

MERSEY RIVER CATCHMENT REPORT 2019/20

The Mersey River catchment

(below Lake Parangana)* is located in the central north of Tasmania and flows north approximately 92km to Bass Strait. The plan area catchment covers a total area of 989 km².

The upper part of the plan area exhibits typical characteristics of a regulated system with reduced flows, however due to large inflows from downstream tributaries, flow resumes a more natural pattern by the time it reaches Devondort.

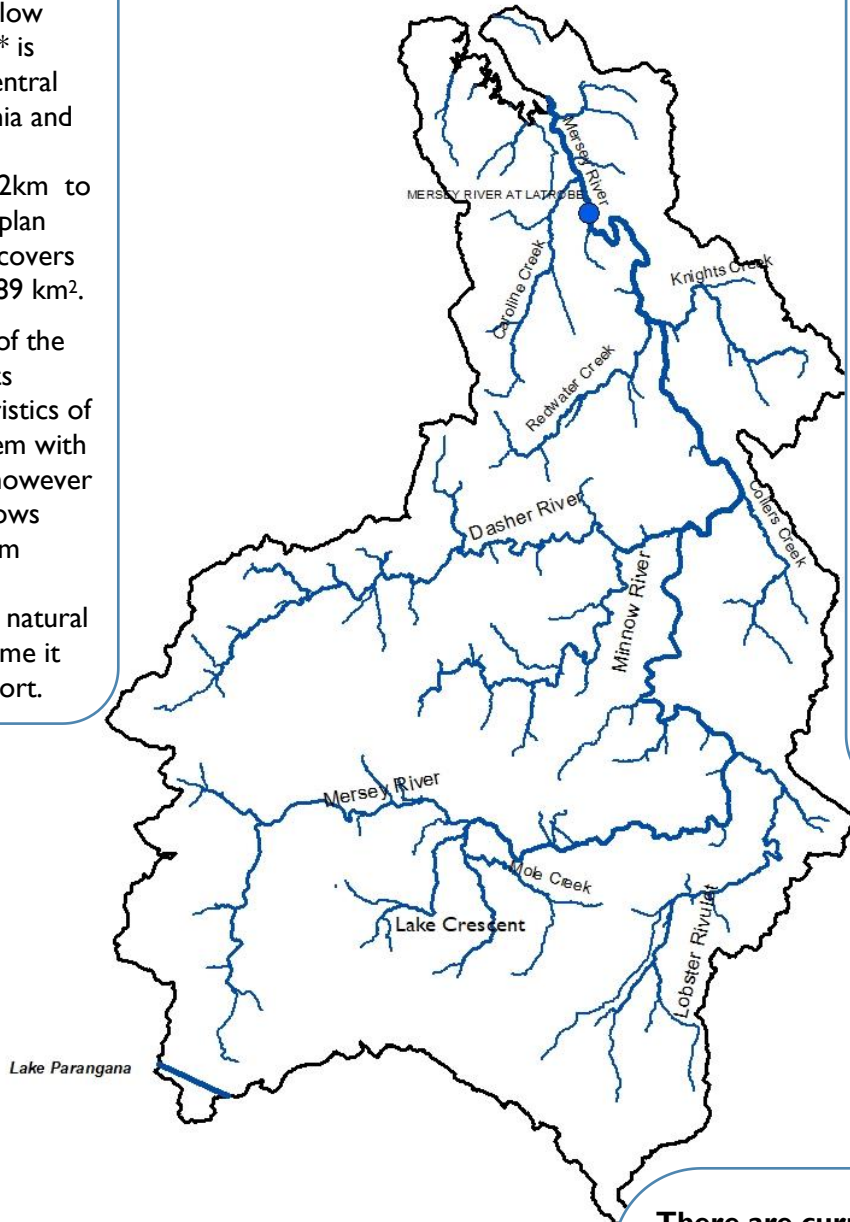
The Mersey River Catchment Water Management Plan

took effect in August 2005. The Plan is a legal document prepared in accordance with the *Water Management Act 1999*.

The Plan applies to the Mersey River catchment **below** Lake Parangana.

The Plan sets out monthly cease to take thresholds, measured at DPIPWE's stream flow gauging station: Mersey River at Shale Road (near Latrobe).

For full details of the current Water Plan and the revised thresholds go to the DPIPWE Water website.



*The Mersey-Forth power development diverts the majority of the water from the upper reaches of the Mersey from Lake Parangana to the Forth River.

There are currently 474 water allocations across Surety's 1-7 in the Mersey catchment with a combined volume of 67,365 ML/year including 31,055 ML/year above Parangana which is mostly *non-consumptive* allocation.

CONSUMPTIVE WATER ALLOCATION*

Surety Level	Summer Vol.(ML)	Winter Vol. (ML)	Overall Vol. (ML)
S 5	14667	17685	32352
S 6	2538	1303	3841
Total	17205	18994	36199

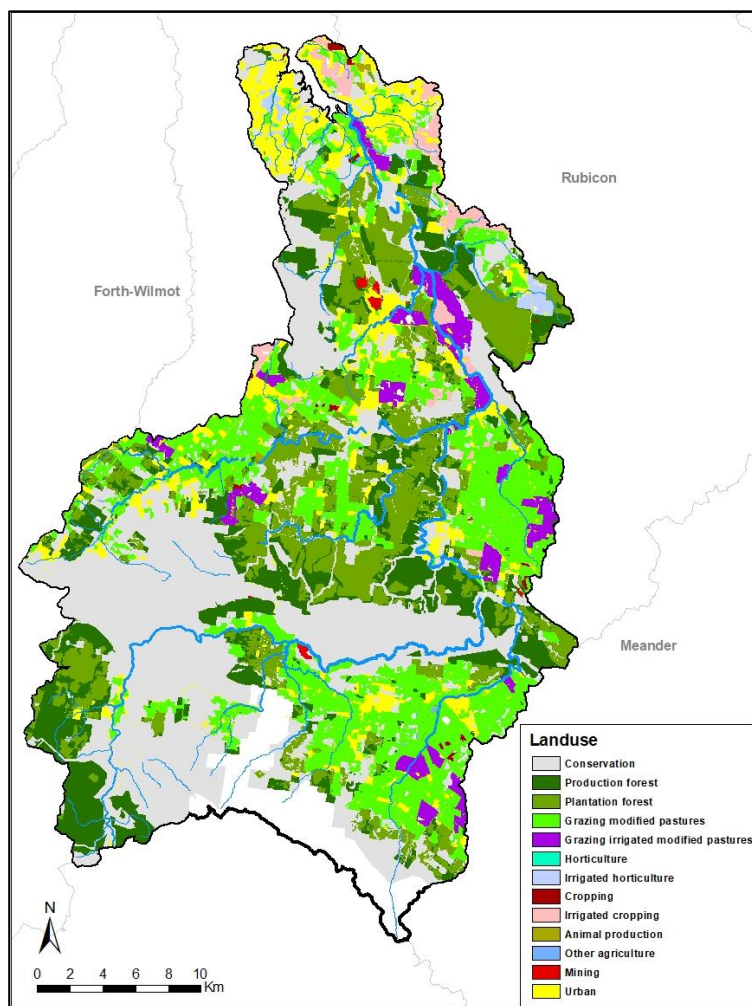
*below Parangana, Summer is Nov-April inclusive

CATCHMENT LAND USE

Roughly 30% of the catchment is under production native forests and plantation forestry. A further 26% is used for agricultural purposes with the remaining area supporting a diversity of land uses including mining, and conservation land. The catchment includes the townships of Mole Creek, Sheffield, Railton and Latrobe, and flows to Bass Strait at Devonport.

RIVER HEALTH

DPIPWE has four long-term river health monitoring sites in the catchment. These sites are on the Mersey River at Shale Road (lower reach), Kellys Bridge, Olivers Road, and the Don River at Sheffield Road (all mid reach). Monitoring at these sites and other sites in the catchment in recent years (2015-2018) indicates that the upper Mersey River (upstream of Lake Rowallan) is in excellent condition, whereas the mid and lower reaches of the river are in poor to good condition. The mid reaches of the Don River are in poor to moderate condition. The condition of some mid-reach sites in the Mersey River have declined since monitoring began in 1994.



HYDROLOGY SUMMARY

The following pages show plots of long term streamflow (full period of available record), short term flow and rainfall (last 5 water years), and last years flow, rainfall and restriction data, split into winter (May 2019 – November 2019) and summer (December 2019 – April 2020) seasons.



For further information contact your local Regional Water Management Officer at the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment:
Phone: 1300 368 550
Email: Water.Operations@dpipwe.tas.gov.au
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Full flow record, 1962 - 2020

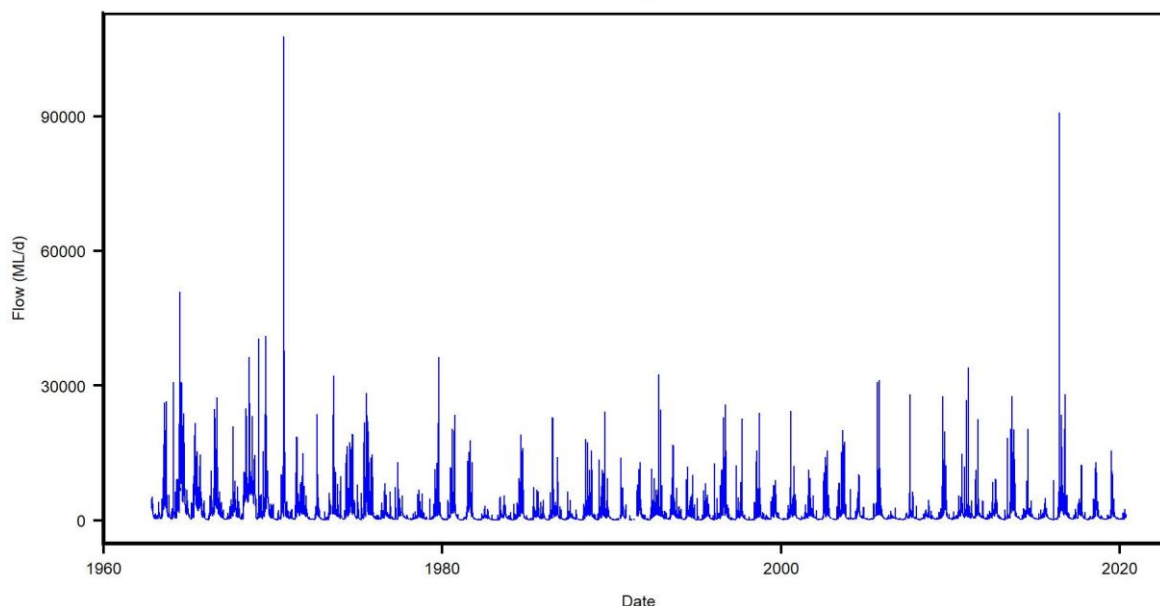


Figure 1. Mean daily flow at the Mersey River at Shale Road (Latrobe) streamflow gauging station, whole of record.

Full record of yields in water years 1962 - 2019

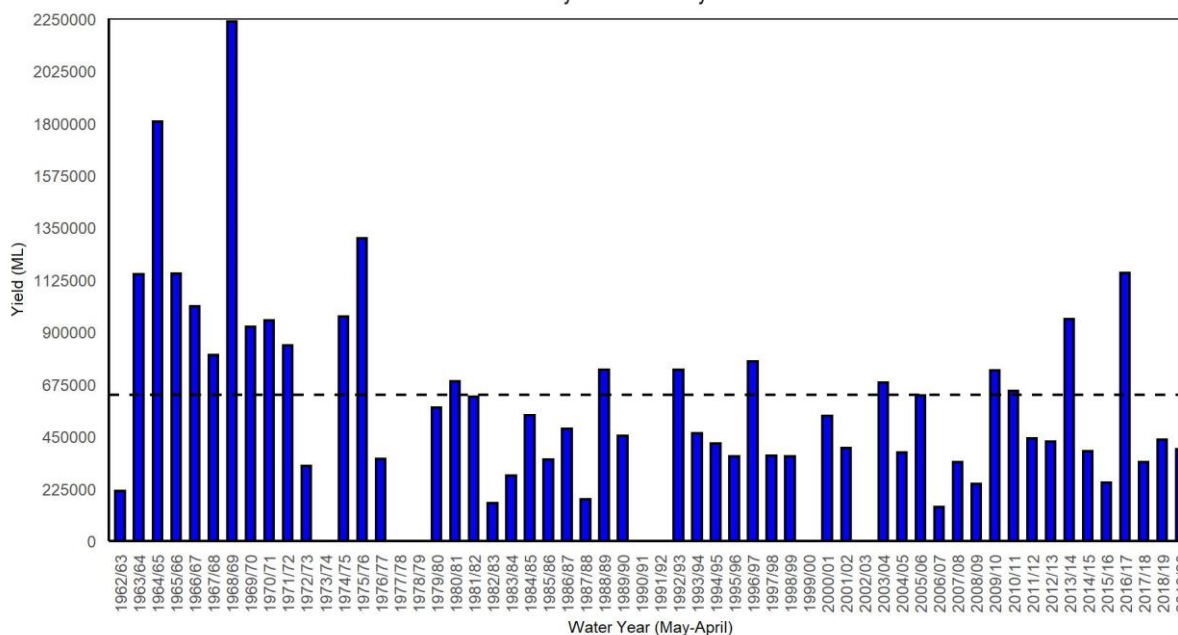


Figure 2. Yields in the Mersey River at Shale Road (Latrobe) streamflow gauging station. Water years with <95% of the daily flow record available are excluded. The long-term mean yield is shown as the dashed horizontal black line (637 500 ML).

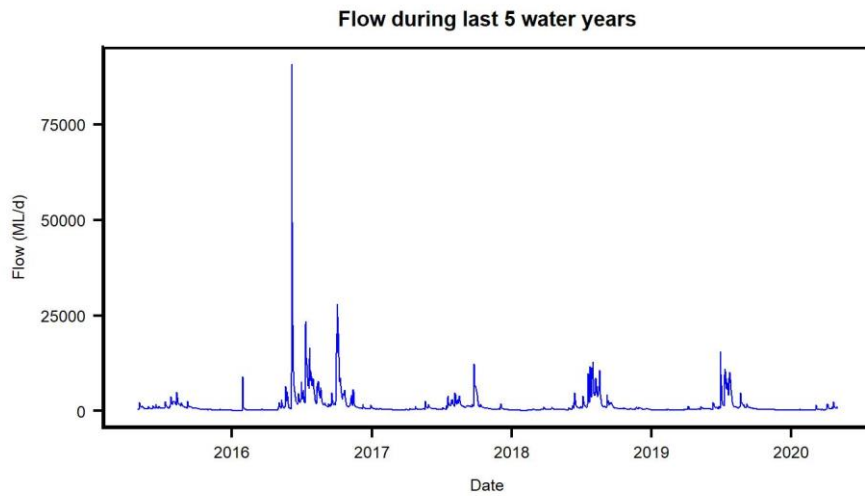


Figure 3. Mean daily flow in the Mersey River at Shale Road (Latrobe) streamflow gauging station for the last five years.

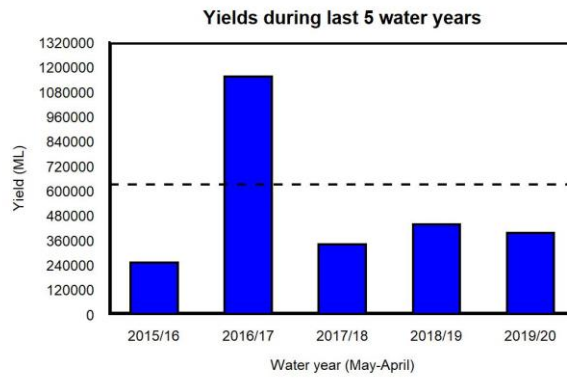


Figure 4. Yields in the Mersey River at Shale Road (Latrobe) streamflow gauging station for the last five years. The long-term mean yield is shown as the dashed horizontal black line (637 500 ML).

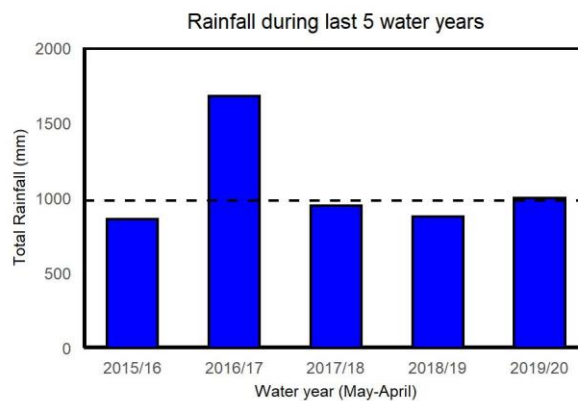


Figure 5. Total rainfall at the Sheffield School Farm BoM weather station during the last five water years. The long-term mean total rainfall (981 mm) is shown as the black horizontal dashed line.

Rainfall, low flows and restriction periods during winter 2019/2020

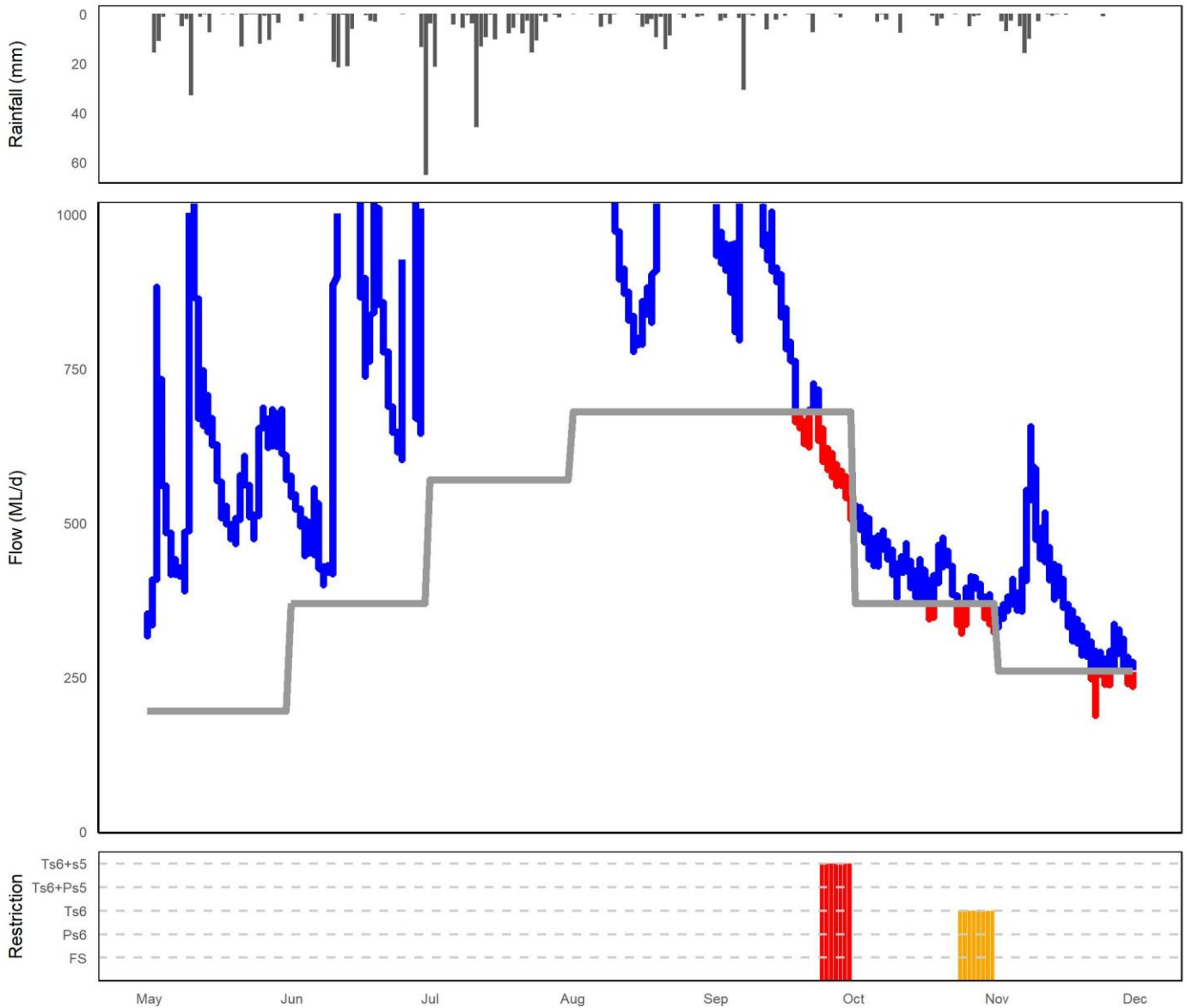


Figure 6. Summary of rainfall, low flows and restrictions in the Mersey River catchment during winter (May-November) 2019.

Top plot: daily rainfall (Sheffield School Farm BoM site).

Middle plot: instantaneous flow (<1000 ML) Mersey River at Shale Road (Latrobe) station (compliance flow site).

Bottom plot: days when restrictions were in place.

NOTE: Refer to the last page for a 'legend' and description on how to interpret these plots

Table 1. Restriction levels and total days at each level for the winter period (214 days: May - November 2019).

Restriction Type	Days at restriction level in 2018/19	Days at restriction level in 2019/20
Partial Surety 6	0	8
Total Surety 6	0	0
Total Surety 6 + Total Surety 5	0	7

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Rainfall, low flows and restriction periods during summer 2019/2020

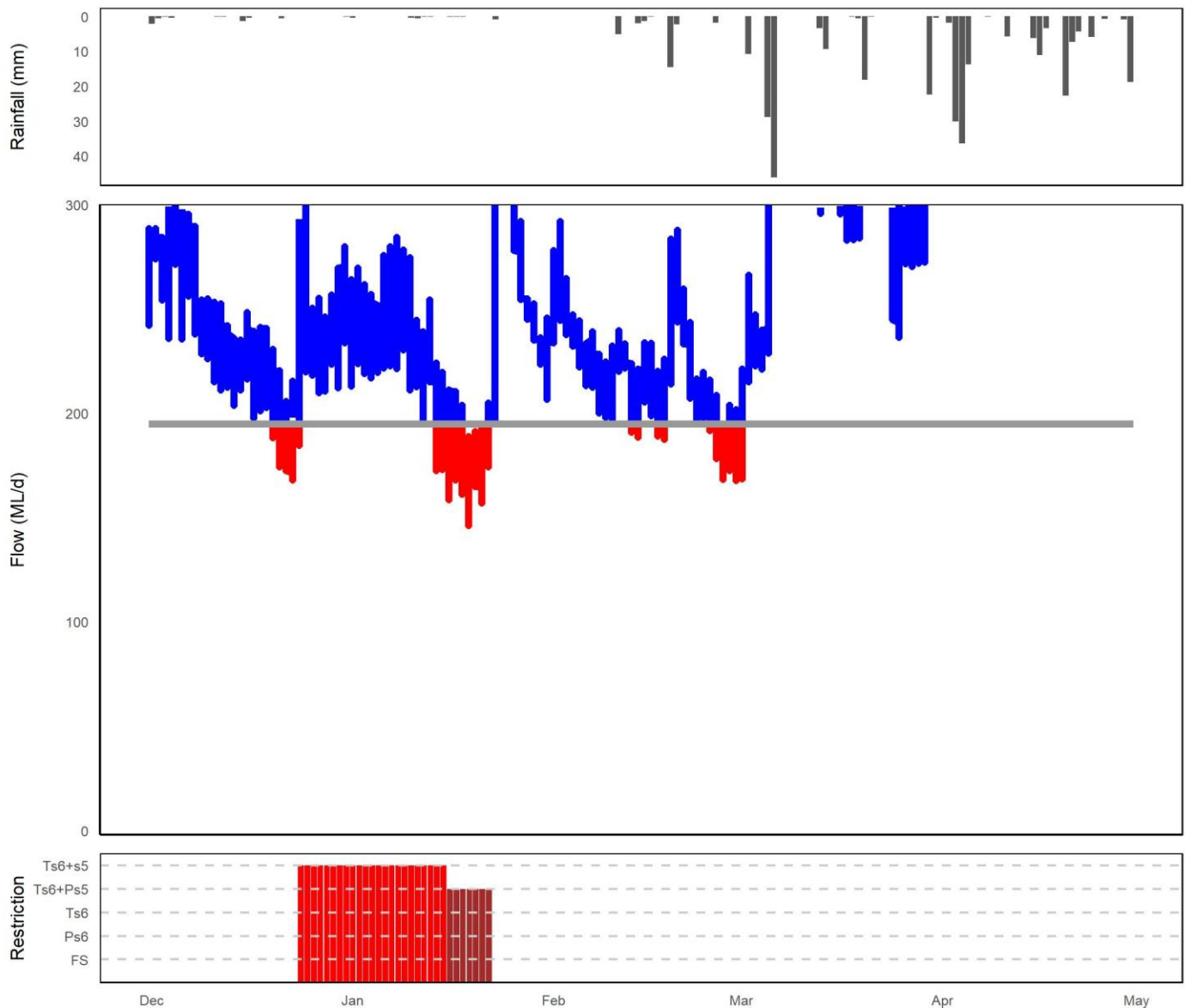


Figure 7. Summary of rainfall, low flows and restrictions in the Mersey River catchment during summer 2019/20 (Dec-April).

Top plot: daily rainfall (Sheffield School Farm BoM site).

Middle plot: instantaneous flow (<300 ML) Mersey River at Shale Road (Latrobe) station (compliance flow site).

Bottom plot: days when restrictions were in place.

NOTE: Refer to the last page for a 'legend' and description on how to interpret these plots

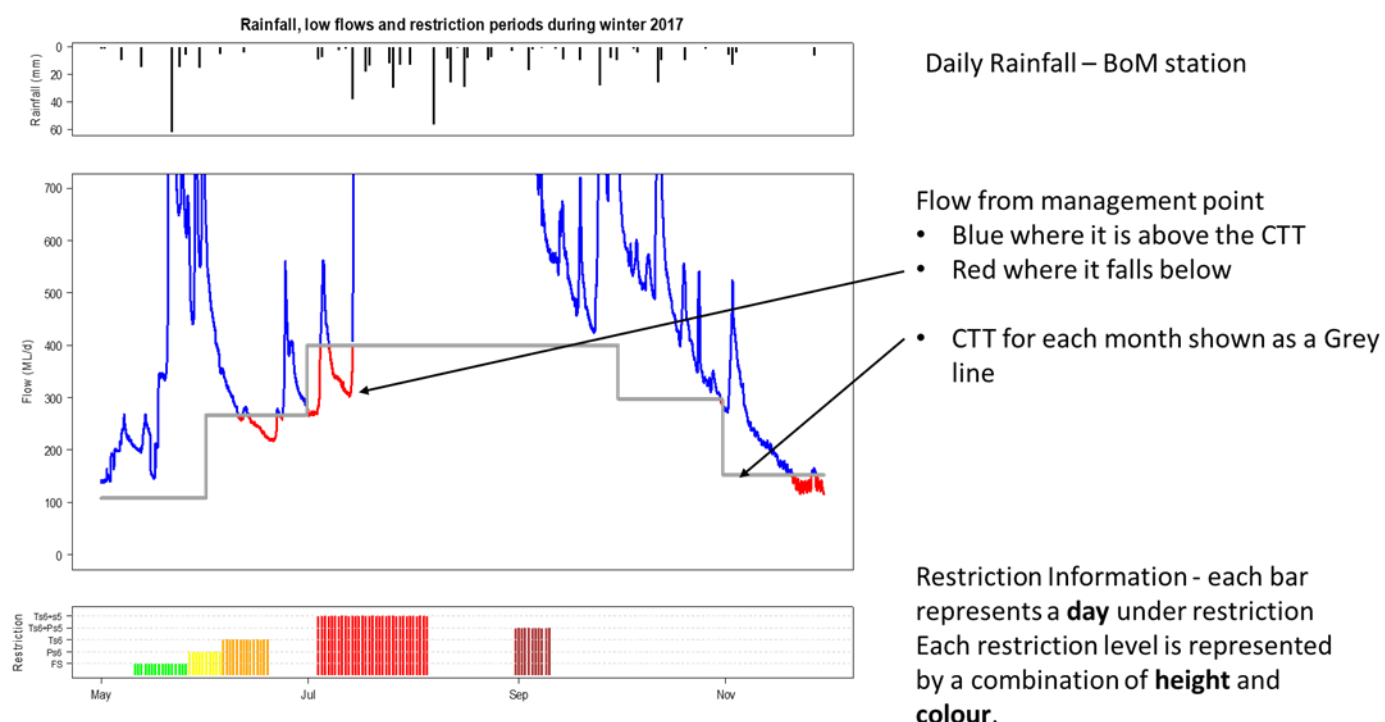
Table 2 Restriction levels and total days at each level for the summer period (151 days: Dec 2019 – April 2020).

Restriction Type	Days at restriction level in 2018/19	Days at restriction level in 2019/20
Partial Surety 6	18	0
Total Surety 6	7	7
Total Surety 6 + Total Surety 5	0	23

EXAMPLE ONLY

Rainfall, flow and restriction plot legend

NOTE: This is a hypothetical example to assist in interpreting the plots in the main body of this document.



Flow Restriction definitions:

FS = flow sharing (only some catchments), shown in GREEN

Ps6 = partial surety 6 ban, shown in YELLOW

Ts6 = total surety 6 ban, shown in ORANGE

Ts6+Ps5 = total surety 6 and partial surety 5 ban, shown in BROWN

Ts6+s5 = total surety 5 and 6 ban, shown in RED

EXAMPLE ONLY

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