

Chichester Dam

Chichester Dam was the Lower Hunter's first drinking water storage system, and to this day is considered one of the most pristine catchments in Australia.

Located at the top of the Williams River catchment, Chichester Dam was built between 1915 and 1926. It provides around 35% of the Lower Hunter's water supply. The dam can hold 18,356 million litres of water, which is much smaller than Grahamstown Dam. What it lacks in storage capacity it makes up for in depth, being 37m deep compared to Grahamstown's 9m. This makes it less prone to water loss through evaporation.

Chichester Dam's Drinking Water Catchment

Chichester Dam is located 80 kilometres north of Newcastle at the south-eastern corner of the World Heritage listed Barrington Tops National Park. The dam is fed by the Wangat River to the north and Chichester River to the north-west. The catchment area is made up of 76% national park, 17% rural and 7% Hunter Water freehold land. It is so pristine due to little contamination run off and low water quality issues.

There is high run-off from the area due to the abundant rainfall and the large catchment area. Because of this, the dam is filled quickly following medium to heavy rainfall.

“To protect drinking water quality, public access is not permitted onto Chichester Dam or its catchment rivers, but there are three picnic areas within the site that are open to the community.”

Treating Water from Chichester Dam

Water from Chichester Dam is dosed with chlorine at the dam and then transported by a gravity pipe to Dungog, where it is treated at the Dungog Water Treatment Plant. The Chichester Trunk Gravity Main transports water from the treatment plant to the major city reservoirs in Maitland, Cessnock and Beresfield. The water not needed by these towns, about half of the water that flows from the dam, continues on to Newcastle where it mixes with water from the Grahamstown Water Treatment Plant.

Because water is fed by gravity from Chichester instead of needing pumps to transport it, it requires the least energy of all our water sources.

