

Your drinking water

Update on PFAS treatment at Cascade Water Filtration Plant

October 2026

Sydney Water is committed to providing safe, reliable drinking water to Blue Mountains communities. We understand people want clear information about PFAS and what it means for their drinking water. This update explains the steps we've taken at Cascade Water Filtration Plant and how the treatment system is performing.

Key facts

- All drinking water supplied from Cascade Water Filtration Plant remains safe to drink and continues to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for PFAS.
- Medlow and Greaves Creek dams remain disconnected from the drinking water supply system.
- A \$3.4 million PFAS treatment system has been operating at Cascade Water Filtration Plant since December 2024.
- Originally installed as a short-term measure, the current PFAS treatment system has a design life of 10 years.
- Regular monitoring shows the treatment system is performing as intended and continues to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for PFAS.
- Improved source water quality and the continued isolation of the affected dams mean we can take a measured and responsible approach to the long-term management of PFAS.
- Separately to PFAS treatment, we will be investing in an upgrade of the plant, to further improve raw water quality entering the plant and our planning continues.

PFAS treatment at Cascade Water Filtration Plant

In August 2024, Medlow and Greaves Creek dams were identified as having elevated levels of PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and these dams were isolated from the drinking water supply.

In December 2024, Sydney Water commissioned a purpose-built PFAS treatment system at Cascade Water Filtration Plant as part of its proactive approach to managing PFAS in drinking water in the Blue Mountains.

The treatment system uses two proven treatment technologies, granular activated carbon and ion exchange resin, which are highly effective at removing PFAS from water. Since it began operating, monitoring and testing have shown the system is performing as intended.

All drinking water supplied from Cascade Water Filtration Plant continues to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines for PFAS and ongoing testing confirms it remains safe to drink.

How the treatment system works

The treatment system uses a two-stage treatment process:

Granular activated carbon

Granular activated carbon filters remove organic compounds from the water using highly porous carbon media. This improves water quality and prepares water for the next treatment stage.

Ion exchange resin

The ion exchange resin is specifically designed to target PFAS compounds. The resin attracts and retains PFAS molecules, significantly reducing PFAS concentrations in treated water.

Together, these technologies provide an effective treatment barrier and support the ongoing supply of safe drinking water to the Blue Mountains community.

How is the system performing?

The PFAS treatment system continues to perform well and meets all operational requirements.

The PFAS treatment system was originally installed as a temporary solution while Sydney Water assessed longer-term options for Cascade Water Filtration Plant. Because the system has a 10-year design life and is performing well, there is time to carefully plan future needs. Improved water quality and the isolation of the affected dams have reduced the need for immediate additional works.

Since commissioning in December 2024, testing and ongoing monitoring have confirmed the system is effectively reducing PFAS and supporting the continued supply of safe drinking water to the Blue Mountains community.

Monitoring also shows that the current source water supplied to Cascade Water Filtration Plant from the Upper, Middle and Lower Cascade dams and the Fish River Water Supply System is meeting Australian Drinking Water Guideline values for PFAS. Sydney Water will continue to regularly test and monitor water quality to ensure these standards are maintained.

Looking ahead

We continue to progress future planning to meet local water supply needs for decades to come, including:

- An upgrade to the Cascade Water Filtration Plant to improve source water quality entering the plant; and
- Long-term planning for water supply in the Blue Mountains which considers drought preparedness and system resilience.

We will continue to engage with the community as this progresses.

Staying informed

We know access to clear and timely information is important.

We will continue to share information about PFAS, our monitoring program and water quality results with the community. The latest information and PFAS monitoring results are available on our website: sydneywater.com.au

