



Melinda Pavey
Minister for Water, Property and Housing

MEDIA RELEASE

Editors' note: Images and video available below

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SECURING GREATER SYDNEY WATER SUPPLY TO BE ENGINE ROOM FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The NSW Government has today launched the draft Greater Sydney Water Strategy, an unprecedented 20-year roadmap to providing a safe, secure and sustainable water supply for Sydney, the Illawarra and the Blue Mountains.

Minister for Water, Property and Housing Melinda Pavey said the Strategy, now on public exhibition, will guide water management to 2040 to support economic growth, meet the needs of the growing population and prepare for our changing climate.

"A secure water supply is vital and this plan ensures we are able to support economic growth as we recover from the pandemic and set the foundations for the future," Mrs Pavey said.

"We need to plan now for how our growing city and region will use water wisely as Sydney's population is set to grow to 7.1 million by 2041.

"During the most recent drought, our dam levels depleted faster than we've experienced since records began – at a rate of 20 per cent per year.

"Thankfully our dams are now full, but we need to act decisively to secure sustainable water for the long-term – by exploring options for new water sources not dependent on rainfall, by conserving more, and by doing more with less."

Options for consultation in the draft Strategy include:

- Improving water recycling, leakage management and water efficiency programs, which could result in water savings of up to 49 gigalitres a year by 2040.
- Extending a water savings program, which has been piloted in over 1000 households and delivered around 20 per cent reduction in water use per household and almost \$190 in savings per year for household water bills.
- Consideration of running the Sydney Desalination Plant full-time to add an extra 20 gigalitres of water per year.
- Expanding or building new desalination plants to be less dependent on rainfall.
- Investigating innovations in recycled water to improve sustainability.

- Making greater use of stormwater and recycled water to cool and green the city and support recreational activities.

The draft Strategy also proposes improvements to the decision making process for water restrictions to better reflect prevailing conditions and forecasting.

“Instead of having inflexible trigger points, decision makers will use a new holistic approach to consider things like rainfall events, inflows to dams and dam depletion rates, water demand and weather forecasts,” Mrs Pavey said.

“The draft Greater Sydney Water Strategy is a critical part of the NSW Government’s plan to grow the NSW economy and I encourage the community and industry to have their say.”

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment will hold public webinars and information sessions during September and October.

The draft Greater Sydney Water Strategy will be on display until November 8, 2021. To read the Strategy and provide feedback visit www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/greater-sydney-water-strategy.

Images and video can be found here

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/apqt51aga1ci414/AACHtIAL7IvaYo9np4kRDgela?dl=0>

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