Special Areas

Factsheet (Secondary Learners)

What are Special Areas?

Land and water within the Greater Sydney Drinking Water Catchment where public entry and activities are prohibited or restricted to protect water quality

The Special Areas cover approximately 384,000 hectares of mostly unspoiled, native bushland. They include our water storages and the land surrounding them to create protection zones for our drinking water.



Metropolitan Special Area at Cataract Dam



Warragamba Special Area

Where are they?

- Warragamba Dam
- Cataract Dam
- Cordeaux Dam
- Avon Dam
- Nepean Dam
- Woronora Dam
- Katoomba, Blackheath & Woodford Dams
- Prospect
- Wingecarribee
- Shoalhaven Special Area



Catchment and Special Areas Map

Why are they important?

Special Areas protect the natural environment and water sources from pollution caused by human activities. These protection zones also naturally filtrate the water in rivers and streams before it reaches the lakes (at the dams).

They are essential to the well-being of ecosystems, conservation of endangered plants and animal species, protection of areas of natural and cultural signficance, and protection of the quantity and quality of our water supply.

Human activities in Special & Controlled Areas are regulated by the *Water NSW Act 2014* and Water NSW Regulation 2026. Water polluting and illegal dumping are regulated under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.

Breaking the rules can result in fines of up to $22,000 (individuals) and $44,000 (companies)!

Controlled Areas

They are sections of land outside the Greater Sydney Drinking Water Catchment that are used for water transfer structures. For example:



The **Upper Canal** is a system of open canals, tunnels and aqueducts that moves water from dams south of Sydney to Prospect Reservoir.



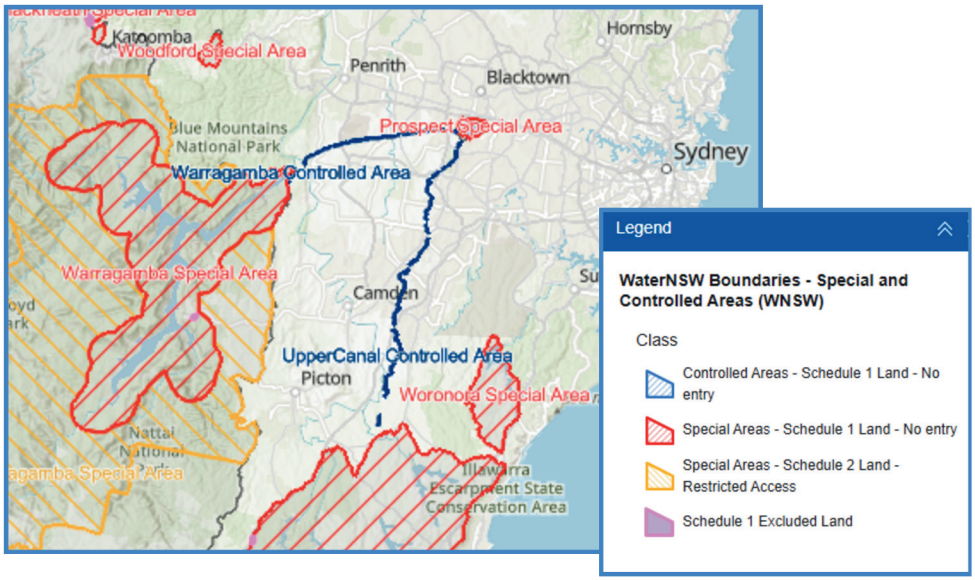
The **Warragamba Pipelines** move water from Warragamba Dam to treatment plants at Warragamba, Orchard Hills and Prospect.

Public entry and activities are prohibited in Controlled Areas to protect WaterNSW's water supply infrastructure.

What are protection zones?

Special Areas and Controlled Areas have two protection zones to manage human activity. They are:

- **Schedule 1** - no public entry
- **Schedule 2** - restricted public entry (walking only)



How do we manage the Special Areas?

The responsibility of managing the Special Areas relies on joint operations by WaterNSW and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Some of the operations include:

- Pollution prevention
- Pest and weed control
- Compliance and access
- Fire management and hazard reduction
- Preserving ecological integrity
- Upholding cultural heritage and values



The catchment team undertaking a hazard reduction burn

Did you know?

The Special Areas are home to threatened spotted-tailed quolls!



Spotted-tailed quolls need large, connected forests, like our Special Areas, to roam, hunt, and find hollows for their dens. These fierce, solitary predators have the most powerful bite for their body size and hunt more than 22 species of mammals!