

Better Bidgee Program

Gooragool and Mantangary Lagoons initiative



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 Gooragool and Mantangary lagoons initiative

The proposed Gooragool and Mantangary lagoons initiative would involve purchasing up to 1,200ha of land, including Mantangary Lagoon to manage for improved ecological outcomes. This would provide a haven for native flora and fauna and support the protection of listed species such as migratory birds, the southern bell frog and golden perch. It would also ensure the future sustainability of an environmentally and culturally significant area along the Murrumbidgee River system.

Potential benefits

A key driver for the project is the opportunity for local First Nations communities to play a greater role in managing the area, and by doing so providing First Nations employment opportunities, improved health outcomes, cultural education and greater Connection to Country.

Other potential benefits include:

- increased native fish passage through the decommissioning of a regulator along Fosters Creek
- expansion of the conservation estate in the area secure refuge and breeding habitats for native fish, frogs and water birds.

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Location map

The location of the proposed Gooragool and Mantangary lagoons initiative is shown in red in the map below.



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.

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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](#).

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@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- visit dpi.nsw.gov.au/better-bidgee

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