NSW Government

# Investigation update into the source of PFAS contamination in the Blue Mountains catchment

NOVEMBER 2026

## Second round of sampling planned for detailed site investigation of the Upper Blue Mountains Drinking Water Catchment

Following the first round of sampling in August 2026, further sampling will be undertaken in the Upper Blue Mountains Drinking Water Catchment as part of the Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) this month.

The Blue Mountains PFAS Project Control Group, consisting of key NSW Government agencies, including WaterNSW and the EPA, is overseeing the DSI, which was recommended after WaterNSW's initial investigation identified two separate historical motor vehicle accident sites on the Great Western Highway and the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Medlow Bath Fire Station as potential sources of PFAS contamination in the Medlow catchment.

A comprehensive sampling program is being undertaken of areas near potential sources.

As with the sampling undertaken in August, the second round will be undertaken in line with the sampling analysis and quality plan (SAQP), developed in accordance with the Contaminated Land Guidelines 2020, NSW EPA Sampling Design Guidelines 2022, PFAS National Environmental Management Plan 3.0 2025, and the NSW Guidelines for the Assessment and Management of Groundwater Contamination. Reinstatement of any disturbed areas will take place following these works.

The findings of the DSI sampling work will be shared with the local community following completion of the DSI.

Previous community updates on PFAS can be found here: https://www.waternsw.com.au/water-services/water-quality/pfas/blue-mountains-investigations

## What will the second round of sampling involve?

The second round of sampling includes supplementary testing of soil, groundwater and surface water. This work will occur near potential source areas in Medlow Bath, Blackheath and Katoomba.

This work includes the following activities:

- Installation of 9 new groundwater monitoring wells;
- Collection of surface water from creeks and lakes, and stormwater samples from stormwater pits;
- Collection of surface soil samples with hand tools;
- Collection of soil samples from borehole locations, using a hand auger or drill rig; and
- Collection of groundwater samples from existing and newly installed groundwater wells.

Sites will be selected to avoid services and minimise impacts on sensitive areas.

## When will this occur?

The sampling activities will occur between 7am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, during 30 November to 15 December 2026. The community can expect to see people and vehicles within the local area while the collection of soil, surface water and stormwater samples occurs. Some work may occur on weekends in the Blackheath and Katoomba Special Areas.

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## Safety of drinking water supply

NSW Health and Sydney Water have advised drinking water in the Blue Mountains meets the existing Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and is safe to drink.

A water treatment system designed specifically to remove PFAS has been operating at the Cascade plant since December 2024.

Greaves Creek and Medlow dams have been isolated from the supply network since September 2024.

WaterNSW are instead supplying water to the Cascades from Oberon Dam, via the Fish River Water Supply Scheme. Regular testing of drinking water supplied to the Blue Mountains community by Sydney Water shows it remains compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

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## More information

For more information on other NSW Government work underway to manage PFAS in waterways, visit www.nsw.gov.au/pfas