

September 2021 | ISSUE #29

Bold new strategy launched to secure NSW's water future



The NSW Government has launched a bold new 20-year strategy to secure the state's water resources. The focus is on ensuring water security for our communities, industries and environment to thrive, now and into the future. This strategy will guide how we respond to a changing climate and increased demand for water. It includes planning for new supply options such as stormwater harvesting and recycling as well as guiding decisions on how, where and what water infrastructure investments are made.

In the next 12 months, we'll refocus our efforts on water conservation and leakage reduction in our cities, towns and regional centres, and deliver a state-wide water efficiency framework.

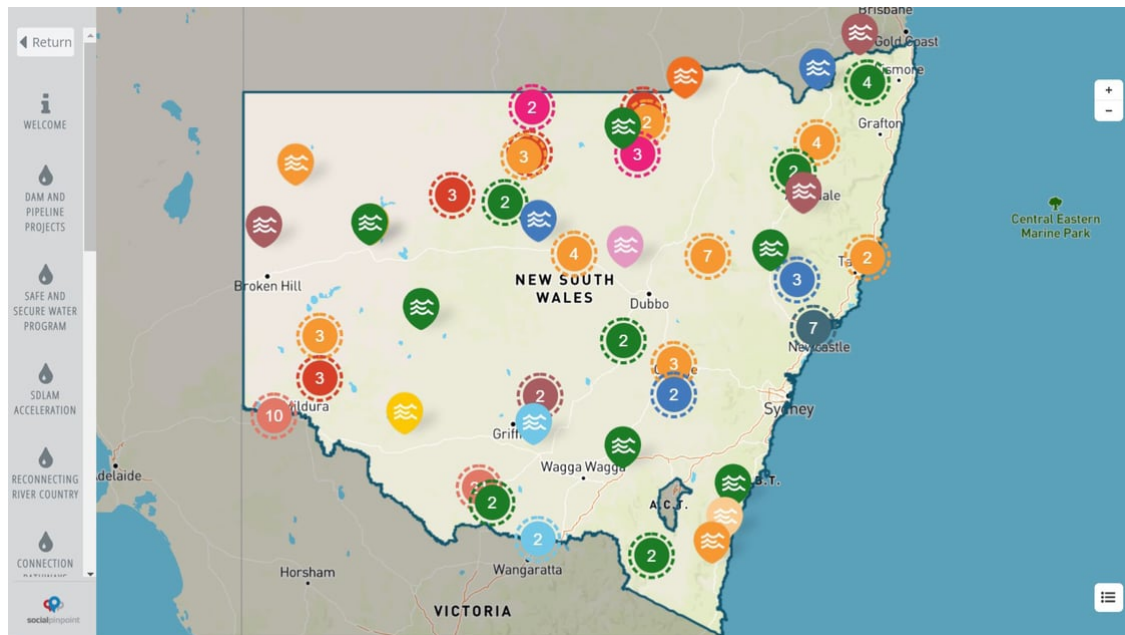
We're also investigating and investing in supply options including stormwater harvesting and water re-use, and looking at developing a consistent approach to water restrictions. The NSW Water Strategy was informed by community and stakeholder feedback and the 'what we heard' [report is available here](#).

The strategy is accompanied by an implementation plan which charts the immediate steps we will be taking towards delivering our long-term goals. The department will

publicly report progress against the implementation plan and update it annually.

Read the [final strategy and implementation plan](#) on our website.

New Water Projects Map for NSW launched



A new tool for people to access information about water infrastructure projects across NSW has been launched. The water projects map will make it easier to find out about initiatives that are either completed, committed to or being investigated as part of the NSW Water Strategy.

The map shows how we are working in partnership across the water sector at all levels of government to invest in water infrastructure and service improvements.

[Visit the map](#)

Have your say on Greater Sydney's water future



The NSW Government has released the draft [Greater Sydney Water Strategy](#) for comment.

The strategy charts a long-term pathway for how we will manage water resources in Greater Sydney, including the Illawarra and Blue Mountains. It sets out a vision, priorities and actions for a resilient and sustainable water supply, addressing growth and preparing for a changing climate.

The draft strategy emphasises conserving water, while exploring water supply options that don't depend on rainfall. It aims for a cooler and greener city, improved waterways and coastal environments, and supports the water interests of Aboriginal communities.

We want to hear your views on the outcomes, strategic directions and options outlined in the draft strategy. Your feedback will be used to inform the final Greater Sydney Water Strategy, to be published in 2022.

To learn more, attend an information session or have your say, visit [our website](#).

Northern Inland region water users - make sure you meet the non-urban water metering rules by 1 Dec

Water meters are the key tool for measurement and monitoring of water usage in NSW. Accurate metering is essential for fairness and equity of water sharing between users. The non-urban water metering framework is being rolled out in stages over five years.

Three easy steps to help you get meter ready:

1. Check your licence and approval details on the [NSW Water Register](#) to see what is listed and whether there are any existing metering conditions that you need to comply with now. WaterNSW can assist you to [amend your approval](#) if you need to update any details including the size of your installed pump or make your work inactive.

2. Use the NSW Government's [online metering guidance tool](#) to see if, and how, the rules apply to you.
3. If the rules apply to you, contact a duly qualified person (DQP), such as a certified meter installer (CMI) to discuss your situation. Visit [Irrigation Australia's website](#) for a list of Certified Meter Installers and Validators.

Water users will need to ensure that they have compliant metering equipment by the relevant roll-out date. Read more on [our website](#) and watch this [short video](#) from the Natural Resources Access Regulator about the new rules.

Planned change to meters for small water users

The NSW Government will make it easier for up to 500 small water users to access water under new rules which deliver more consistency to the Government's metering policy.

Up to 500 small water users who take water under a domestic and stock water access licence will soon be exempt from non-urban metering rules, fixing an inconsistency in the NSW Government's metering policy.

The exemption will apply to pumps smaller than 100 mm and bores that are smaller than 200 mm, which are used solely to take water under a domestic and stock water access licence.

The exemption will not apply to works that supply town water, take water from at-risk groundwater sources or properties with other metered works. The exemption, once drafted, will apply until 1 December 2024. Working with Water NSW, the department will directly contact water users who will be affected by the exemption.

Read the full media release.

Why are there different rules for managing water across NSW?



We've been working to provide better information to water users on how we manage water in NSW. As part of this, we're developing new explainer videos that address some commonly asked questions about water.

Our [latest video](#) explains why we have different rules for managing water in different parts of NSW. Visit our website for more information about your [local rules](#).

Increased water security in the pipeline for Coonabarabran



Construction is underway on the \$2.2 million Coonabarabran groundwater pipeline.

During the recent drought, Coonabarabran faced a critical water shortage when Timor Dam fell to just 18 per cent capacity. In response, the NSW Government invested \$1.7 million to develop three new bores. An additional \$2.2 million in funding, administered under the Safe and Secure Water Program, will provide an

8.25 kilometre pipeline linking the new bores directly to the town's water treatment plant.

The pipeline will give the community control over where town water is drawn from. At the same time, the new bores ensure Coonabarabran has a more sustainable, flexible supply of water, as the town's water now comes from more than one source. This will ensure the town has access to clean and safe drinking water if there is ever a break or outage of the mainline to Timor Dam. It will also improve the community's resilience to drought.

The pipeline is due to be completed in January 2022.

Learn more about [Safe and Secure Water Program](#).

Remote assessment of floodplain harvesting

Our analysts have used remote sensing technology (satellite imagery) to estimate how much water was likely to have been taken from floodplains earlier this year. Direct measurement of floodplain harvesting is not possible until the NSW Government's floodplain harvesting policy is rolled out, which means that remote sensing is our best available technology.

Our estimates are that around 221 GL could have been taken from floodplains, compared with 206 GL through licensed river take from the same valleys at that time. Despite this, the Menindee Lakes have filled to capacity in this time period, with further releases and good flows being maintained from the Menindee Lakes.

Floodplain Management Plan for the Macquarie valley completes the set for the northern valleys of NSW

The Macquarie Valley Floodplain Management Plan commenced on 24 September 2021. This plan is the final of six plans developed as part of the reform of floodplain management across the northern valleys of the NSW Murray–Darling Basin.

Floodplain management plans are important because they provide the framework for coordinating the development of flood works on a whole-of-valley basis. These plans outline the types of flood works that may be considered for approval, advertising requirements for approvals and standards for the acceptable impacts of the construction of flood works.

This is part of our work to reform how water on floodplains is managed.

Learn more.

Cockburn River groundwater and surface water connectivity study underway



We've begun a study looking at the relationship between the take of groundwater and surface water pools in the Cockburn River in the Peel valley. The pools and underlying aquifer are an important water source for domestic, stock and industry use.

The groundwater and surface water in this area is highly connected. The works are to get a better understanding of the effect of groundwater extraction on the surface water pools, and how it affects the habitat of endangered populations of Eel-tailed catfish and Murray cod.

This work will help us develop options for daily access rules for groundwater licences for consultation with stakeholders. You can [read a progress report](#) on our website with information on study sites, data collected to date and what is happening next.

We will share findings with stakeholders when the study is complete later this year.

Officials talk Basin progress

The Basin Officials Committee (BOC) met on 16 September 2021 to discuss Basin Plan implementation and the management of Basin water resources. NSW Basin Official Jim Bentley said that it was important for NSW to continue to advocate for improved river outcomes and practical implementation of the Basin Plan.

A key focus for NSW has been the Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) projects in the Southern Basin and the need for flexibility in delivering these projects to achieve the economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes intended by the Basin Plan. NSW also continues to seek improvements in transparency and accessibility of information to water users and Basin communities.

The BOC is responsible for providing advice to the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council, and for implementing policy and decisions of the Ministerial Council such as state water shares, and the funding and delivery of natural resource management programs. The BOC consists of one senior official from each Basin jurisdiction.

Learn more about the BOC and the outcomes from its most recent meeting on 16 September. BOC is next scheduled to meet in November 2021.

Yanco Creek Modernisation Project online information sessions



With COVID-19 restrictions continuing across the state, we've rolled out online engagement sessions to continue community engagement on the [Yanco Creek Modernisation Project](#). The project is investigating the modernisation of infrastructure in the Yanco Creek system, including the Yanco, Billabong, Colombo and Forest Creeks.

Visit the [project's webpage](#) to see the presentations and to learn more about the project, or call 1300 081 047.

Get involved in the Reconnecting River Country Program

The Reconnecting River Country Program is inviting private landholders, First Nations people and community organisations to provide local knowledge and expertise to help shape the program. We'll ask for feedback on key components of the program through a series of discussions in person and/or online.

Applications to participate are now open and close on 15 October 2021. Visit the program website to learn how to get involved.

Water regulator ramps up website with new tools



The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) has revamped and expanded its website. It now includes:

- new e-tools [NRAR Assist](#) and the [Controlled activity exemption e-tool](#)
- a guide on which government agency or entity water users should contact for their needs
- case studies of NRAR's concluded prosecutions
- an interactive map of NRAR's active prosecutions
- a huge 'How to comply' section including metering rules
- how NRAR uses technology to find non-compliance.

The NRAR Assist e-tool is designed as the first point of contact with NRAR for water users, guiding them to the part of the website they need by asking a series of questions.

The Controlled activity exemption e-tool should be used along with our existing Waterfront land e-tool. This helps landholders, developers and consultants determine if they need a controlled activity approval from NRAR before starting work on waterfront land. This should save everyone time and money, as almost half the controlled activity applications NRAR receives are unnecessary.

Controlled activity applications on the website now also redirect to the NSW Planning Portal. This will give users a more streamlined experience and faster processing times.

Visit the [NRAR website](#) for more information. Find all of [NRAR's e-tools here](#).

Drought Recovery

Visit our website for the latest information on drought recovery in NSW.

Have your say

Current and upcoming consultations and information events:

[Off-farm Water Efficiency Program](#) is seeking feedback on the socio-economic benefits outlined in Murrumbidgee Irrigation's funding application. Visit the website to view the application and provide feedback. Submissions close Sunday, 3 October 2021.

[Dungowan Dam and Pipeline Environmental Impact Statement](#) - register for an online community information session:

- Tuesday, 5 October 2021
 - Session 1: 9:00 am – 10:30 am
 - Session 2: 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm

[Reconnecting River Country Program](#) is seeking feedback on key components of the program. Applications to participate close Friday, 15 October 2021.

[Draft Greater Sydney Water Strategy](#).

We want to hear your views on the outcomes, strategic directions, and options outlined in the draft Greater Sydney Water Strategy. [Submit your feedback](#) by Monday, 8 November 2021.

- [Register](#) for an online community information session:
 - Tuesday, 12 October (3:00 pm – 5:00 pm) - First Nations focus
 - Thursday, 14 October (11:00 am – 1:00 pm)

[Water Engagement Roundup](#) - this monthly webinar provides updates on current consultation and engagement about important water policy and programs. Find the dates for upcoming sessions and recordings of past webinars on [our website](#).

[View all](#)

Latest water news from the department

- [Fairer metering for small water users](#)
- [Rising river alert – Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam](#)
- [Securing Greater Sydney water supply to be engine room for economic growth](#)
- [Rising river alert – Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam](#)
- [Innovation at heart of NSW Water Strategy](#)
- [Oberon community the winner after regulator's deal with gardens](#)
- [Organisations needed to run First Nations water management traineeship program](#)
- [Cockburn River water connectivity study progressing](#)

[View all](#)

Contact us

Water News is our monthly update on water planning, management and reform in NSW. If you have any questions or feedback contact us at:

NSW Government – Water Relations

Phone +61 2 9338 6600

water.relations@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Subscribe to Water News

View previous newsletters



Department of Planning, Industry & Environment, Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street, Parramatta, NSW
2150, Australia

[Unsubscribe](#) [Manage preferences](#)