Bundaberg Water Supply Scheme Customer Update

Fact Sheet: Managing storage levels during the Paradise Dam Improvement Project and implications for 2023/24 MP AA

March 2023

- Storage level management of Paradise Dam will be required commencing March 2023
- This will not impact announced allocations (AAs) in this water year
- Burnett River sub-scheme customers may experience a reduced medium priority (MP) AA of approximately 65-88 per cent from 1 July 2023 when the new water year commences.
- Sunwater will ensure customers have clarity on AA impacts going into the new water year.
- Releases that can't be stored in downstream storages will be made available as out-of-allocation (OOA) water
- OOA water will only be available to Sunwater's Burnett River sub-scheme customers.
- AAs may increase throughout the water year based on usage data (and once inflows can be stored and further releases aren't required).
- Sunwater has no current plans to sell new permanent water in the Burnett River sub-scheme.

Sunwater is holding customer drop-in sessions at our office at 34 Enterprise Street, Bundaberg to answer your questions:

- Tuesday 14 March 3.00-4.30pm
- Wednesday 15 March 7.00-8.30am

Register to attend by calling 3120 0270 or emailing paradise.dam@sunwater.com.au.

The Paradise Dam Improvement Project (PDIP) will see the dam returned to its original height, as part of significant safety improvement works. This customer update shares information about how the storage level of Paradise Dam will need to be managed during the project. It addresses these questions:

- Why and when will the storage level need to be lowered?
- How will Sunwater plan the works to minimise customer impacts?
- Who can access OOA water?
- When are water permits required and how are they obtained?
- What impact will water releases have on announced allocations?
- Where will information about upcoming water releases be available?
- Is Sunwater currently planning on selling permanent water from the scheme?

Background

Paradise Dam's storage level needs to be lowered to allow for safe and efficient work on the dam, both for the dam improvement project, and for the outlet works. The outlet works are critical to ensure the dam can be safely operated and the level safely managed throughout the PDIP.

Multiple release periods will be required in the lead up to and during the PDIP works.

Sunwater can operate Paradise Dam at a reduced level in accordance with Section 399B of the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*.

Sunwater will plan and schedule works to minimise customer impacts, where possible.

Why does the storage level need to be managed during work?

Working on an operating dam presents safety risks to workers, the dam and equipment. To ensure those risks can be managed to an acceptable level, and that work can proceed in a timely way, the storage level needs to be lowered. The extent of lowering depends on the specific work activities and the storage level at the time.

A number of work packages requiring a reduced storage level need to be undertaken before the main dam improvement works can commence. These include:

- irrigation discharge valve replacement
- fishway repairs
- guard gate hydraulic ram refurbishment
- conduit inspections and
- guard gate and rail replacement.

When will the storage level be reduced?

Sunwater is progressing design and procurement activities and planning to commence the first phase of outlet work in April 2023. Sunwater will aim to complete that phase of work before the start of the next wet season, in late 2023 (weather permitting).

This work will require releases to commence in late March 2023, although the timing of releases will be subject to weather conditions.

The duration of releases will depend on the storage level at the commencement of each event and any subsequent inflows.

Once storage level management commences, inflows will lead to further releases.

How will Sunwater plan the works to minimise customer impacts?

Sunwater has scheduled the outlet works to avoid the typical wet season period and will manage downstream storages, Ned Churchward Weir and Ben Anderson Barrage to maximise capturing released water, where possible.

When storage level management is required and the volume released from Paradise Dam is greater than the volume that can be stored in the two downstream storages, an OOA event will be triggered, and water made available to Burnett River sub-scheme customers at no cost for a period defined by Sunwater.

The rate of release will vary depending on constraints including storage levels in the sub-scheme, inflows and work schedules.

A summary of OOA event information will be made available on this webpage.

Only Burnett River sub-scheme customers can access OOA water

OOA water will be made available at no cost to Sunwater's Burnett River sub-scheme customers and access to this water will have no impact on customers' existing allocation balances. The take up of OOA water is limited to offtake design flow rates.

This webpage explains the OOA process and customer requirements to participate. Depending on your situation you may also require a water permit from the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW).

This process is similar to the one used in 2019 and 2020 for storage management during the Paradise Dam Essential Works but has been streamlined and automated as it will be in place across the life of PDIP.

When are water permits required and how are they obtained?

Burnett River sub-scheme customers who wish to access OOA water from a meter on the Burnett River will need a permit from DRDMW.

Sunwater customers on the Don Beattie (Isis) or Woongarra channel will not require a permit.

Water permits are managed by DRDMW. Water permits can be applied for by completing the DRDMW 'Application for permit to take water (W2F007)' form available here. A guide to completing the application is available here.

DRDMW will begin issuing permits from mid-March 2023. Issued permits will be valid until 30 June 2025. Questions about the permit process can be directed to DRDMW on 1800 135 531.

What impact will water releases have on announced allocations?

Storage level management will not impact AAs in the Burnett River sub-scheme in the current 2022-23 water year.

Storage level management will impact AAs in the Burnett River sub-scheme in the water year commencing 1 July 2023.

Initial calculations indicate that the impact could result in a MP AA in the Burnett River sub-scheme of 65-88 per cent from 1 July 2023, compared to >90 per cent if storage level management was not required.

There will be no impact on high priority (HP) allocations in the Burnett River sub-scheme or HP or MP in the Kolan sub-scheme in this or the next water year due to storage level management.

Carryover will be assessed on 1 July 2023 if Paradise Dam is not spilling.

The impact on AAs in subsequent water years can only be assessed approximately six months prior to the start of a new water year, based on a range of potential inflows informed by historical records.

Where will information about upcoming water releases be available?

Sunwater will communicate OOA event details via customer SMS and email and on this webpage.

Is Sunwater currently planning on selling permanent water from the Burnett River sub-scheme?

Sunwater engaged with customers in 2022 about options to make additional water for sale during the PDIP. Feedback indicated that while there is interest in purchasing water in the future, customers do not want to risk undermining security of current allocations.

Sunwater has no current plans to sell new permanent water from the Burnett River sub-scheme and will continue to engage with customers as the PDIP is implemented.

Contact us

If you have questions or feedback, please attend the drop-in session (details on page one) or contact Sunwater using these details:

Paradise Dam Improvement Project Team

Phone 3120 0270
Email paradise.dam@sunwater.com.au

Customer Support

Phone 13 15 89 or live chat via sunwater.com.au, Monday - Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm.