

South East Queensland's Water Security Program

Seqwater



Seqwater is the sole bulk water supplier for the South East Queensland Region and is tasked with delivering a safe, secure and cost-effective water supply.

The severity of the Millennium Drought combined with population growth highlighted the need for the region to improve its resilience, with the largest regional dam reaching 15 per cent storage capacity in 2007.

In response to the Drought, the community and industry reduced water consumption and constructed climate resilient infrastructure (desalination and recycled water schemes) and an interconnected water grid to move water around the region.

The Drought demonstrated the need to plan future water supply well in advance to prevent a crisis and that deterministic planning based on previously observed conditions was not adequate to respond to a changing and uncertain future. Additionally, planning needed to consider climate extremes, including drought and flood.

Implementation

The Water Security Program is Seqwater's plan to provide South East Queensland with drinking water for 30 years. This includes planning for extreme weather to improve resilience of supply and adapt to changing conditions, including climate change.

The Water Security Program investigated water security options spanning new supply options, demand management options and options to change how the system is operated. The trade-offs between options and their ability to respond to different conditions including drought and flood were explored in the development of the program.

The Program incorporated community consultation which shaped the program to reflect the values of the community. Community forums provided information on water security options and their trade-offs, generated discussion amongst community members in relation to options and provided the opportunity for community members to decide on the relative importance of considerations.

Investing in water infrastructure, particularly new sources of water, is an intergenerational decision – the cost, benefits and implications will be felt by generations to come. South East Queensland's Water Security Program helps to make the right decisions based on community values for the region at the right time.

The Water Security Program is adaptive. It does not propose one water security solution with a set timeframe. Rather, it identifies ways to respond to changing influences and sets triggers for implementing options or reviewing and changing responses. While responses are planned in advance, investment decisions will be made based on conditions at the time and depending on what options have previously been implemented.

Benefit / Outcome

- A resilient and adaptive plan for future water security.
- Improved stakeholder relationships.
- Better understanding of community values.

Further References

For more information please go to Seqwater's website (seqwater.com.au/waterforlife).

