

Better Bidgee Program

Reconnecting the Bidgee – fish passage



About the Better Bidgee Program

The NSW Government is investigating a range of measures for the Murrumbidgee River system as part of rescoping the Yanco Creek Offtake Project. These measures are part of a new Better Bidgee program (the program).

Following the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in April, Water Infrastructure NSW has rescoped the Yanco Creek Offtake Sustainable Diversion Limits Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) Project and investigated options that could be supported by the community.

Our focus over the past few months has been evaluating the years of community feedback regarding the need to improve connectivity, environmental, cultural and community outcomes.

We know that these issues can only be addressed by taking a holistic, system-wide approach to water infrastructure planning and operations, working in tandem with changes in water policy and strategy. We also know that feedback from our stakeholders and communities is critical to ensuring we progress the best options for delivering outcomes.

We have recently launched a major consultation and engagement program, which will enable us to work side-by-side with communities to investigate solutions to create a Better Bidgee. This is a shift towards beneficial outcomes for communities and the environment.

Options are currently being investigated by the project team, most of which are in the very early planning stages. Community feedback and input will play a crucial role in shaping which initiatives are progressed, and what these initiatives look like, to deliver a Better Bidgee.

About the proposed Reconnecting the Bidgee initiative

The Reconnecting the Bidgee initiative would support the health of waterways and the many unique native fish species that live in the Murrumbidgee River. We are investigating constructing fishways at five high priority sites to improve fish health, movement and population size, with the proposed sites including:

- Berembed Weir
- Gogeldrie Weir
- Hay Weir
- Maude Weir
- Redbank Weir.

Potential benefits

The benefits of implementing the initiative would be:

- restoring fish passage at priority barriers allowing for the natural movement of fish along the system
- Improving native fish access to nearly 1,200 km of mainstem waterway from the main dam storages to the Murray Junction
- supporting the recovery of native fish populations including Golden Perch and Murray Cod

Better Bidgee Program

Reconnecting the Bidgee – fish passage



- increasing opportunities for recreational fishing and tourism, boosting economic activity.

Location map

The locations of the proposed fishways under the Reconnecting the Bidgee initiative are shown in the map below.



Stakeholder engagement

Communities will be at the heart of the Better Bidgee program. We are committed to working in partnership to develop the program to deliver outcomes with broad community support.

We will provide numerous opportunities for local communities and stakeholders to have their say on the design of the program and throughout the development and delivery phases of any projects. This feedback will be a key input into decision making and will help shape the program's future design.

We are also keen to hear any alternative or additional ideas local communities may have to deliver economic, cultural and environmental outcomes for local communities and the environment across the Murrumbidgee River system.

Better Bidgee Program

Reconnecting the Bidgee – fish passage



We will be reaching out to local communities to discuss the proposed ideas making up the Better Bidgee program. Upcoming engagement and partnering opportunities will be listed on the [Better Bidgee webpage](#) and on our [stakeholder engagement page](#).

Engagement with First Nations people

We recognise and acknowledge the unique relationship and deep Connection to Country that First Nations people have as the Traditional Owners and First Peoples of Australia.

The wisdom and experience of First Nations communities will play a critical role in informing the development and approach to the Better Bidgee program.

We have a dedicated engagement team who will guide our program engagement with these communities, and we look forward to working with them to deliver real, tangible and widely accepted outcomes.

Find out more

For more information on the Better Bidgee program:

- call 1300 081 047
- email our engagement team at better.bidgee@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- visit dpi.nsw.gov.au/better-bidgee

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2021. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (October 2021). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment or the user's independent adviser.