

Dams

FACTSHEET (Primary Learners)

What is a dam?

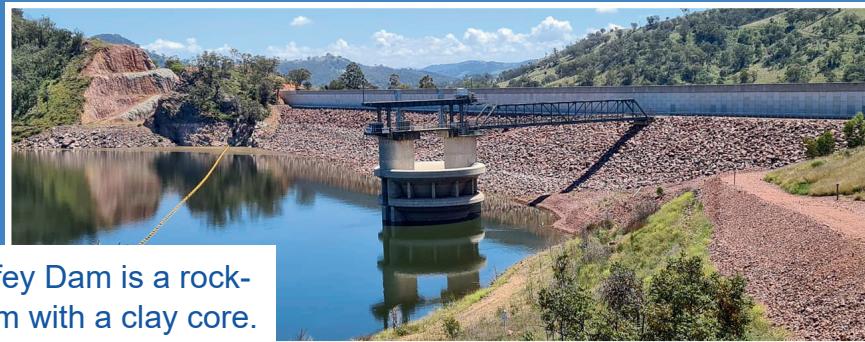
A dam is like a wall that is built across a river to block the flow of water. When it rains water collects behind the dam and creates a man-made lake.



Cordeaux Dam is made of sandstone blocks like the Egyptian pyramids.

What are dams made of?

Dams can be built from a mixture of earth-fill, rock-fill, stone, or concrete.



Chaffey Dam is a rock-fill dam with a clay core.

What happens when water reaches the top of a dam?

When it rains a lot, more water will flow into the man-made lake.

When the man-made lake is full, water will be let out of the dam using gates and spillways.

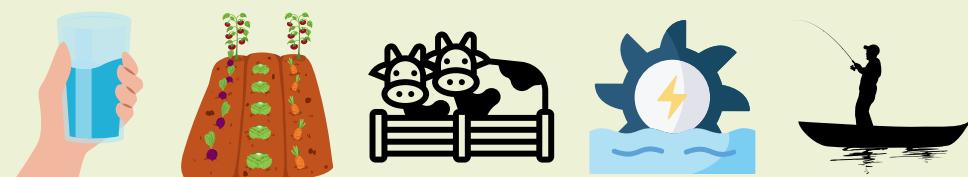
The released water becomes part of the river and flows downstream.

Photo: Water is let out of Warragamba Dam's gates and into Warragamba River when Lake Burragorang is full.



Why do we have dams?

We all need freshwater to live. Dams collect freshwater. WaterNSW cares for 41 dams across New South Wales and supplies freshwater to 8 million people.



The main jobs of dams are to:

- supply drinking water,
- supply water to irrigators (farmers),
- help control floods,
- help make hydropower, and/or
- create man-made lakes for fun activities.



Copeton Dam is popular for water sports.

Did you know?

Beavers build dams too!



The biggest beaver-built dam is in Alberta, Canada. It is over 850 metres long!

Blowering Dam helps with hydropower, irrigation, drinking water, and fun activities.



Burrinjuck Dam was NSW's first major irrigation dam and still helps farmers grow food.

Which dam is closest to you? What is its job?