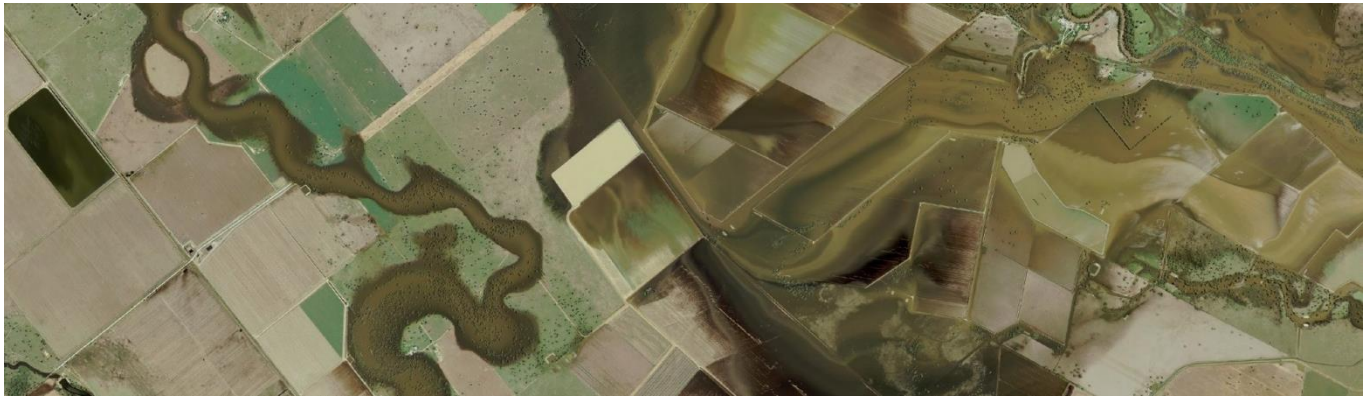


Replacement floodplain management plans for the Southern Murray–Darling Basin



The NSW Department of Planning and Environment is transitioning floodplain management plans from the *Water Act 1912* (Water Act) to the *Water Management Act 2000* (WM Act). This means existing localised plans in the southern Murray–Darling Basin that were developed under the Water Act will undergo review and be replaced in accordance with the WM Act, as has occurred in the northern Murray–Darling Basin.

What are floodplain management plans?

Floodplain management plans provide the basis for coordinating flood work development in critical areas by mapping floodways and setting standardised rules and assessment criteria for flood work approvals. Under the WM Act, any floodplain structure (such as levees, infrastructure protection works and roads) which is likely to affect the behaviour of floodwater requires assessment and approval as a **flood work**. Plans developed under the WM Act will continue to:

- identify the existing and natural flooding regimes
- identify the ecological benefits of flooding
- identify existing flood works
- deal with the risk to life and property from flooding.

In addition, plans developed under the WM Act will consider:

- the existing planning arrangements in existing localised Water Act plans
- the principles for water management specified in the WM Act
- updated flooding and landscape information
- feedback from community consultation.

Existing approvals granted under Part 8 of the Water Act (now converted to flood work approvals under the WM Act) will continue to be valid, however there will be changes to the process for landholders making an application for flood work approvals in the future or for those amending existing approvals.

Existing localised plans in the Southern Basin

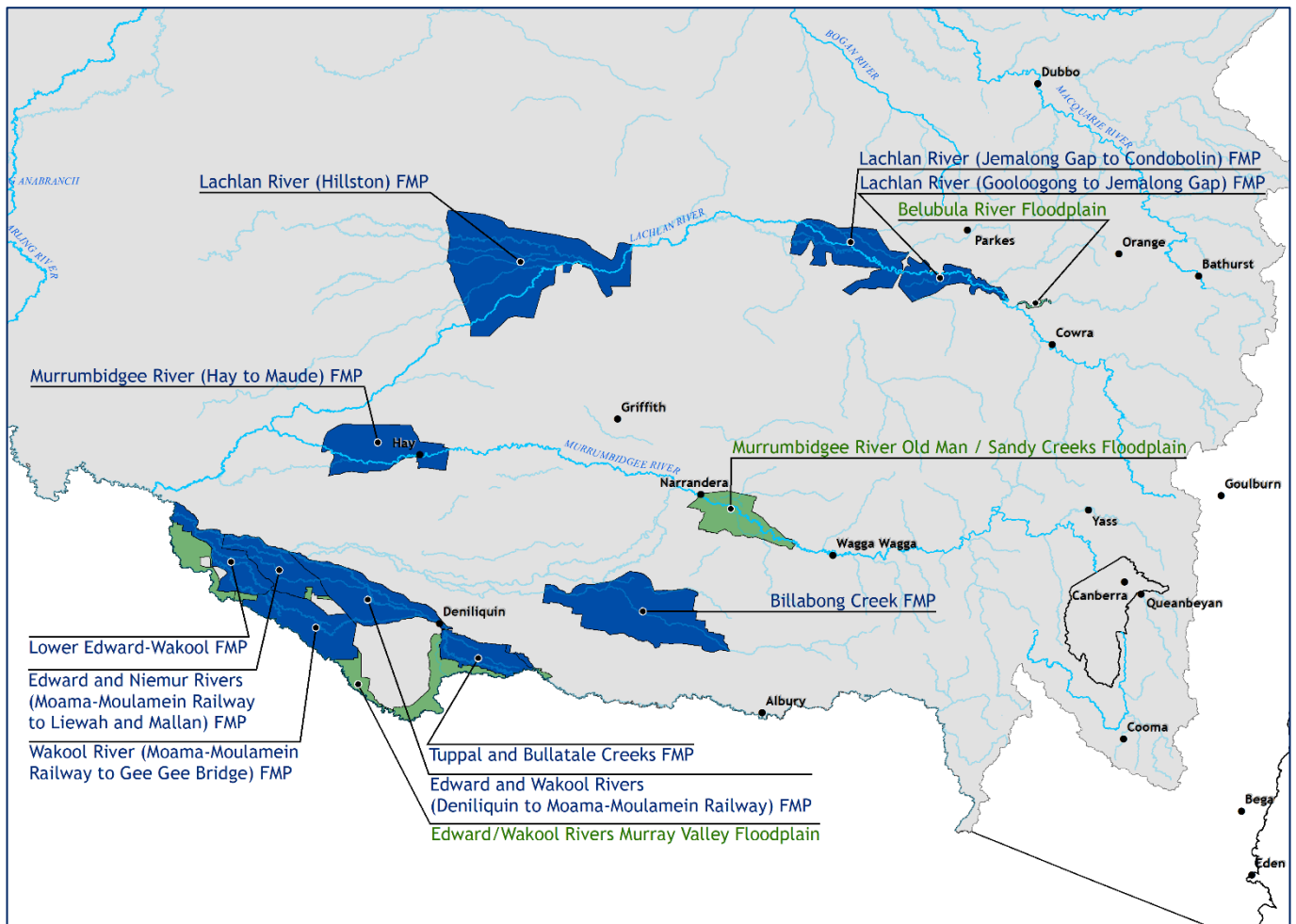


Figure 1. The southern Murray-Darling Basin has 10 localised floodplain management plans developed under the Water Act, along with 2 declared floodplains.

The southern Murray-Darling Basin currently has 10 localised floodplain management plans developed under the Water Act and 2 declared floodplains. The replacement of these plans under the WM Act will be based on a whole-of-valley approach and will include the declaration of floodplains that match the new plans:

- The Lachlan River Valley has 3 localised plans and one declared floodplain which will be replaced with a single floodplain management plan and associated declared floodplain.
- The Murray River Valley has 5 localised plans which will be replaced with a single floodplain management plan and associated declared floodplain.
- The Murrumbidgee River Valley has 2 localised plans and one declared floodplain which will be replaced with 2 floodplain management plans and associated declared floodplains.

How the new plans are made and what they look like

Work on southern floodplain management plan replacement is in early stages. However, it is anticipated that this project will be completed over the next 3 to 4 years. Floodplain management plans are based on technical advice from a wide range of government departments and community groups representing agricultural, environmental, First Nations, fisheries and other water interests.

The technical process for developing new floodplain management plans involves defining an overall boundary for the floodplain and categorising different areas within the floodplain into management zones. Each management zone has different rules and assessment criteria catering to the local risk of expected flooding.

High-resolution aerial Lidar is used to map and create a detailed model of the floodplain, through which simulated flood events that are representative of the local area are run. The depth and velocity of flood water in these models are further cross-checked with existing floodway networks, aerial photography, river gauge data of historical flood events, cultural values and environmental considerations to form the basis of the management zone designation.

Plan development is further guided by a comprehensive consultation process incorporating local expertise, with targeted consultation events, formal public exhibition and opportunities for property scale feedback. An Interagency Regional Panel reviews the draft plan throughout each stage of development. All plans require approval from the Minister for Lands and Water, and concurrence from the Minister for the Environment.

For additional detail on floodplain management plans, please refer to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment website <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-programs/plans>.