Floodplain harvesting

Outcome from consultations

Community consultation on the NSW Floodplain Harvesting Monitoring and Auditing Strategy

In November 2018 a draft Floodplain Harvesting Monitoring and Auditing Strategy was released for your comment. Here's what you told us.

Quick stats

32 submissions received

9 engagement events including a state-wide webinar

215 participants

7 locations across NSW

more than **180** questions and comments

6 newspaper advertisements

The public were given 40 days to submit feedback on the draft strategy. In October and December 2018, the department held eight consultation sessions—in Tamworth, Dubbo, Moree, Narrabri, Narromine, Bourke, Sydney—and ran a webinar session that attracted 215 participants. We received 32 written submissions during the consultation period.

What you told us and how we change our approach in response

The key concerns voiced were around the measurement technology, reporting requirements and rainfall run-off provisions proposed in the draft strategy.

Table 1 gives a summary of how we have revised our approaches in these areas based on your feedback. The changes will be incorporated into the final strategy.

Table 1. Summary of the revisions to the draft strategy based on community feedback

Feedback from submission	Draft strategy approach	Revised approach
Technology Gauge boards are outdated technology.	Use gauge boards on private on-farm storages to measure floodplain harvesting.	Use accurate, reliable and tamper proof storage level meters on private on-farm storages to measure floodplain harvesting.
Reporting requirements Proposed requirements are onerous and unsafe. Self-reporting would not adequately support compliance.	Landholders manually read gauge boards: • daily in the harvesting event • weekly in irrigation season • monthly all year.	Continuous storage devices collect storage level and volumes automatically via telemetry. This directly addresses concerns safety and significantly reduces the need for self-reporting.
Rainfall run-off A proportion of rainfall run-off is artificially created by the application of irrigation water.	Consider all rainfall run-off as floodplain harvesting take.	This issue is being considered and will be addressed as part of the Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan.
Contaminated rainfall run-off The first flush rule does not allow all contaminated water to be captured, which may result in a pollution risk and business inefficiencies.	Consider the first 55 mm of on-farm rainfall run-off after application of a registered chemical to be contaminated. Floodplain harvesting licence holders can go into debit to take this contaminated run-off. Any such account debit will reduce the volume of floodplain harvesting that can occur in the next year.	Consider all on-farm rainfall run-off as contaminated, and allow floodplain harvesting licence holders to go into debit up to 100% of their accounts to take this contaminated run-off. Any such account debit will reduce the volume of floodplain harvesting that can occur in the next year.

Timeline to improving the measurement of floodplain harvesting

Phase one

October 2019–April 2020 : Test and approve continuous storage level measurement devices

April 2020–June 2021	:	Landholders install approved devices
July 2021	:	Commence licensing and measurement

Phase two

July 2019–June 2021	:	Develop in collaboration with QLD and MDBA a best practice guideline for measuring floodplain harvesting
July 2021–June 2022	:	Enhance the measurement approach to implement the best practice guideline