

UPPER HUNTER WATER BALANCE 2020



Upper Hunter
Mining Dialogue

Summary of Key Findings

The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue assessed water use by the mining industry in the Upper Hunter in 2020. Using a common accounting framework, mining companies have reported their water inflows and outflows from operations. This has helped them manage their water use and embark on water saving and reuse opportunities.

Below is a summary of key findings on water use in the Upper Hunter for 2020:

- 2020 was a wetter than average year, which allowed 500,000 megalitres to enter the river system in the Upper Hunter.
- 74% of the water stayed in the river.
- Farmers, residents and businesses extracted 22% of the water flow.
- Mining used less than 4% of the water in the system.
- 1.2 times as much water evaporated from the Hunter River System storage dams as was extracted from the Hunter River System by mining companies.
- 21% of mine water came from rivers and alluvial aquifers.
- 55% of mine water was sourced from onsite rainfall and runoff.
- 22% of mine water was sourced from deep aquifers that are of limited use to other water users due to their high salinity.
- The mining industry reused 45% of its water onsite.
- 3% of mine water was discharged into the Hunter River.
- The rainfall in Scone during 2020 was 781mm, which is significantly higher than the long-term average of 599mm. The wetter conditions meant that river flows were higher, companies increased their water storage, and had more opportunities to discharge water into the Hunter River.

To find out more, visit miningdialogue.com.au

The NSW Minerals Council has compiled the data in this infographic using the best available information. Since water accounting is a complex task that relies on estimates and computer models, there are corresponding limits to the accuracy of the information. Sources: Bureau of Meteorology; DPI Water; NSW Minerals Council data.