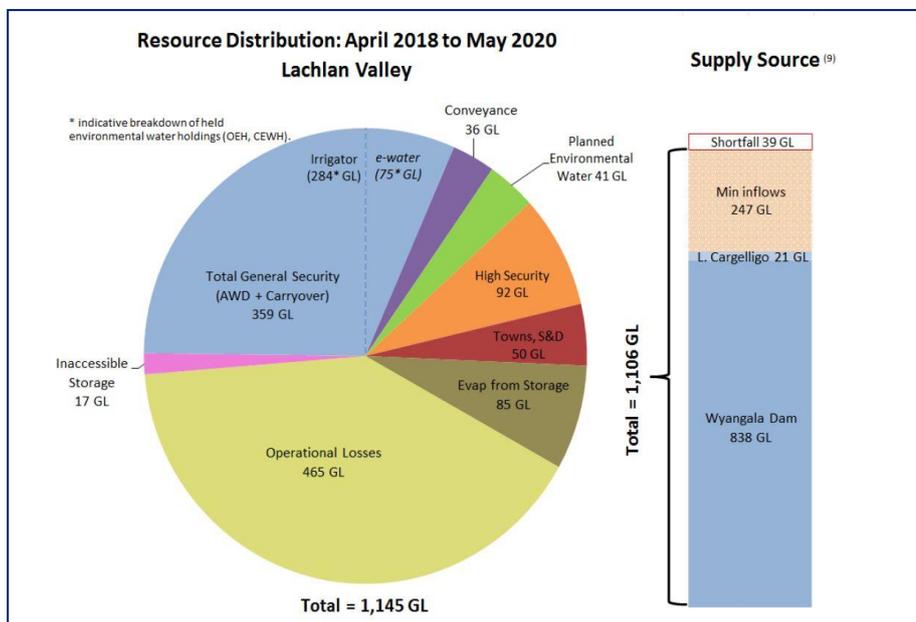
An irrigator has a 1000 ML licence, and starts the 2017/18 water year with 1070 ML total in his account. During 2017/18 he uses 600 ML, and at 30 April '18 has 400 ML left in the Take account and 70 ML in the Hold account. In May he buys 550 ML but has no further usage before 30 June '18. The balances are as follows:

Date	A (Take)	B (Hold)	Total (ML)
1 July '17	1000	70	1070
Usage to Apr '18	-600		
Bal @ 30 Apr '18	400	70	470
May – purchase 550 ML take water	+550		
Bal @ 30 June '18	950	70	1020
Bal @ 1 July '18	1000	20	1020

WaterNSW News

WaterNSW publishes a weekly [Water Availability Report](#) on their website. Useful points from the latest update are:

- * WaterNSW has scheduled some maintenance work on Jemalong Weir from late June to late July. Flows past the weir during this period will be limited to 300 ML/day, so flows in the mid-Lachlan creeks, particularly Wallaroi, Wallamundry and Nerathong, are likely to be very low.
- * WaterNSW will be maintaining Lake Cargelligo at between 40% and 50% during autumn to allow any tributary inflows to be captured and stored.
- * Usage to 30 April has been 320,000 ML in the Lachlan, and 7,700 ML in the Belubula.



Water Metering and Compliance

Metering

The NSW Government's Water Reform Action Plan has been through a statewide round of community consultation, and while the papers on Water Measurement and Compliance, Transparency and Environmental Water Management can still be viewed [HERE](#), submissions have now closed. The Government is considering the submissions and is expected to introduce legislation to the autumn sitting of Parliament, and then to finalise the timetable for implementation.

Fundamentally the Government's approach is to define a meter as one that complies with Australian Standard AS 4747, requiring that it be pattern approved, accurate to within +/- 5%, fitted with telemetry or enabling remote collection of data, installed in accordance with manufacturers' standards, and verified by a registered installer.

The consultation papers asked a series of questions about how the program should be implemented:

1. Should there be a minimum threshold below which a pattern approved meter is not mandatory?

LVW submitted that a minimum threshold is justified. On a statewide basis 95% of the total water used is extracted by 46% of works, and the remaining 54% of pumps account for only 5% of total usage, making it a very high cost per ML for those licences to install a pattern approved meter (although some form of measurement is required).

2. Whether the metering requirements are practical?

At present the range of pattern approved meters is limited, particularly for large pipe diameters, and we have suggested that time should be allowed for more meters to attain pattern approval, and also that consideration needs to be given to the very large, open channel offtakes used by Irrigation Corporations, which are not pattern approved, but which already meet the accuracy and validation standards.

We have also flagged that there are irrigators who in recent years have installed meters which comply with the NSW Interim Standards. Essentially the accuracy and installation requirements are the same as a pattern approved meter, but the actual meter is not pattern approved. We believe it would be commonsense to assess whether meters that comply with the NSW Interim Standards can be upgraded to meet AS 4747, and if not, that some grandfathering provisions apply while the meters continue to meet the +/-5% accuracy standard.

3. The timeframe for installing the required new meters?

The paper acknowledges that it's not practical to implement the new requirements immediately due to the limited availability of pattern approved meters and certified installers.

4. Who should own the meters?

LVW supports private ownership of meters, we believe it is preferable that the owner is responsible for maintenance and that licence holders should not be paying a fee to WaterNSW for meter servicing each year.

5. One of the biggest questions in the Water Reform Plan is around transparency, with the Matthews Report advocating that real time data about water use, account balances and meter readings should be publically available from a single source.

This information is commercial-in-confidence and market-sensitive, and LVW has strongly opposed it being made public. The regulator already has access to this information and should be using it to do their job.

Licence Conditions

The Department's mail out to all licence holders in January describing the new licence conditions and the requirement for meters to comply with Australian Standard AS 4747 caused widespread questioning and confusion about enforcement of these conditions.

The Government has now issued a follow up fact sheet, (attached) which acknowledges that the "Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) recognizes it may not be practical for all licence and approval holders to become immediately compliant with this condition (a meter complying with AS 4747) given the need to source, install and calibrate a compliant meter". It goes on to say that the NRAR will take a case-by-case approach to enforcing compliance with AS 4747, and that it will adopt a risk-based approach to compliance.

So in the interim, make sure your existing meter is working, if it isn't then stop pumping and apply for a section 91i, and operate in accordance with the 91i if it is issued.



If you have any questions about information in the newsletter please give us a call.

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