

# Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme

## Scheme Performance

*By Robert Stacey, Scheme Operator*

The 2025/26 irrigation season for the Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme delivered overall performance broadly consistent with previous years. Approximately 4,878 megalitres (ML) of water was delivered this season, compared with 5,600 ML last year.

While this is a lower total volume, irrigators reported that deliveries were comparable to previous seasons in terms of meeting demand.

Seasonal conditions were mixed, with a wetter spring in 2025 compared with the previous year, followed by an average summer and autumn.

Less snow over the 2025 winter contributed to reduced early-season inflows, and the scheme commenced operations exceptionally early, with only 30 per cent allocation available at the start of the season.

Despite this challenge, the scheme successfully filled Southernfield Dam to 100 per cent allocation, a significant achievement given the low initial volumes.

Operationally, the scheme performed well, with no major faults or outages. TasNetworks power outages caused only minimal disruption.



A long-standing issue involving a potential leak on the Scheme line was further narrowed down to a specific area, representing meaningful progress toward resolution. Work also continued with SCADA technicians to streamline a new operating mode at the Southern River pump station.

It was great to be able to collaborate with farmers to extend the season by 102 days, helping to finish and start crops, and maintain pasture productivity.

I would like to thank all irrigators for their cooperation and communication throughout the season. Maintaining strong relationships and sharing information helps ensure the Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme continues to deliver water where and when it is needed.

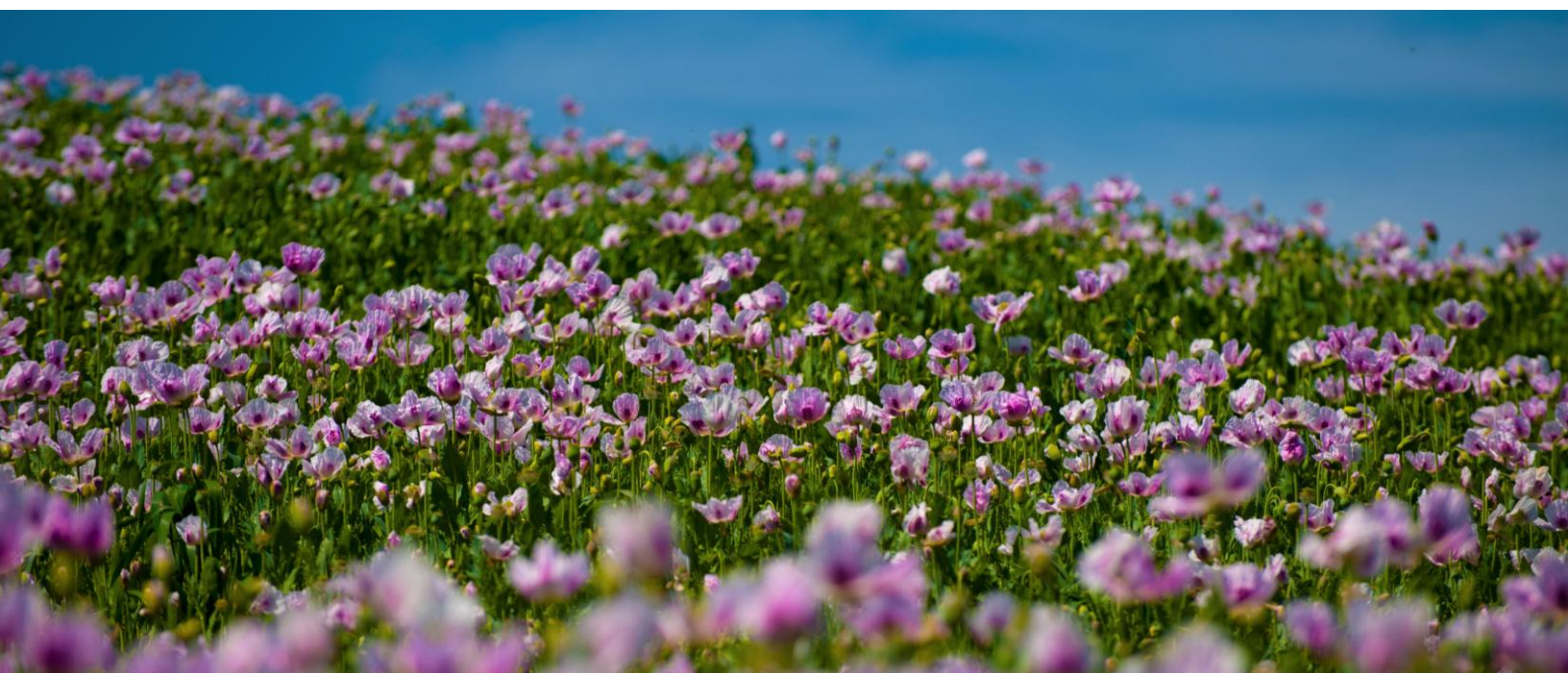
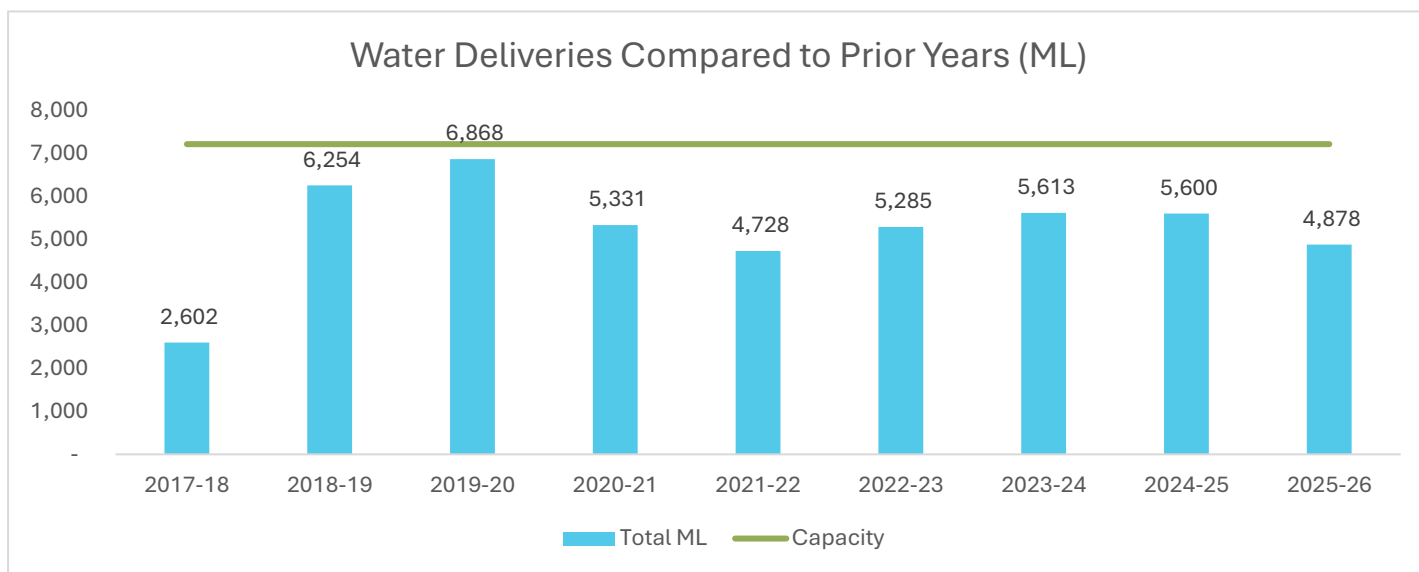
## Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme

### Water Delivery

The 2025/26 summer irrigation season ran for 252 days, opening on 21 August 2025 and closing on 30 April 2026.

30 per cent of the Scheme's water allocation was available in August 2025, which had increased to 100 per cent by 11 November last year. Approximately 4,878 ML of water was delivered during the summer season.

The volume delivered represents a 68 per cent utilisation rate of the Scheme's 7,215 ML total summer capacity.



## Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme

### Asset Renewal Levy (ARL)

The ARL makes provisions for major asset repairs and replacements required to ensure the continuing operation of the Scheme.

The table below shows the asset renewal works completed or expected to be completed prior to the next season:

Facility Name	ARL Task Description
Shannon River pump station	Pump refurbishments
Shannon River pump station	Wet well cleanup
Shannon River pump station	Electrical gantry installation
Scheme wide	Property outlet cage repairs
Southernfield Dam	Dam asset renewals

### Repairs and Maintenance

The table below shows the general repairs and maintenance completed or expected to be completed prior to the next season:

Maintenance Task Description
Electrical switchboard periodic maintenance inspections
Pump station vibration monitoring assessments
Weed and vegetation management
Motor and pump lubrication
Dam surveillance
Dam repairs and maintenance



## Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme

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### Farm Water Access Plan Audits

Tasmanian Irrigation is about to commence the annual Farm Water Access Plan (Farm WAP) audit process to maintain compliance and environmental excellence. Farm WAPs are property-specific documents that guide the responsible use of irrigation water and protect the long-term productivity and environmental values of irrigated farmland.

Audits are randomly selected and generally involve around 10 to 15 per cent of irrigators in each scheme who have used more than five megalitres (ML) of water during the season. If selected, irrigators will be contacted to arrange a suitable time for the audit. To help spread audits across a broader range of properties, irrigators who were audited last season and those currently awaiting updated Farm WAPs will not be included in this year's audit program.

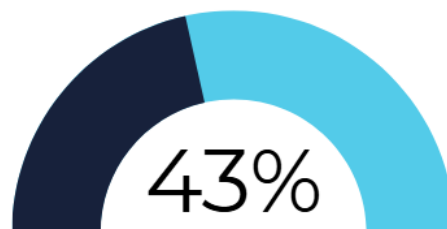
Audits generally involve a site inspection; a discussion with the landholder or irrigation staff; and a review of relevant records and documentation. To help the audit process run smoothly, now is a good time for irrigators to revisit their approved Farm WAP and confirm that irrigation activities align with the approved plan. Common issues identified during audits include irrigation occurring outside approved Farm WAP areas or incorrect dam and storage information.

For assistance or questions, contact the Farm WAP Team on (03) 6398-8433 or email [FarmWAP@tasirrigation.com.au](mailto:FarmWAP@tasirrigation.com.au).

### Dam Update – Southernfield Dam

Tasmanian Irrigation took the opportunity to harvest water from rivers into storages during recent rainfall events, boosting dam levels across the State. With long range forecasts pointing to drier-than-average conditions ahead, making the most of rainfall events to replenish our dams is more important than ever.

At the end of June, Southernfield Dam was at 43 per cent of capacity. The current volume is 3,490 ML, compared to the total volume of 8,162 ML. Dam levels are updated daily on Tasmanian Irrigation's website here: [Dam Dashboard - Tasmanian Irrigation](#).



Southernfield Dam –  
current percentage of capacity

### Get in Touch

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