

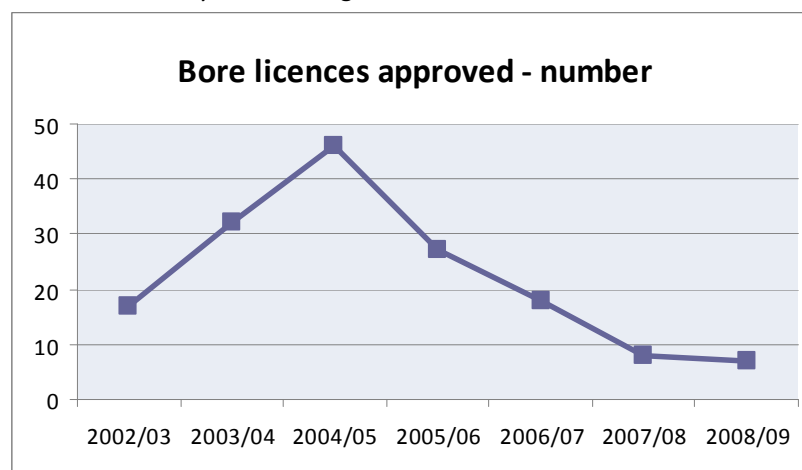
Water– bore licences

What are we monitoring?

The number of bore licences granted to Blue Mountains residents and commercial enterprises

What is the trend?

The number of bore licences granted increased significantly between 2002-2003 and 2004-2005.. From 2004-2005 to 2008-2009 the number of licences granted annually significantly decreased from 46 to 7. The 7 bore licences issued in 2009 were for stock and domestic bores. This data measures licensed bores. It does not account for the unlicensed extraction of ground water. Residential bores do not have a meter and so the amount of water extracted is not measured. Although detailed information about the amount of groundwater extracted or the water table levels cannot be gauged from this data, the trend in granting bore licences could indicate a change in the community's perception about the availability and use of groundwater.



BORE LICENCES APPROVED							
Year	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Number	17	32	46	27	18	8	7

Throughout the Blue Mountains there are a number of bores that have been drilled to provide access to groundwater. All bore operators are required to have a bore licence and the number of bore licences that have been approved for Blue Mountains residents and businesses are issued and monitored by the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (DECCW). DECCW reported 353 active bore licences in the Blue Mountains LGA in September 2009. Groundwater extraction is thought to be highly seasonal in the Blue Mountains – with extraction increasing in dry years. In 1999, the (then) Department of Land and Water Conservation (DLWC), conducted a review of groundwater quality and quantity in the Blue Mountains Sandstone Aquifer. It was estimated that groundwater usage from both licensed and unlicensed bores in the Blue Mountains was 3,780 megalitres per year (Department of Land and Water Conservation, 1999).

Why is monitoring this trend important?

Groundwater is an important resource that supports ecological communities and is essential for many ecosystems that are prevalent in the region. However, the impacts of extracting groundwater are not well understood. Groundwater provides the base flows from which hanging swamps, rivers, stream and water falls are supported. These features also provide economic opportunities to the LGA through the development of eco-tourism. Groundwater also feeds into catchment areas that provide a consistent water supply for the built environment.

Source: New South Wales Government Department of Environment, Climate Change & Water (DECCW).