

Bushfire and drought resilience in Lorne



Historically, Lorne's water supply system has demonstrated a high degree of security because of its high yielding catchment and lots of rainfall. However, conditions in the Otway Coast area over the summer of 2015-16 were unlike anything ever experienced before, with nowhere more severe than around Lorne.

2015/16 summer

Although the Allen Reservoir was almost 100% full heading into summer, by early 2016 it had dropped to its lowest level on record.

Extremely dry catchments and rainfall 50% below the 10-year average led to historically low inflows, while high summer demand contributed to the storage levels falling rapidly.

Implementing water restrictions

Stage 3 water restrictions were triggered, and, for the first time, water was carted from the Greater Geelong, system to top up dwindling local supplies. These measures ensured supply was maintained until rainfall returned and rapidly restored levels in Allen Reservoir.

Minor upgrades completed

In 2018 we completed dam safety works at Allen Reservoir, which increased its storage capacity by 19 million litres (or close to 10%). While the ability to store more water will help to meet peak summer demand, the fundamental characteristics of the system present a challenge for the management of short-term climate extremes.

How we operate

We are prepared for bushfires and have plans in place to protect our assets. During a bushfire emergency, there may be extra demands on our system and potential damage to our infrastructure.

For these reasons, we are unable to guarantee pressure or an uninterrupted water supply during a bushfire event.

Stay informed

Register to stay informed about the project or have your say at our dedicated online site. Please visit www.yoursay.barwonwater.vic.gov.au/lorne-hub or scan the QR code!

