

# SOUTHERN DOWNS DROUGHT RESILIENCE PACKAGE

Despite the recent rain, parts of Queensland remain in drought and we know we can't rely on that rain to keep coming year on year.

Warwick has no contingency supply and carting to a town the size of Warwick is not feasible. The Queensland Government has invested \$19.34 million to provide reliable and lasting drought contingency for the Southern Downs region.

The Drought Resilience Package also includes careful consideration of the water security needs of Toowoomba and its southern satellite towns of Cambooya, Greenmount, Nobby, and Clifton.

This commitment is being delivered in partnership with Seqwater, Sunwater, and Southern Downs Regional Council, in consultation with Toowoomba Regional Council. This package will identify additional sources of water, not currently allocated to other users, and is vital to provide drought resilience to the region.

## About the Drought Resilience Package

Announced on 15 April 2021, the drought resilience package includes an initial \$19.34 million for the following immediate activities:

- \$8.1 million towards investigations into the proposed Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline, including getting community views, detailed design, approvals, costings, surveying, and geotechnical works. This work will help inform a decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposed pipeline.
- \$4.6 million in upgrades, including enhanced water treatment, to reconnect groundwater available to the Allora township, or freeing up to 350 megalitres of additional Southern Downs urban water supply annually
- \$1.4 million to help Southern Downs Regional Council move a range of industries from using previous clean water supplies to groundwater – including local processing and industrial businesses
- \$4.54 million to increase Leslie Dam's usable water capacity by upgrading its pumps and water treatment systems, increasing usable storage capacity by an additional 1700 megalitres
- \$700,000 to support Southern Downs Regional Council investigations into local groundwater supplies for Warwick, Allora and Stanthorpe, and to support Sunwater's efficiency and innovation investigations at Leslie Dam.

In addition, an independent engineer has been engaged to assess Toowoomba's ongoing water security and options, so that the community can have confidence in Toowoomba's water security.

## What does it involve?

### Early construction works

The Queensland Government is funding early works such as bore recommissioning, connection to reticulation and water treatment at Allora, to provide additional supply as soon as possible. The potential to collect and centrally treat local groundwater and surface water supplies will also be investigated.

To reduce the take on Leslie Dam and extend the town's water supply, Southern Downs Regional Council is also looking into the potential to send groundwater for treatment in the Warwick supply system or to make it available for industry use where possible.

Other emergency measures will be funded by the Queensland Government to allow the treatment and use of the water below minimum operating level in Leslie Dam. This water can't usually be accessed through gravitational flows from the dam.

### Proposed Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline

The department is currently working collaboratively with Seqwater, Sunwater, Toowoomba Regional Council, and Southern Downs Regional Council to understand the costs and options which might be involved if the pipeline is built, including design of the proposed pipeline, and engaging with the community to get their views.

In addition, an independent engineer has been engaged to assess Toowoomba's ongoing water security and options so that the community can have confidence in Toowoomba's water security.

This work will provide important information about the feasibility of the proposed pipeline and is anticipated to be completed in April 2022. A decision will then be made about whether or not to progress with the pipeline.

### Water source investigations

Investigations into groundwater flow rates, sustainability and impacts on other water users will commence to better understand groundwater resources and the potential for developing new bore fields, including around Stanthorpe.

## What's next?

The activities included as part of the Drought Resilience Package will be delivered separately across the coming years. The graph below shows the current timeframe for implementing these projects.

Please note, these dates are indicative only and may be subject to change.

