

APRIL 2020

This newsletter is sent to General Managers and to Water and Sewer Managers in 89 regional Councils in NSW and also to 80 contacts in government departments and private industry across Australia.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S UPDATE

Welcome to our fourth edition of the newsletter for 2020. Issues we have been working through this month on behalf of our members include:

- Drought updates
- Mutual aid for local water utilities
- Water industry training
- Reform of water industry frameworks and regulations
- Our communications strategy
- Reviews of our Odour Management and STP Buffer Zone guidelines.

We will keep you up to date on progress in future editions.

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19

Councils no doubt are receiving numerous updates on a daily basis regarding the COVID-19 pandemic via a number of channels. We are summarising the information relevant to local water utilities on our blog: [Advice on managing impacts of COVID-19 for local water utilities in regional NSW.](#)

Some regional groups of Councils have commenced planning for mutual support arrangements to prepare for the potential need to isolate groups of engineers or operators.

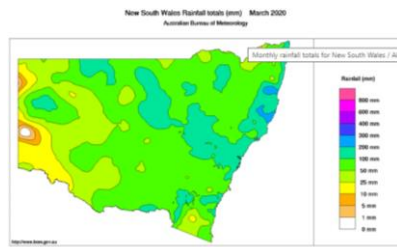
The Water Directorate receives daily updates from EUSFA, the

Energy and Utilities Services Functional area, and is working closely with DPIE and NSW Health to keep you up to date as an essential service.

Consultancies such as [Atom Consulting](#) and [Hunter H2O](#) can assist with business continuity planning for your LWU.

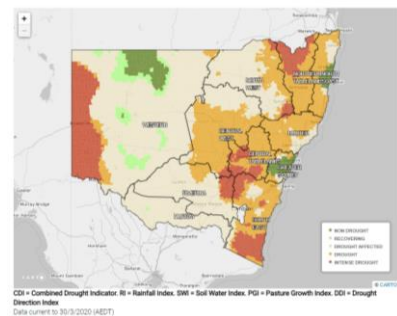
DROUGHT UPDATE

The number of towns with high risk of failure of water supply has reduced to 18 in April, as some more towns have received some good rainfall in March courtesy of ex-tropical cyclone Esther:



Source: <http://www.bom.gov.au/>

Despite the rainfall weakening the drought event, it is not over. DPIE in their February [NSW State Seasonal Update](#) showed 98.5% of NSW remained in one of three drought categories.



Source: <https://edis.dpi.nsw.gov.au/>

The proportion of the state in the Intense Drought category is falling, and the Drought Direction Index is tracking improving conditions in eastern NSW. The Bureau of Meteorology reports that root zone soil moisture has improved, although significant follow up rainfall is still needed for several months to address our water deficiency. The longer term prediction is for neutral (average) conditions in NSW. BOM's Climate and Water Outlook for April to June 2020, issued 26 March 2020 is available [here](#).

Emergency assistance commitments for towns including emergency infrastructure and water carting has amounted to \$210 million. Details be viewed in DPIE's [interactive map](#).

OUR BLOG IS ACTIVE

Did you know our [Blog](#) (short for weblog, our informational webpage) is available to update you on technical topics relevant to your water utility operations?

Recent posts include:

- [Bushfires and drinking water safety](#)
- [Watching water quality](#)
- [Advice on managing impacts of COVID-19 for LWU's in NSW](#)
- [Toilet paper panic - Stick to the 3P's](#)

Please don't hesitate to [email us](#) if there's a technical topic you'd like us to share.

CONSULTATION ON DRAFT WATER RESOURCE PLANS

Due to COVID-19 all engagement meetings with stakeholder advisory panels are now being held online:

- 1 April – Gwydir Water Resource Plan
- 2 April – Border Rivers Water Resource Plan
- 2 April – NSW Murray and Lower Darling Water Resource Plan
- 7 April – Lachlan Water Resource Plan
- 8 April – Macquarie Water Resource Plan



Stay up to date with upcoming consultation events [here](#).

NSW PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY ESTABLISHED

A parliamentary committee has been established to inquire into and report on the [Impact and implementation of the Water Management \(General\) Amendment \(Exemptions for Floodplain Harvesting\) Regulation 2020](#).

Submissions can be made via an [online questionnaire](#). In response to COVID-19 the inquiry timeline has been revised, with the questionnaire open until **31 May 2020**.

DRAFT EPA FINANCIAL ASSURANCE POLICY

The EPA invites you to have your

say on its [proposal to require financial assurances](#) to ensure those responsible for pollution pay the costs of remediation.

DAM SAFETY UPDATES

Dams Safety NSW are publishing guidelines to help declared dam owners comply with the requirements of the legislation and will be seeking feedback on the draft guidelines prior to publication. The [Dams Safety NSW website](#) lists the schedule for release of the guidelines. Two draft guidelines currently out for comment are the meaning of [So Far As Is Reasonably Practicable \(SFAIRP\) and Cost benefit analysis](#), closing **6 April 2020**. Comments to info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au, attention Peter Boyd, Manager Governance and Assurance.

It is important to note that if you do not have existing O&M plans or emergency plans – declared dam owners have until **1 May 2020** to establish these plans.

WELCOME TO NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Warm welcome to our Executive Committee to newly appointed representatives Gillian Marchant of Tenterfield Shire Council, Chris Best of Bega Valley Shire Council, Victor Papierniak of Cobar Shire Council. And welcome back to Brett Corven of Eurobodalla Shire Council.

CONSULTATION DRAFT AUSTRALIAN GUIDELINES FOR WATER RECYCLING

A consultation draft of the *Australian Guidelines for Water Recycling: Managing Health and Environmental Risks (Phase 1)* has been issued incorporating proposed revisions to public health components of the

guidelines. You can obtain a copy by [emailing me](#). Consultation has been extended to **30 April 2020**.

IN THE NEWS

- [After years of drought, water reaches parched Menindee](#)
- [Coronavirus: 10 workplace impacts you might not have considered](#)
- [Feb 2020 update: Emergency drought works for Tamworth](#)
- [Paper panic hits sewers](#)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

A number of conferences have now been postponed or cancelled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly between now and the end of June. Some may be reconvened as virtual events or rescheduled to later in the year. We will keep you informed.

- **Ozwater '20**
Adelaide, 5-7 May – cancelled. AWA are considering a 'Digital Ozwater' using content already prepared.
- **Qldwater Small/remote communities workshop**, Goondiwindi, 13-14 May – cancelled.
- **LGNSW Water Management Conference 2020**, Narrabri, 15-17 July – under review.
- **AWA NSW State Conference**, Tamworth, 13-14 August – may proceed as planned.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

- Thursday 21 May
- Thursday 9 July
- Thursday 10 September
- Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November

Brendan Guiney
Executive Officer

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