

# Better Bidgee Program

## Fish Friendly Water Extraction



## 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 Fish Friendly Water Extraction initiative

Many communities, businesses and farmers rely on water from the Murrumbidgee for their livelihood. However, water extraction can inadvertently cause harm to fish that get sucked into pumps and diverted into channels, where they are lost from the waterways.

The proposed Fish Friendly Water Extraction initiative would deliver a major program of installing [modern fish screens](#) and other infrastructure works to stop fish and debris entering pumps and diversions.

### Potential benefits

This initiative would have significant environmental and economic benefits including:

- up to 90 per cent reduction in fish loss from irrigation infrastructure, saving millions of native fish each year
- reduced operating costs to farmers with less money and time spent maintaining their pumps
- potential water savings, as less debris in supply lines means more water efficient delivery.

### Location map

The location of the proposed Fish Friendly Water Extraction initiative is shown in the map below.

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## 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.

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](#).

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### 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@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:better.bidgee@dpie.nsw.gov.au)
- visit [dpie.nsw.gov.au/better-bidgee](https://dpie.nsw.gov.au/better-bidgee)

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