

Water - dams

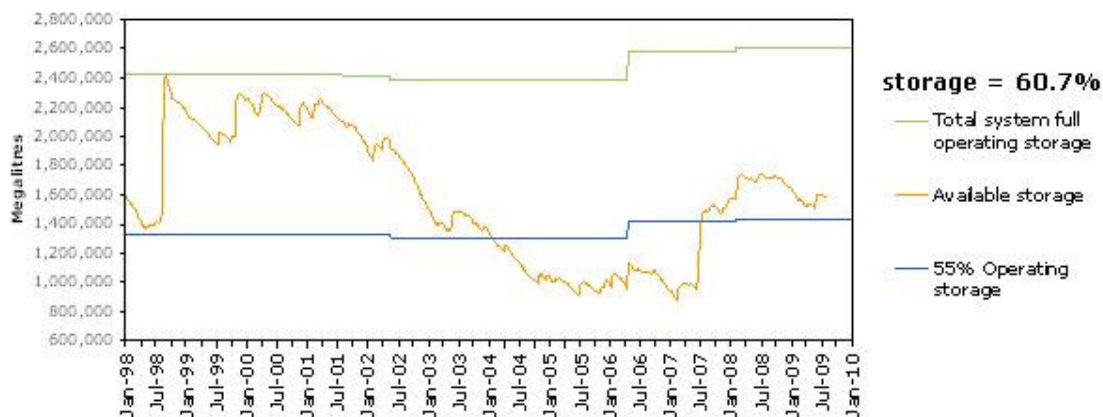
What are we monitoring?

The amount of water available in dams that supply Sydney and the Blue Mountains

What is the trend?

In July 2009 water storage was at 60.7%. The available water in our dams decreased approximately by 60% between 1999 and 2005. Between 2005 the 2007 available water was stable but low. The greatest rainfall inflow event since 1999 occurred in the Sydney Water Catchment in the winter of 2007. This led to a significant increase in dam water storage. The graph below shows the amount of water available in mega-litres and as a percentage of the water available when the dams are full. The term "full operating storage" is used to describe the amount of water the Sydney Catchment Authority can extract from the dams when they are full. This is less than the total water stored in the full dams, as the dams cannot be completely drained. "Available storage" is the amount of water that is currently available. The available storage is also expressed as a percentage of the full operating storage.

Available water storage at 30 July 2009



Why is monitoring this trend important?

Dams allow water to be harvested and channelled for human purposes on a large scale. The Blue Mountains is highly dependent on dams managed by Sydney Catchment Authority for potable water supply. Most Blue Mountains communities rely on the Cascade Dams near Katoomba and Greaves Creek Dam near Medlow Bath, when required these dams are supplemented by a pipeline from the fish river near Oberon. Warragamba dam supplies some of the Lower Blue Mountains communities. Most dams are currently low. For many years now, demand for water has outpaced supply. With future rainfall likely to be less than historic rainfall, the need for water conservation and alternative water supplies (eg rainwater tanks, recycling) is now a major issue for communities and government.

Source: Sydney Catchment Authority www.sca.nsw.gov.au/dams