

Greater Sydney drought update

19 March 2019



Key customer messages

As of 17 March, Sydney's dam levels are at 56.8%, a decrease of 0.3% since last Sunday.

The dam levels fell 0.4% then recovered 0.1% due to catchment rainfall on the weekend.

WaterNSW expects further minor increases in storage levels over the next few days.

The rainfall is not having an impact on water quality.

The 60% drought trigger was reached on 27 January 2019.

Drought conditions remain throughout the Sydney catchments. Inflows remain low after below average rainfall through February and the first half of March.

WaterNSW continues to work closely with Sydney Water and other stakeholders to manage water quality risks associated with low storage levels and transfer of water from the Shoalhaven.

Oberon Council is the only LWU in the Greater Sydney area of operations with restrictions in place.

More details are outlined below.

Inflows to WaterNSW storages

Moderate rainfall was recorded over the catchment areas on the weekend. Storage inflows remain at low levels.

Supply

Wet weather has resulted in a decrease in the volume supplied to Sydney Water this week, with average daily supply decreasing 142 ML/d (to 1,571 ML/d from the previous weekly average of 1,713 ML/d).

Water Storages

WaterNSW storages in the Sydney catchment decreased by 0.3% (-6,951 ML) in the past week.

Shoalhaven pumping

During the last week, no transfers were made from Shoalhaven due to the unavailability of water in Tallowa dam. More than 33 GL has been transferred since reaching the trigger to commence transfers in April 2018.

Transfers from the Shoalhaven to the Upper Nepean System have now ceased as per standard protocol due to lack of available storage in Wingecarribee Dam. Transfers to date have resulted in a steady rise in Nepean Dam, providing much needed relief to the Upper Nepean system which supplies Nepean, Avon and Macarthur WFPs (a population of over 500,000) as well as supplementing supply to Prospect WFP via the Upper Canal when sufficient storage is available.

Transfers from Nepean to Avon via the newly recommissioned Nepean Deep Water Pumping Station were completed in February with the two storages now in balance as per system operating rules. The transfer has allowed WaterNSW to both maximise supply security to the Illawarra and minimise the risk of spill at Nepean. Future Shoalhaven Transfers may necessitate further Nepean / Avon Transfers.

WaterNSW is working closely with Sydney Water to manage anticipated changes to water quality as a result of transfers from the Shoalhaven. The Shoalhaven Scheme will be offline from 18 March for the first of several major system outages to facilitate essential maintenance works by both Origin Energy and WaterNSW. No transfers will be possible during the first outage.

Some of the outages scheduled will only result in a reduced transfer rate. Origin has rescheduled outages into smaller blocks to facilitate transfers if water is available. WaterNSW continues to work closely with Origin Energy to minimise the impact of planned works on system availability and assesses the risks to drought response against the asset reliability risks associated with not going ahead with the works.

This week's weather forecast

The forecast is for 20mm to 50mm rain early in the week. Temperatures in the west are forecast to reach high 20's to low 30's. This is expected to result in decreased supply to Sydney Water early in the week and increased supply late in the week.

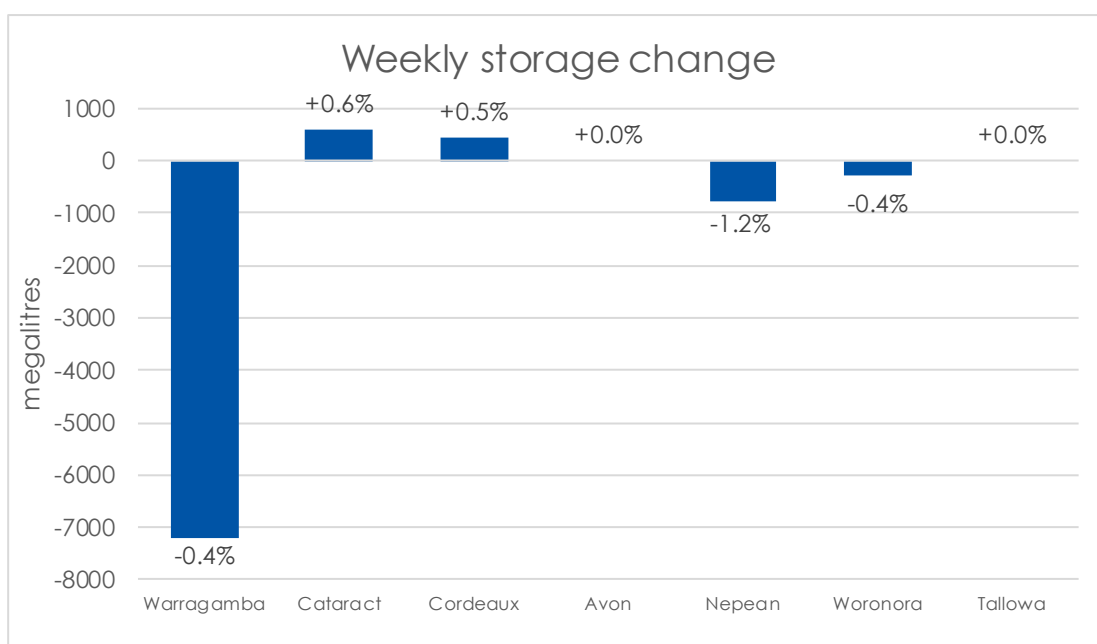
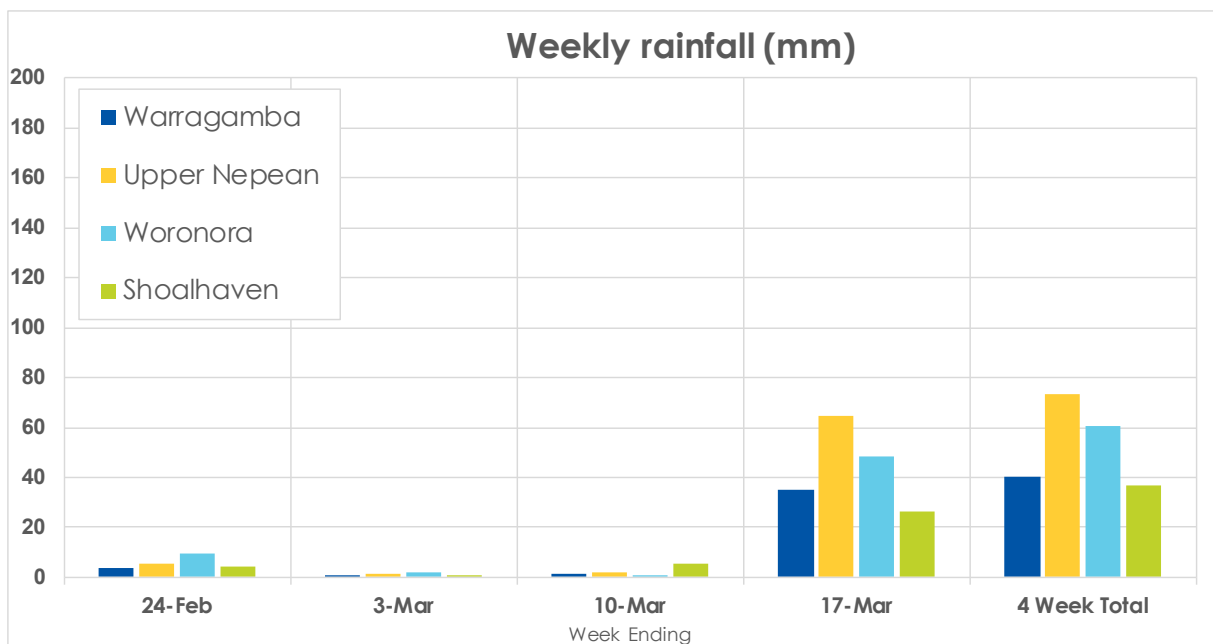
Details

Storage situation

Sydney's dam levels are at 56.8%, a decrease of 0.3% since last Sunday.

Rainfall

Rainfall over the last 4 weeks:



Water supplied to Sydney Water

Total water supply (7 days)	Average daily supply (7 days)	Net weekly storage change
10,994 ML	1,571 ML	- 6,951 ML

More information

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