

**7 April 2021**

## **Low Supply Alert declared as capacity at Awoonga Dam continues to fall**

Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) has declared its first Low Supply Alert since 2007, following prolonged drought conditions that have seen capacity at Lake Awoonga decline significantly since 2019.

The notification comes after three successive wet seasons (2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21) failed to deliver significant inflows into the Lake Awoonga Catchment area.

Under GAWB's Drought Management Plan (DMP), a Low Supply Alert is declared when modelling indicates there is five years (or 60 months) reliable water supply remaining in Awoonga Dam.

GAWB Chief Executive Officer Darren Barlow said the declaration provides an opportunity for increased customer engagement regarding water security in Central Queensland.

"A Low Supply Alert is not a Supply Restriction; but it is a significant step signalling to all stakeholders that voluntary reductions in water consumption behaviour should occur, where possible, to assist in reducing the likelihood of future restrictions being imposed," Mr Barlow said.

"We're asking the community and our customers to view this as an opportunity to act early, adopt proactive reduction strategies and raise awareness of water security in the Gladstone region.

"GAWB is well prepared to manage and respond to various water supply and demand scenarios as they occur. Our drought management plan aims to balance a multitude of factors such as customer demand, public health, economic impact and environmental management.

"When it comes to high-quality water supply the Gladstone region expects a high degree of reliability and dependability and that is what GAWB will continue to provide," Mr Barlow said.

Mr Barlow said the summer wet season is usually the time when Awoonga Dam receives its most significant inflows for the year.

“Generally speaking, December to March is when our most significant inflows occur. We were hoping for a successful wet season, but unfortunately that hasn’t eventuated this year.”

While GAWB operates on five levels of possible supply restrictions, Mr Barlow stressed that it may be more than a year before any formal restrictions would need to be adopted.

“The Low Supply Alert will remain in place until more stringent level one supply restrictions are deemed necessary or, alternatively, when significant inflows are received and it can be removed.

“As the region’s sole bulk water provider, we take a long term view on this issue, which is why we must prepare ourselves now.”

GAWB will also launch a public education campaign to boost the local community’s knowledge of water security in the Gladstone region.

**-ENDS-**

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