



# Dam management during floods

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MAKING WATER WORK



*Fairbairn Dam, near Emerald, Central Queensland*

## **Flooding in Queensland in recent years has prompted public interest in the flood attenuation capabilities and safety of SunWater's 19 dams.**

### **Are SunWater dams safe?**

With over 80 years' experience in operations, SunWater's dams are designed and maintained to withstand extreme rainfall events.

All dams undergo regular and comprehensive safety assessments to ensure they adhere to National and State dam safety guidelines.

Experienced dam staff also adhere to comprehensive and safety-focused operating procedures to ensure all dams remain safe during extreme rainfall events.

### **Are SunWater dams designed to stop floods?**

With the exception of Peter Faust Dam in Proserpine, none of SunWater's dams are designed or developed to provide downstream flood mitigation. SunWater's dams are designed to store water to their intended capacity and then safely divert any excess water inflows through purpose built spillways, release gates or outlet works.

### **Can SunWater release water to stop flooding?**

Releasing water from SunWater dams before an expected major rainfall event or before a traditional wet season approaches, provides no beneficial effect to downstream flooding during moderate or major events.

Dam outlet works are generally designed to release small volumes of water for distribution to downstream customers and are not capable of large volume releases. Making outlet work releases to reduce dam levels would literally take months of continuous release and still only provide negligible downstream flooding benefits.

Gated dam releases to reduce storage levels are also, in most instances, insignificant when compared to the large volumes of water flowing into dam catchments and over spillways during significant rainfall events.

### **Don't dams physically stop water going downstream?**

By their very nature dams can slow the rate of flood waters to some degree, however SunWater's dams are not flood mitigation dams so should not be relied upon to stop or reduce flooding during extreme weather events.

### **When does SunWater make water releases?**

SunWater makes water releases for two main reasons — demand from downstream water entitlement holders and for environmental factors.

A majority of SunWater's water releases are made for customers, such as farmers, towns and industry. These releases are based on customer demand and are regulated through Resource Operations Plans (ROP) for each particular water supply scheme.



Wuruma Dam, near Eidsvold, in the North Burnett Region of Queensland

SunWater also makes scheduled water releases for environmental flow purposes. These are based on extensive research and fall within each scheme's ROP rules. Any additional ad hoc water releases from a dam would be in breach of established ROP rules and could also result in an imbalance to the eco-system.

### During a flood event, how does SunWater advise people that a dam is spilling or releases are being made?

SunWater has comprehensive communication protocols in place which ensure all relevant stakeholders are updated regularly during a flood event release. SunWater liaises closely with councils, Police, emergency services and counter disaster groups so they can advise downstream communities and residents of any appropriate action that needs to be taken.

SunWater uses a multi-channel warning strategy, including SMS alerts to residents immediately downstream of its dams, social media posts on Facebook and Twitter and media alerts to local radio stations. The SunWater App also provides communities living near SunWater dams, weirs and waterways with emergency preparedness updates.

Operational and emergency updates straight to your phone.

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[www.sunwater.com.au/sunwater-app](http://www.sunwater.com.au/sunwater-app)

### During a flood event SunWater will:

- monitor water inflows into dams and notify immediate downstream landholders/ customers of major inflow events
- provide regular inflow updates to relevant emergency services groups
- pass water inflows through dam spillways and outlet works in accordance with operational guidelines and manage and maintain water levels in gated dams
- manage the dam to ensure it remains safe during extreme rainfall events.

### If you are seeking information about:

- **Flood warnings**  
Contact local councils, local disaster management groups or the **Bureau of Meteorology**
- **Flood level forecast**  
Contact the **Bureau of Meteorology**
- **Flood damage, road closures, crowd control**  
Contact local councils or police
- **Disaster relief**  
Contact the **State Emergency Service (SES)**  
Visit the **Get Ready Queensland** website
- **Disasters and alerts**  
Visit [www.qldalert.com](http://www.qldalert.com) for the latest information from key government agencies
- **SunWater emergency updates**  
Download the SunWater App and follow us on [facebook.com/sunwater](https://facebook.com/sunwater) and [twitter.com/sunwaterlimited](https://twitter.com/sunwaterlimited)

# SunWater Dams



Legend

- ▲ Dams
- TOWNS
- ~ Rivers

For up to date information on dam levels visit [www.sunwater.com.au/home/water-storage-levels](http://www.sunwater.com.au/home/water-storage-levels) or call us on 13 15 89

