

Paradise Dam Community Update

October 2019

Is Paradise Dam safe?

Under normal and current forecast weather conditions, Paradise Dam is safe.

However, in the unlikely event of another 1-in-200 year event, like the community experienced in 2013, the dam spillway (wall) may not perform to dam industry standards.

What is Sunwater doing?

Sunwater is:

- **Lowering the Paradise Dam spillway** by 5 meters to allow for better community safety management.
- **Releasing water** from the dam over a period of 10 weeks to reduce the amount of water stored in the dam to 42 per cent of the dam's full capacity.
- **Working closely with Council's Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)** who manage local flood risks and emergencies, to help keep communities informed and prepared.
- **Closely monitoring Paradise Dam** and weather events to ensure early and informed decisions can be made regarding safety of downstream communities.
- **Activating an additional emergency warning system** at the dam including a siren.
- **Forming an independently chaired Community Reference Group** to ensure that the community is kept informed about Paradise Dam while rectification works are taking place.
- **Committing to providing regular updates** on the

region through a variety of channels.

- **Meeting our customers water supplies needs** in the current water year and we are working to determine long-term water security for the region.

What will happen if there is another significant weather event before the essential work is complete?

It is important to remember that under normal and forecast weather conditions, Paradise Dam is safe. If another significant weather event similar to 2013 occurs, Sunwater will:

- **Trigger the updated Emergency Action Plan** for Paradise Dam that sets in motion a series of processes and alerts for the community and for the Council's Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG).
- **Communicate up-to-date information** via text messages directly to downstream residents, as well as to the broader community via our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter), the Sunwater App, through local media broadcasts and emergency alerts.

Communities should be aware that if Paradise Dam experiences another 1-in-200 year event, properties not previously impacted in 2013 might be impacted.

Sunwater will continue to work with the LDMG and through the newly formed Paradise Dam Community Reference Group to provide additional information that assists Council to identify additional potential impacts.

Keeping informed about Paradise Dam:

If you live immediately downstream of Paradise Dam, **register for SMS updates** at sunwater.com.au

Download the Sunwater App to receive push notifications when the dam is spilling water and to monitor dam levels.

Follow Sunwater on Facebook and Twitter and **visit sunwater.com.au** for updates.

Visit **bom.gov.au/qld/** for the latest weather information and your local council website for emergency updates.



What is the problem with Paradise Dam and why was the community not notified earlier?

As part of our Dam Improvement Program, we conducted technical investigations that identified a structural problem relating to the concrete in the dam wall that creates a potential issue in the unlikely event that a flood like the 2013 flood occurs.

We immediately acted to further investigate the issue and understand what it meant for the dam, including seeking advice from national and international experts. We recently received confirmation that immediate action is necessary to better manage community safety. This resulted in our difficult announcement to conduct essential works to lower the spillway and to release water from Paradise Dam. Our response needed to be comprehensive as well as timely and regrettably did not allow for consultation with our community or customers.

When will the work on Paradise Dam start and finish?

Sunwater will lower the dam's water storage level ahead of the 2019/20 wet season. We have commenced planning to facilitate site access and construction work to lower the spillway in May 2020.

While the structural issues will have been managed in the short-term at the completion of these essential works, further improvement will be needed to secure the dam's long-term stability.

Building Queensland will undertake an accelerated assessment to guide Sunwater on future options, including the final revised spillway height and the final full supply level for Paradise Dam beyond the 5m lowering. This assessment is due to be completed by February 2020.

How does Paradise Dam work?

- Collects water from rainfall and runoff from its large catchment area (the land, rivers and creeks surrounding the dam).
- Holds the water for Sunwater to supply to its customers including irrigators, farmers and local industries as well as providing drinking water to some communities.
- Is not designed to provide downstream flood mitigation.
- Can release water for customers and for the environment during controlled releases. This is how the dam level is being reduced currently.
- Has a spillway (or dam wall) that is designed to 'spill' excess water into the Burnett River when the dam reaches its maximum storage level.
- As water continues to flow into the dam during heavy rainfall, it will naturally flow over the spillway and continue into the River. The amount of water that spills during this event is dictated by the amount of rainfall and inflows from the catchment.

For further information on Paradise Dam:

Community enquiries, contact:

3120 0270 or via community@sunwater.com.au

Customers and non-customers wishing to access water, contact:

13 15 89 or via customersupport@sunwater.com.au

Media enquiries, contact:

3120 0047 or via media@sunwater.com.au