












UPPER HUNTER WATER BALANCE 2022



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 2022 water year. Using a common accounting framework, the mining industry has since 2014, 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 2022:

-  2022 was a significantly wetter than average year, which allowed 3,554 gigalitres (or 3,554,000 megalitres) to enter the river system in the Upper Hunter.
-  98% (or 3,498 gigalitres) of the water stayed in the river.
-  Farmers, residents and businesses extracted just over 1% (or 50.5 gigalitres) of the water in the system.
-  Mining used less than 0.2% (or 6.1 gigalitres) of the water in the system.
-  1% (or 32.0 gigalitres) of the available water evaporated from the Hunter River System storage dams.
-  4% (or 6.9 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines came from rivers and alluvial aquifers.
-  75% (or 111.1 gigalitres) of the water inflow to mines was sourced from onsite rainfall and runoff.
-  19% (or 27.8 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 48% of its water onsite.
-  35% (or 39.4 gigalitres) of the water outflow from mines was discharged into the Hunter River, which was permitted given the high flow volume of water.
-  The rainfall in Scone during 2022 was 826mm, which is significantly higher than the long-term average of 621mm. 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.

Several figures are included over the page, which provide a snapshot of the long-term annual water use figures for the Upper Hunter and demonstrate mining's water use in the context of other Hunter River water users.



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Figure 1: Annual Upper Hunter Water Use Figures (2014-2022)

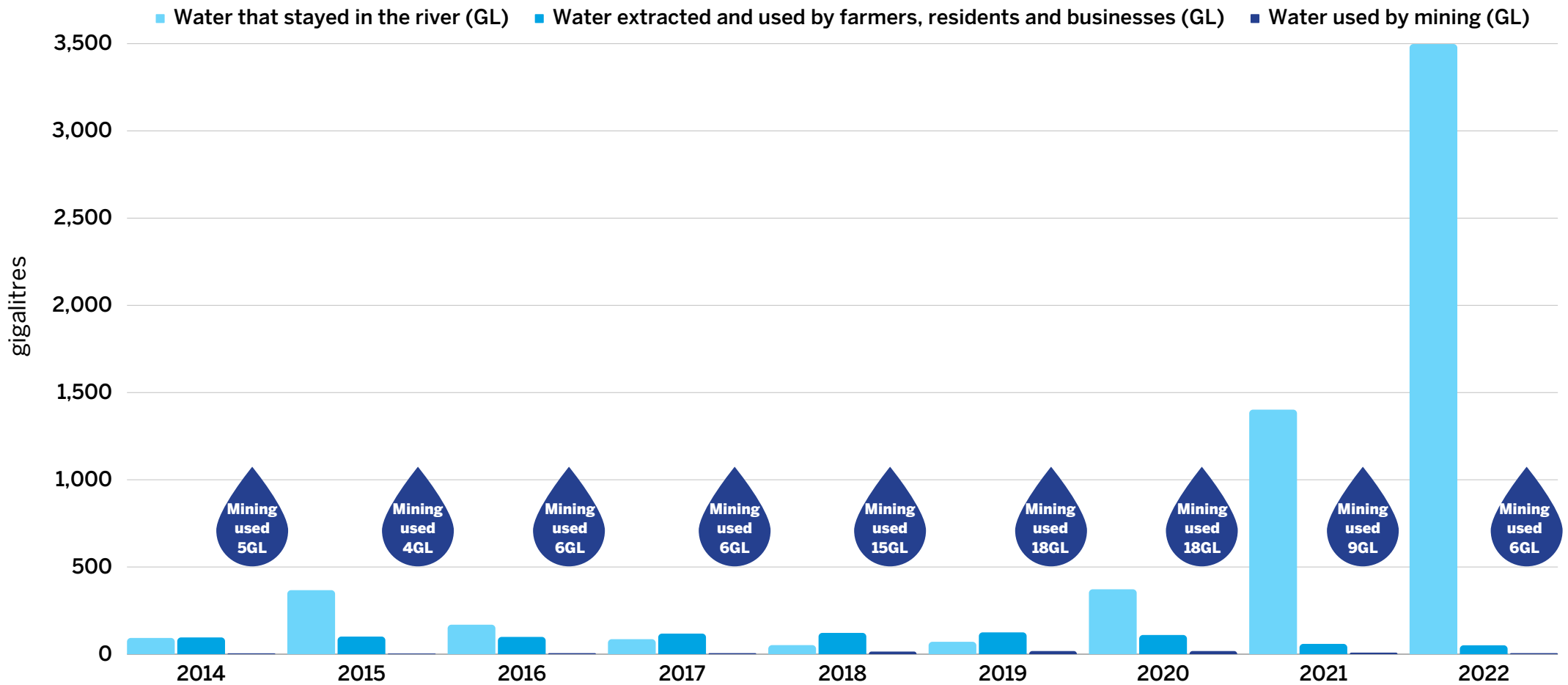
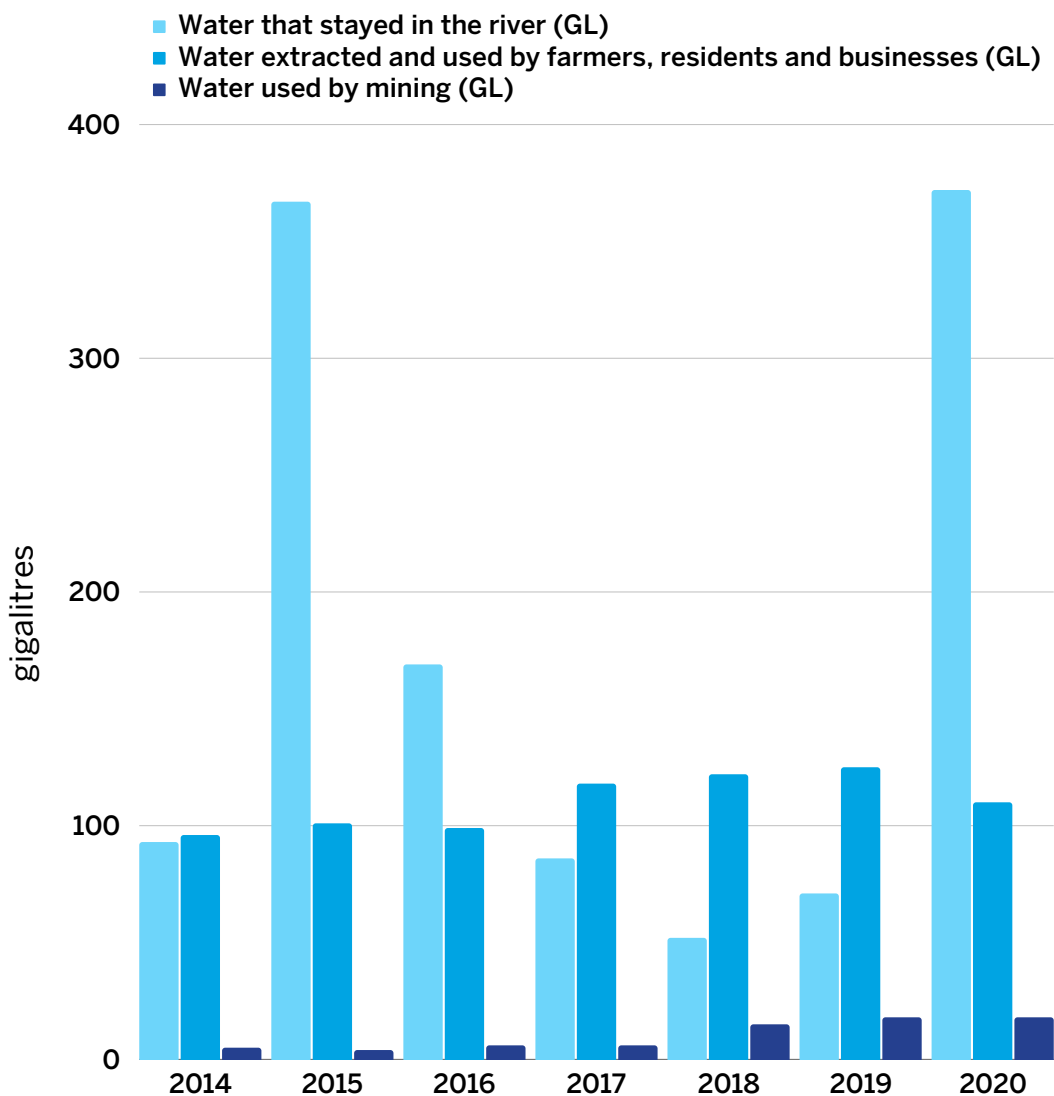
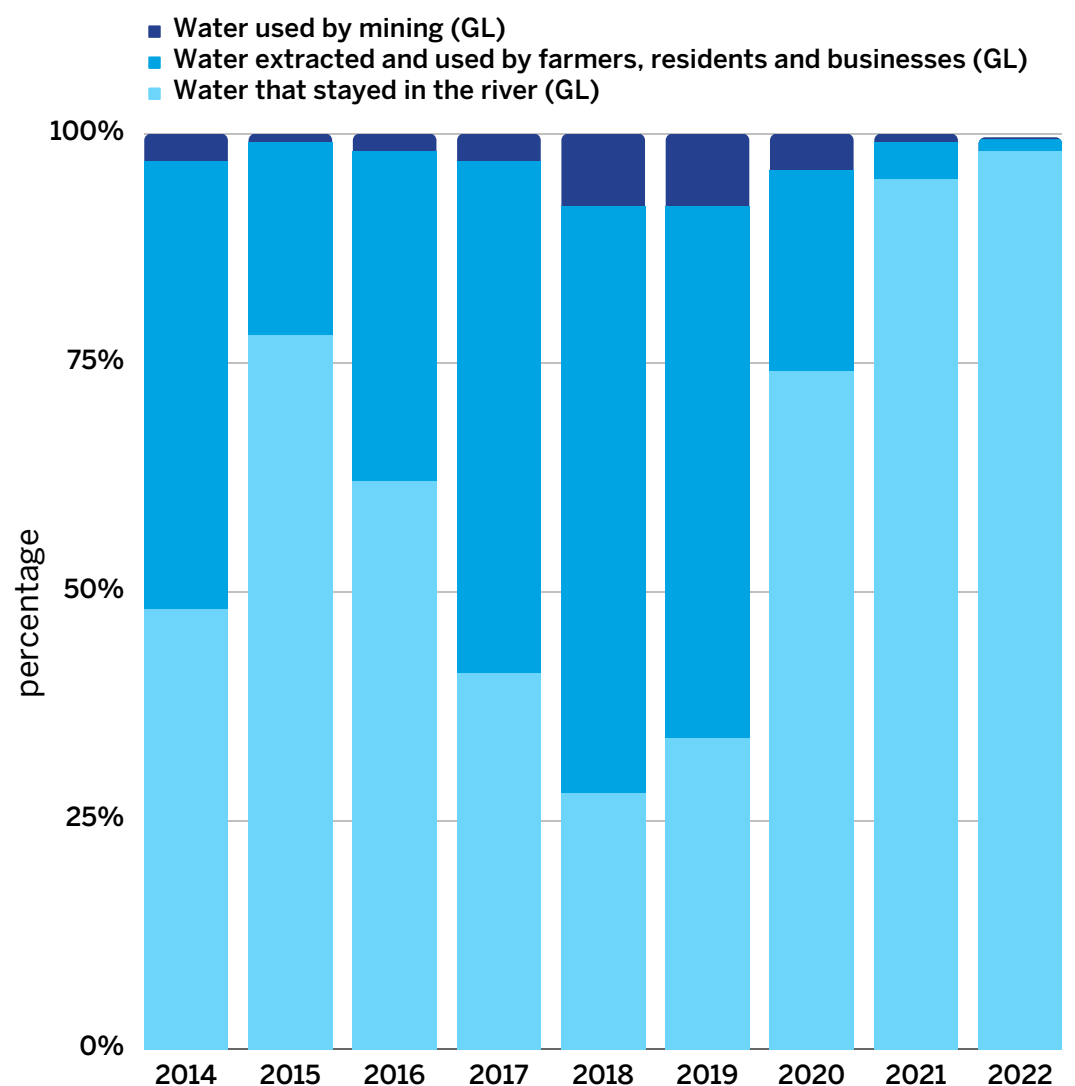


Figure 2: Annual Upper Hunter Water Use Figures (2014-2020)*



* Note: Fig. 2 contains the same information as Fig. 1, but with the 2021 and 2022 years removed to better differentiate pre-2021 figures.

Figure 3: Annual Percentages of Water Use (2014-2022)



The Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue developed this resource using the best available information, supplied by industry data. 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.

For more information:

miningdialogue.com.au