



## Rural floodplain management plans

### How are cultural areas identified in floodplain management plans?

Floodplain management plans identify areas that have important environmental value, which may also hold important cultural value. These include places that depend on flooding or may be impacted by changes to the way floodwater moves across the floodplain.

The main tool for identifying cultural areas on a floodplain is the **Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS)**. AHIMS is a secure electronic database that holds over 100,000 records and information about Aboriginal Places, objects, and other significant sites across NSW.

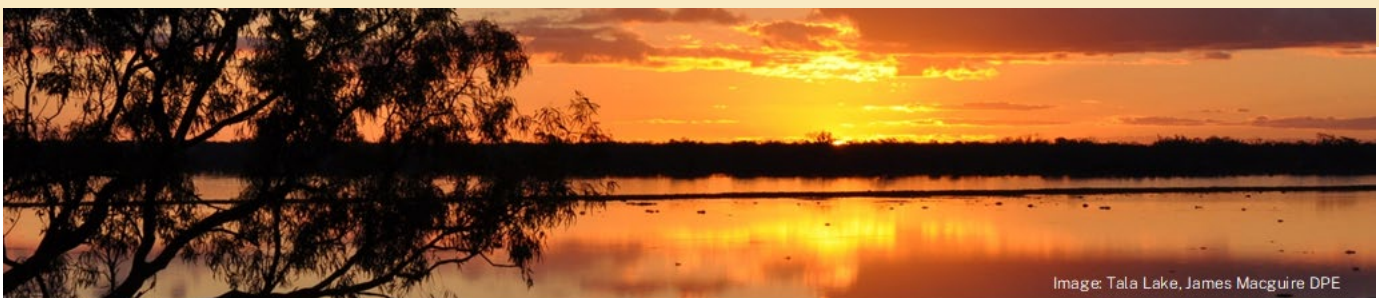
A floodplain management plan does not provide information on the different types of cultural areas or show cultural areas on a map. Instead, the areas are protected by the establishment of management zones. If a cultural area needs floodwater, a floodplain management plan will map (and protect) the pathway for floodwater to get there.

#### Places that need flooding

- Wetlands, lagoons and waterholes (Ceremony or Dreaming sites, scarred or carved trees, resource gathering areas or places that are used for cultural activities)
- Other places that could be used for cultural activities (stone or stick fish traps)

#### Places that may be damaged by flooding

- Camp sites, burial grounds, shell middens
- Other Ceremony, Dreaming or truth-telling sites



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## How do floodplain management plans protect cultural areas?

Floodplain management plans map wetlands, lagoons, and waterholes and the pathways (floodway) that connect them back to the main river or creek. The rules in floodplain management plans keep these floodways open to ensure these places get the water they need to survive.

Floodplain management plans set rules for all flood work applications and a strict assessment process that prevents any impacts on areas of cultural significance. They also allow for the approval of flood works that will protect or enhance areas of Aboriginal cultural significance. For example:

- Levee banks to protect places that may be damaged by flooding, such as burial grounds or shell middens
- Structures designed to direct floodwaters into waterholes or lagoons.

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## How does AHIMS protect cultural areas?

When an application for a flood work approval, water supply work approval or use approval is being assessed, a search of AHIMS must be completed. The location and construction of any work or use area, including a flood work, must prevent any impact on areas of cultural significance.

Everyone has a responsibility to prevent harm to areas of cultural significance. This is particularly important before commencing any earthworks. To demonstrate that consideration has been given to preventing harm to areas of cultural significance, a search of AHIMS is the easiest and most comprehensive approach.

There are penalties under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* if an activity harms an area of cultural significance.

For more information on AHIMS, including how to record a site or report damage to a site, please visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritage](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritage) > Search heritage databases > AHIMS.

The most effective way to protect Aboriginal cultural values on the floodplain is to ensure as many places as possible are recorded in AHIMS.

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## Further information

Find maps and other documents on the department's website to help you understand floodplain management plans at [water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/floodplain-management/plans](http://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/floodplain-management/plans), or contact us at [floodplain.planning@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:floodplain.planning@dpie.nsw.gov.au).