

Greater Sydney drought update

21 May 2019



Key messages

- As of 19 May, Sydney's dam levels are at 54.1%, a decrease of 0.4% 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 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.
- The planned outage of the Shoalhaven Scheme has been extended. Origin Energy and WaterNSW are investigating options to minimise the impact of the outage extension. The scheme is critical to the business needs of Origin Energy as well as for the Greater Sydney drought response and as such Origin Energy are doing all they can to return the station to service. WaterNSW has approximately 4GL of storage available in Tallowa to pump. At present there is minimal risk of lost transfer opportunity. Tallowa Dam is currently 0.36m below FSL, inflows remain within the transparent environmental flow range and there is no significant rain in the BoM forecast

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 decreased by 6 ML/d (to 1,419 ML/d from the previous weekly average of 1,425 ML/d).

WaterNSW storages

WaterNSW storages in the Sydney catchment decreased by 0.4% (-11,554 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.

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.

Transfers to date have resulted in improved supply security for 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.

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.

This week's weather forecast

The forecast indicates a low chance of showers with less than 2 mm expected over the catchment areas this week. Temperatures in the west are forecast to reach a minimum of 9 degrees and a maximum of 27 degrees across next week. This is expected to result in average supply levels to Sydney Water.

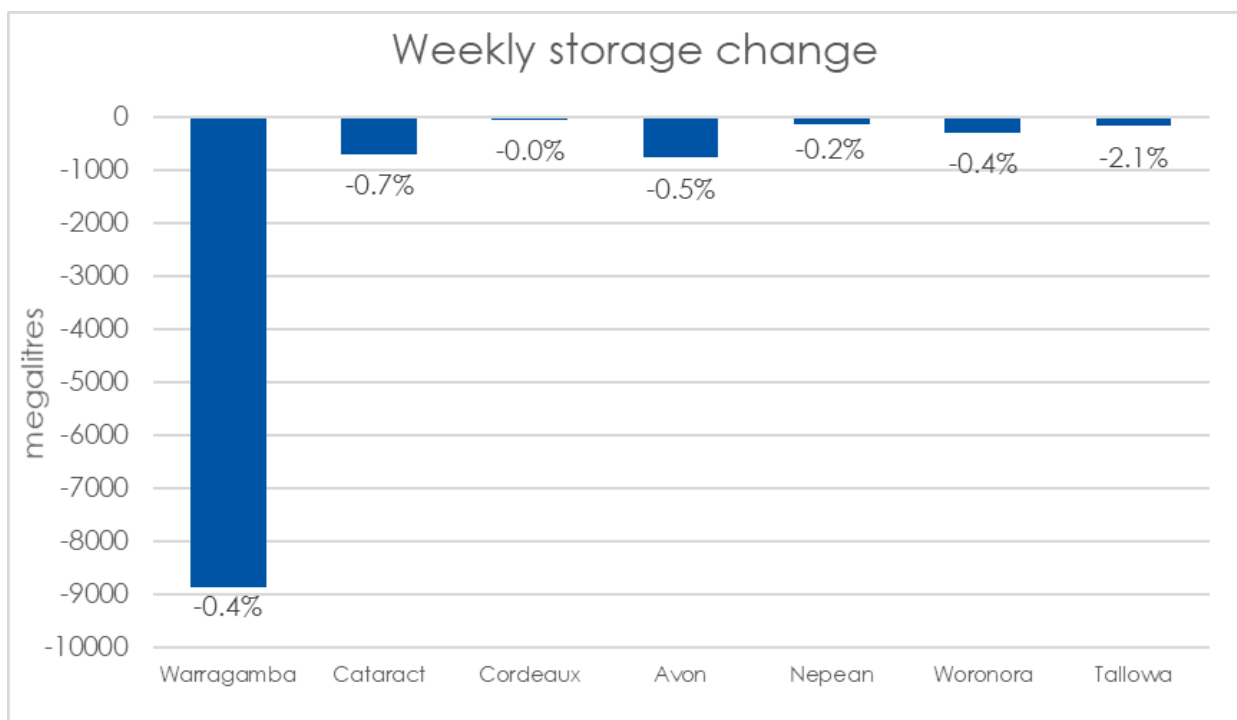
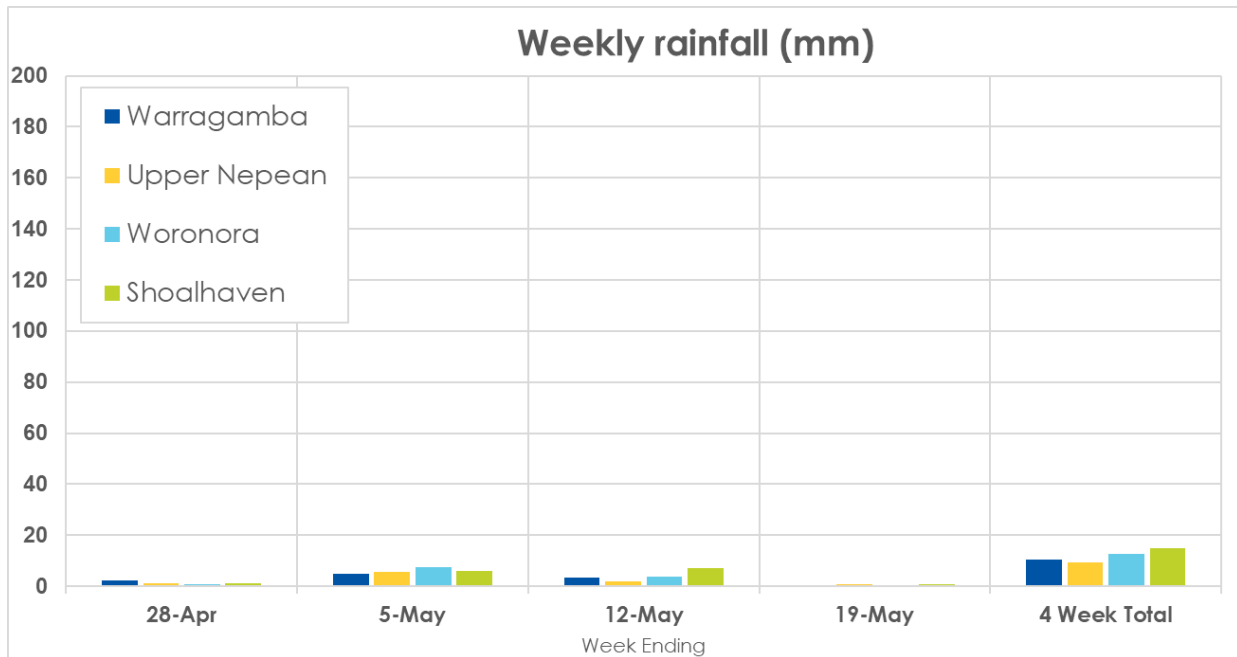
Details

Storage situation

Sydney's dam levels are at 54.1%, a decrease of 0.4% 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
9,935 ML	1,419 ML	-11,554 ML

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.

Subscribe to have the report emailed to you each week. Please visit our website at watnsw.com.au/subscribe for more information.