

Greater Sydney drought update

30 April 2019



Key messages

- As of 28 April, Sydney's dam levels are at 55.4%, a decrease of 0.5% since last week.
- Drought conditions remain throughout the Sydney catchments. Storage inflows remain low as the catchments received near zero rainfall.
- Last month recorded one of the lowest April rainfall totals over the last 16 years. Rainfall over the Warragamba Catchment in April was the 5th driest since commencement of the millennium drought in the early 2000's.
- 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.
- WaterNSW is working with Sydney Water to make preparation to utilise Duckmaloi Weir to supplement supply to the Blue Mountains system when enough flow is available. Use of the Duckmaloi water source is outlined in the Water Management Licence and is key to providing security of supply to the Blue Mountains, Oberon Council, Lithgow City Council and Energy Australia. Given Duckmaloi is essentially a run of river system the variable water quality will need to be carefully managed to ensure there are no risks to either water supply or energy generation.
- 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

A negligible amount of rainfall was recorded in parts of greater Sydney catchments over the week. Storage inflows remain at low levels.

Supply

Ongoing mild temperatures have resulted in little change to the volume supplied to Sydney Water this week. Average daily supply increased by 32 ML/d (to 1,437 ML/d from the previous weekly average of 1,405 ML/d).

WaterNSW storages

WaterNSW storages in the Sydney catchment decreased by 0.5% (-11,002 ML) in the past week.

Shoalhaven pumping

More than 33 GL has been transferred since reaching the trigger to commence transfers in April 2018. No transfers have been made from the Shoalhaven since 18th March due to the first of several system outages scheduled to facilitate major maintenance works by both Origin Energy and WaterNSW. The outage is to address both statutory requirements and key process safety issues. Minor inflows over recent weeks have seen Tallowa reach full capacity. As a result, WaterNSW has a near full storage of over 6GL to transfer once the system is back online in May.

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. Sydney Water are progressing with short term treatment plant upgrades at Nepean WFP to reduced risks during the current drought. Longer term upgrades are also being planned to ensure the WFP has the capability to meet increasing demand.

The Shoalhaven Scheme is offline until 3 May 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 this outage period. Further outages are planned during 2019. 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 assess 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 indicates a low chance of showers with less than 15mm expected over the catchment areas this week. Temperatures in the west are forecast to range between low 13-20 degrees over this week. This is expected to result in average supply levels to Sydney Water next week.

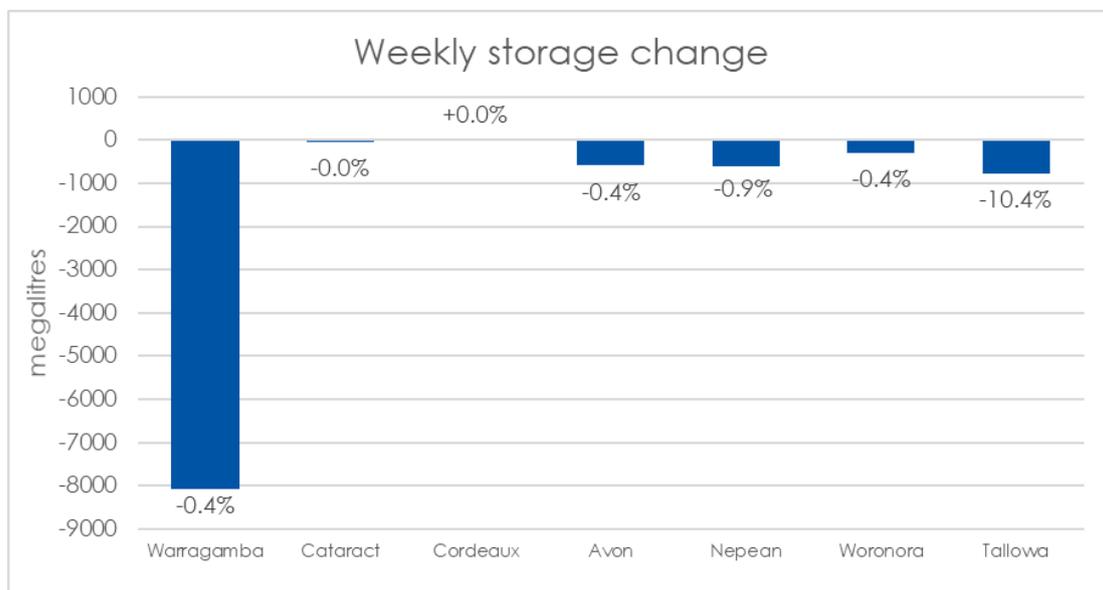
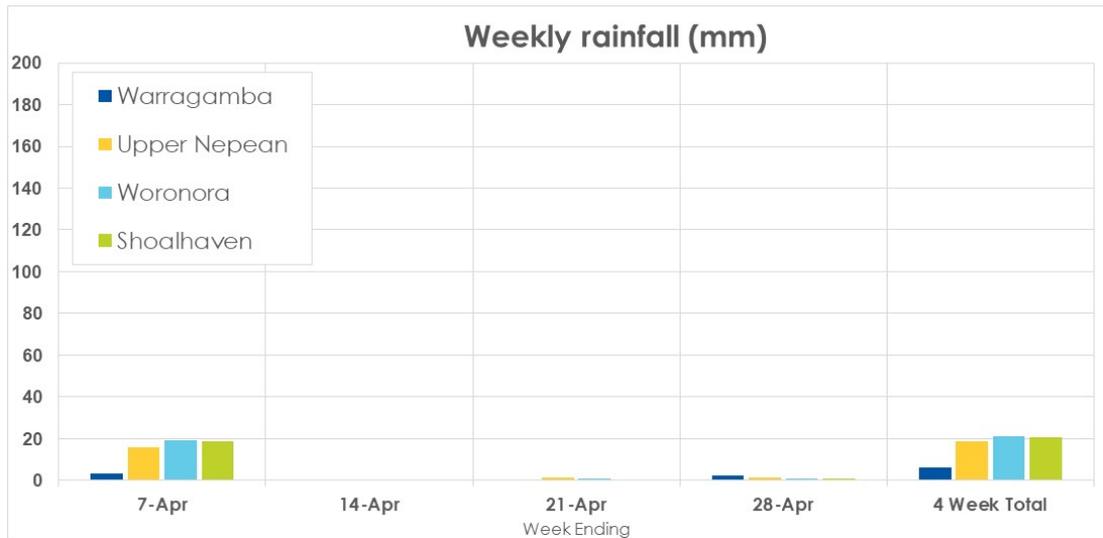
Details

Storage situation

Sydney's dam levels are at 55.4%, a decrease of 0.5% since last week.

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
10,056 ML	1,437 ML	-11,002ML

More information

Are you receiving our publications? Stay up-to-date with storage levels, system risks and climate conditions across NSW. You can also find valley-specific information about storage status, predicted release patterns and operating conditions.

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