



## Critical water planning for the Peel and Namoi valleys

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Issue 2 | 30 November 2007

### Current water availability

Good rainfall during October and November has generated considerable inflows and increased water levels in the Peel and Namoi valley storages.

The following table shows storage volumes in gigalitres (GL) as at 30 November 2007.

	Volume (GL)	Percentage of Capacity	Change in volume (GL) since 1 July
Chaffey Dam	28.4	43.9%	+11.6
Keepit Dam	69.9	15.1%	+36.7
Split Rock Dam	12.7	2.4%	+ 0.4

### What this means

#### *Peel River*

Full allocation is currently available for town water supply, high security, and stock and domestic licences. As the water level in Chaffey Dam is currently less than 50 per cent of capacity-the volume needed to ensure future essential supplies, no allocation is available for general security users.

#### *Upper Namoi/Manilla River*

Full allocation is currently available for town water supply, high security, and stock and domestic licences. As the storage volume in Split Rock Dam is currently less than five per cent of capacity, the cut-off level specified in the Water Sharing Plan for the Upper Namoi and Lower Namoi Regulated River Water Sources (the plan) no allocation is available for general security users.

#### *Lower Namoi River*

Full allocation is currently available for town water supply, high security, and stock and domestic licences. However, the township of Walgett is currently taking water from a weir pool on the Barwon River, as it does not expect the Namoi River to run with sufficient consistency to meet its needs. Any delivery of other allocations will be dependant on State Water operations.

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## **River management during 2007/08**

### ***Peel River***

Regulated flows will be used to supply Tamworth town water needs. However, unregulated inflows will be used wherever possible to meet demand. As there is no general security allocation off-allocation access will be made available where possible with the lower threshold of five megalitres per day (ML/d) at any gauging station within the river section.

### ***Upper Namoi/Manilla River***

General security licensees have access to unregulated flows downstream of Split Rock Dam in accordance with the plan. That is, when flows exceed 100 ML/d at the Brabri gauge or 200 ML/d at the Manilla Railway Bridge gauge.

### ***Lower Namoi River***

Supplementary access remains suspended due to the need to meet Broken Hill's town water supply needs. Water remaining in general security accounts is unlikely to be delivered on demand until storage reserves improve. State Water will consider bulked orders to reduce delivery losses.

## **Water trading in 2007/08**

Water held in accounts may be traded under the normal rules of the plan. However, delivery is dependant on State Water's operational requirements.

## **Water availability outlook**

### ***Peel River***

The water level in Chaffey Dam will need to reach 50 per cent of capacity (an additional 2,600 ML) before an allocation for general security users can be considered. If the flow in the Peel River at Carroll Gap is in excess of 40 ML/d, then State Water may announce access to the unregulated flow as an off-allocation event. This event may continue in the relevant section of the river as long as there is a 5 ML/d flow at all gauging stations within the section. Irrigators must cease to pump when flow falls below 5 ML/d at any relevant gauging station.

### ***Upper Namoi/Manilla River***

An additional 7,200 ML is required in Split Rock Dam before an allocation for general security users can be made under the plan.

### ***Lower Namoi River***

The storage loss, essential supplies and delivery loss accounts have all been filled from inflows received in October and a small general security allocation (a half per cent) has been made. This is the first general security allocation since January 2006.

## **Groundwater**

It is recognised that surface water and groundwater are strongly linked in the Peel River and associated tributaries. River flows will at times contribute to the recharge of the groundwater, whilst at other times groundwater provides base flow to the river. The relationship between surface water and groundwater is considered when managing groundwater allocations.

Where the surface water allocation is zero, then the groundwater allocation is 25 per cent of entitlement. As the surface water allocation increases, the groundwater allocation increases proportionally to maintain an allocation of 25 per cent above the surface water allocation. For example, if the surface water allocation is 15 per cent, the groundwater allocation is 40 per cent.

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