

UPPER HUNTER WATER BALANCE 2021



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 the 2021 water year. Using a common accounting framework, the mining industry has 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 2021:

- 2021 was a significantly wetter than average year, which allowed 1,469 gigalitres (or 1,469,000 megalitres) to enter the river system in the Upper Hunter.
- 95% (or 1,401 gigalitres) of the water stayed in the river.
- Farmers, residents and businesses extracted 4% (or 59.2 gigalitres) of the water in the system.
- Mining used less than 1% (or 8.5 gigalitres) of the water in the system.
- 1% (or 15.7 gigalitres) of the available water evaporated from the Hunter River System storage dams.
- 7% (or 9.3 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines came from rivers and alluvial aquifers.
- 64% (or 80.3 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines was sourced from onsite rainfall and runoff.
- 16% (or 20.2 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines was sourced from deep aquifers that are of limited use to other water users due to their high salinity.
- The mining industry reused 43% of its water onsite.
- 12% (or 10.9 gigalitres) of the water outflow from mines was discharged into the Hunter River.
- The rainfall in Scone during 2021 was 981mm, which is significantly higher than the long-term average of 613mm. 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.

Note: 1 gigalitre = 1,000 megalitres = 1 billion litres.

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.