



Annual Operations Plan

Barwon-Darling 19-20

Update – Feb 2020



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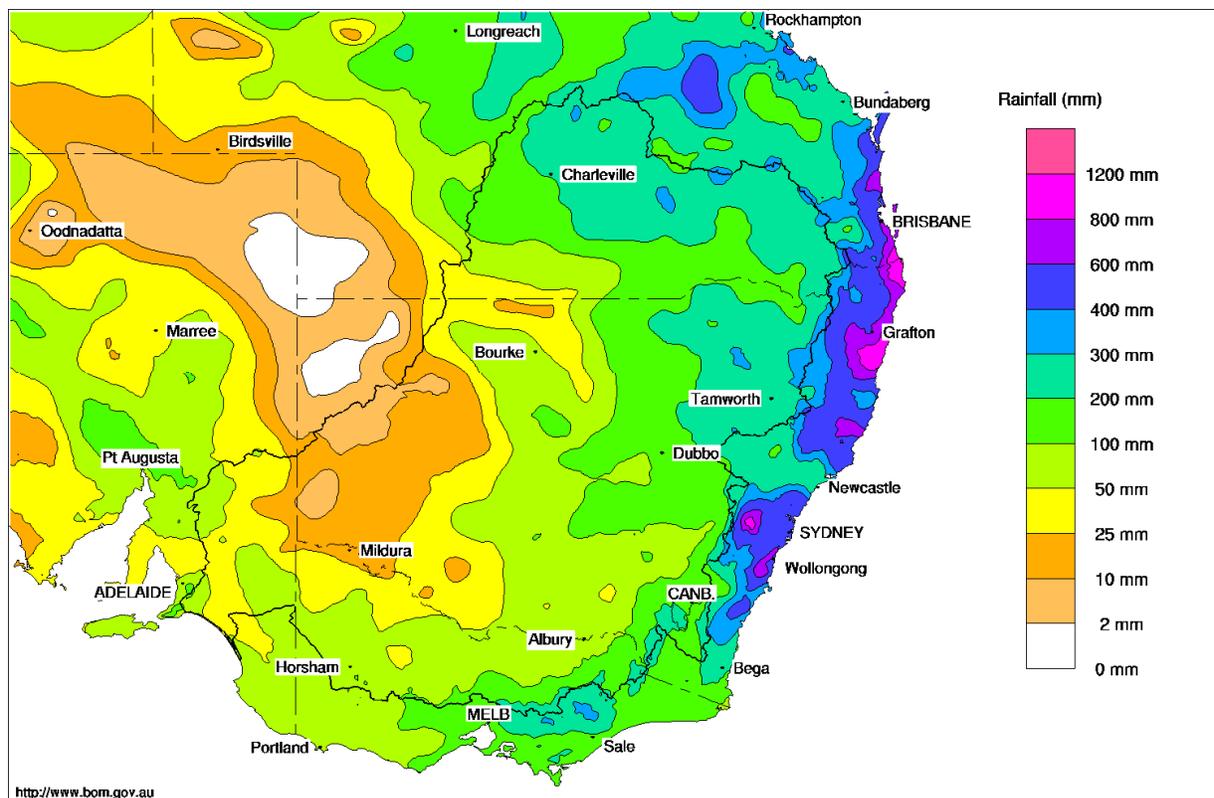
Highlights

- Significant rainfall across northern NSW and south east Queensland catchments in January and February
- The first flows in the Barwon-Darling from this rain event occurred at Mogil Mogil and Collarenebri in late January and early February
- The Barwon-Darling has received inflows from the Moonie, Border Rivers, Gwydir and the Namoi
- Flow in the Barwon-Darling reached Louth on 24 February
- Major flooding in the Condamine-Balonne in QLD will contribute to the Barwon-Darling system upstream of Warraweena in early March. Initial forecasts for inflow into the Barwon-Darling from the Condamine-Balonne are around 100 GL.
- The forecast for inflows into Menindee is now for 150,000ML to 170,000ML by late March.

Recent rainfall

The significant rainfall across northern NSW and south east Queensland throughout January and February included some heavy patches of localized falls.

Murray-Darling Rainfall Totals (mm) 1 January to 23 February 2020
Australian Bureau of Meteorology



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Flow forecasts

Water NSW has been providing regular updated flow forecasts for the current flow event. These updates are available at <https://www.watersw.com.au/supply/regional-nsw/operations-updates>

The Barwon-Darling system is an unregulated river system, which travels through a very arid environment with significant losses from the system due to high evaporation and long flow-travel times. It is very difficult to accurately forecast downstream flows as local conditions can vary significantly over the number of weeks it takes the water to travel along the river. In addition, sections of the river have ceased to flow for an extended time and significant losses will occur with wetting up the riverbed along these sections and refilling weir pools and natural holes in the river. The below summaries are the current forecast estimates of flows along the system and assume that the current Barwon-Darling temporary water restrictions remain in place. The forecast is current as of 26 February 2020.

Forecast as of 26 Feb 2020:

Location	Observed volume (ML)	Total forecast volume – including observed (ML)	Date or expected date of flow arrival	Comments about inflows to each section
Mungindi	31,551	40,000 – 50,000	15 Feb 2020	Inflows are from the Border Rivers
Presbury	26,209	35,000-45,000	5 Feb 2020	
Mogil Mogil	77,105	95,000-110,000	27 Jan 2020	Expected total inflows (observed and forecast) are 5-10 GL from Gil Gil and 30-35 GL from Moonie.
Collarenberi (total flow including Old Pockataroo anabranch)	114,416	135,000 – 155,000	6 Feb 2020	Expected total inflows (observed and forecast) are 15-20 GL from Mehi. Total observed flows at Garwon (Old Pockataroo) are 7.8 GL
Tara	129,731	160,000 – 180,000	7 Feb 2020	Gain from localised inflows
Walgett	169,086	220,000 –250,000	9 Feb 2020	Expected total inflows (observed and forecast) are 60-70 GL from Namoi at Goangra
Boorooma	112,813	190,000 – 220,000	13 Feb 2020	Flows likely out of bank
Geera	119,477	205,000 - 235,000	12 Feb 2020	A small volume may join from Mathaguy creek. Small Inflow from Castlereagh is considered
Brewarrina	87,345	200,000 – 230,000	16 Feb 2020	
Beemery	61,809	185,000 – 220,000	18 Feb 2020	Water going through Cato Creek anabranch may re-join.
Warraweena	59,286	275,000 – 305,000	19 Feb 2020	Flows reaching Barwon from St George are extremely variable, but we can expect at least 10-15% as a minimum of the flow from Balonne River at St George gauge will reach the Barwon. Around 100 GL inflow is considered from Culgoa as an initial forecast.
Bourke	47,027	260,000 - 290,000	20 Feb 2020	
Louth	6687	245,000 – 265,000	24 Feb 2020	
Tilpa	0	205,000 – 235,000	28 Feb - 5 Mar 2020	
Wilcannia	0	170,000– 200,000	8 - 20 Mar 2020	
Lake Wetherell	0	150,000 - 170,000	15-27 Mar 2020	

Current temporary water restrictions

As of 26 Feb 2020, a Section 324 Temporary Water Restriction Order applies to A, B and C class licences in Barwon-Darling. During January and February, numerous other temporary water restrictions were applied in the northern valleys. Further details and up-to date information can be found at

<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions>

The significant inflows into the Barwon-Darling mean that flow connectivity to the end of the system will be achieved and consideration will be given to progressively allowing some access in the Barwon-Darling.

Northern valley storage status

Most of the recent rainfall and inflows occurred downstream of the northern storages. Increases in the northern storage levels range from zero to close to 10%.

The table below summarizes the inflows and change in storage volumes since 1 Feb up to 20 Feb 2020.

SN	Valleys	Dam	Inflow (GL) 1-20 Feb	Storage Volume (ML) (active %) 20 Feb	Storage Level Rise (%) since 1 st Feb 2020	Likely Storage Level (%) with recession
1	Upper Namoi	Split Rock	10.7	17,421 (3.6%)	2.70%	3.80%
2	Lower Namoi	Keepit	31.9	42,595 (8.6%)	7.40%	9.70%
2	Gwydir	Copeton	38.3	149,801 (9.7%)	2.70%	10.20%
3	Border	Glenlyon	26.8	35,295(13.3%)	9.90%	
		Pindari	13.2	25,497 (8%)	4.2%	
4	Peel	Chaffey	1.2	16,660(14.2%)	0.5%	
5	Macquarie-Cudgegong	Burrendong	26	76,063 (3.7%)	2.1%	4.30%
		Windamere	0	97,960 (26.4%)	0%	

Three-month weather forecast

Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) indicates that the likelihood of a wetter or drier than average autumn (March to May) is roughly equal (45–55% chance) for much of Australia. Rainfall for the last week of February is likely to be below average across northwest Australia (greater than 70% chance) while some parts in the east are likely to have a wetter week. Major climate drivers, including the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) are currently neutral and are forecast to remain neutral through autumn. When these major climate drivers are neutral, widespread above or below average seasonal rainfall is less likely.

