

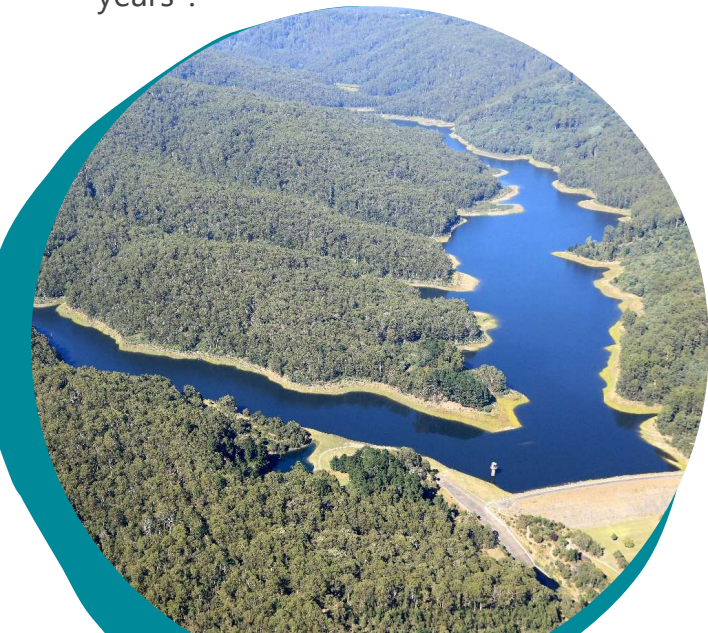
West Barwon Reservoir

Background

The West Barwon Reservoir supplies drinking water to Forrest, the greater Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula and Surf Coast areas. At capacity the reservoir holds almost 21,500 million litres of water, enough for approximately six months' supply of drinking water. It is one of the most important water sources in our region.

The West Barwon Reservoir also captures water for environmental flow releases in accordance with the environmental entitlement which is managed by the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority on behalf of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder.

Geelong storages are now at **99.1%**, approximately **1.6** percentage points higher than the same time last year and the highest storages have been in the last 10 years*.



Understanding the reservoir

Did you know our reservoirs are not designed for flood mitigation? They are designed to fill and spill during wet periods. The water that is captured is primarily used for drinking water purposes and passing flow releases in accordance with our operating licence (Bulk Entitlement). This means we try to capture and retain as much water as possible to ensure we can provide drinking water for everyone after our required passing and environmental flows.

Our operations teams work hard to manage our water network every day, including over night and on weekends.

Maintaining high water storage levels at West Barwon Reservoir is a priority in the face of a changing climate. We are experiencing more extreme weather events which has a direct impact on our region's water supplies. Our operations teams do a lot of planning and adaption to move water around our network in all conditions.

Water movement helps reduce excess spills in wet weather, however weather conditions and maintenance requirements can limit how much we transfer.

**Figures accurate at time of printing (22 November)*

West Barwon Reservoir

Future plans for the site – Masterplan

Barwon Water is partnering with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and the Forrest community to begin planning for the future of the West Barwon Reservoir.

The overarching plan for the site will consider a range of opportunities to celebrate the cultural significance of the site and river; identifying and managing native vegetation and threatened fauna; weed and pest management; new and existing recreational and tourism opportunities, and building understanding of the site and its history.

We are excited to be working to develop a future vision for the West Barwon Reservoir with Traditional Owners and the broader community.

Want to be involved?

You can register your interest on our Your Say page.



Managing wet conditions

With the possibility of another wet summer on the way our operations teams are considering continuing to transfer water from the West Barwon Reservoir to Wurdee Boluc throughout January. We don't normally transfer during the dry summer, however this will reduce the likelihood of further spill this summer.

This management of transfers is carefully considered every year and is dependent on storage levels, evaporation over warmer months, and the need for critical maintenance on the channel. We know as our climate becomes hotter and drier, our weather patterns are becoming more unpredictable which is why we must adapt our operations to suit conditions.



Environmental vs passing flows

Passing flows are the minimum flow of water we must allow to pass downstream of our reservoirs or extraction points. The passing flow required varies depending on the waterway, natural flows, time of year and storage levels.

Environmental water flows refer to additional water that is released to support ecological health, usually over the dry summer months. The Corangamite CMA on behalf of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder advise actual environmental releases required and take into account the passing and natural flows already present in the river. No environmental water has been released since July 2022 due to the above average rainfall.

