



Water Infrastructure NSW

Strategy for delivering
Aboriginal community
outcomes

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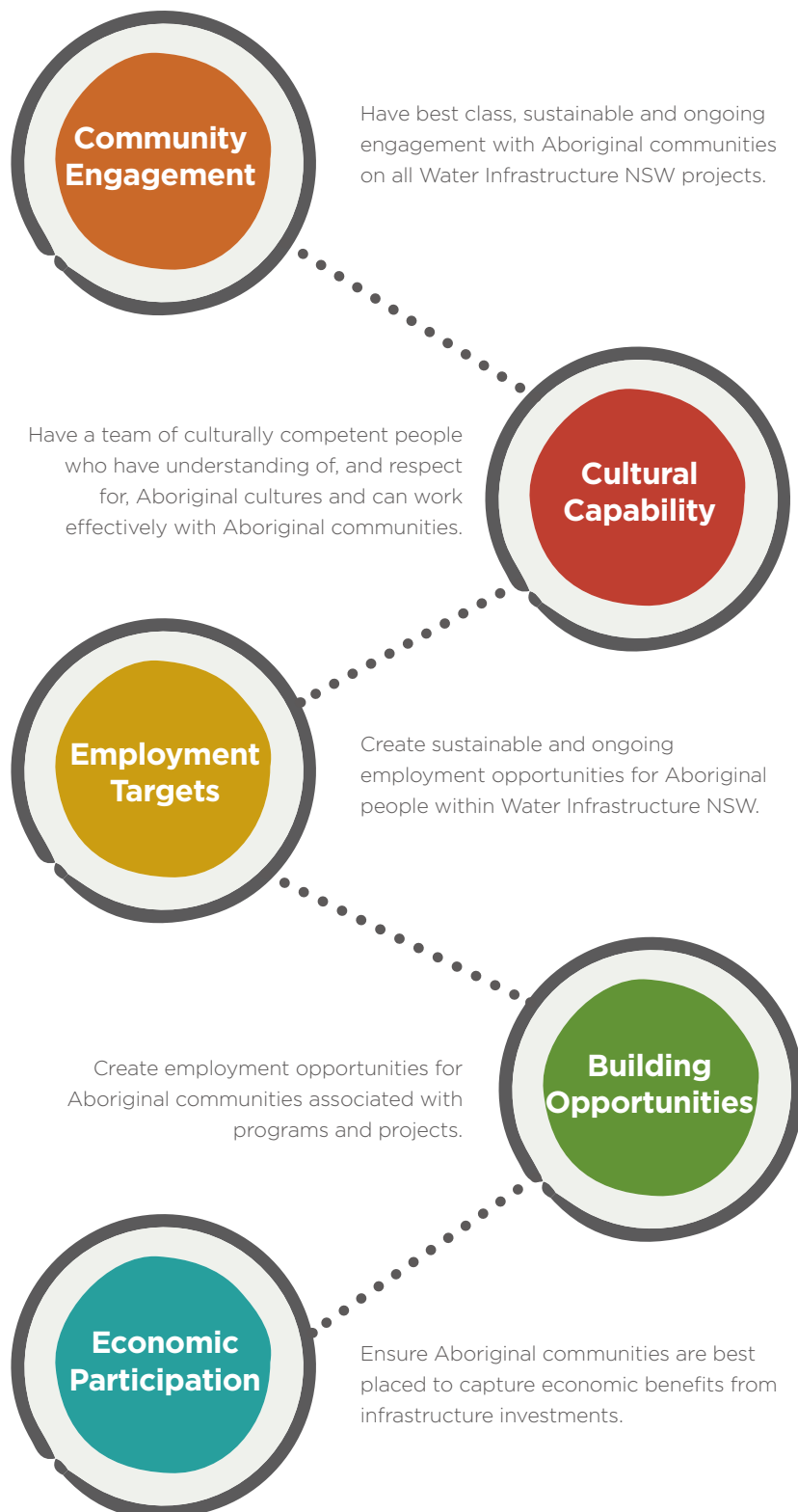
Delivering outcomes for Aboriginal communities

Water Infrastructure NSW recognises and acknowledges the unique relationship and deep connection to Country that Aboriginal people have, as the Traditional Owners and first peoples of Australia.

Water Infrastructure NSW is committed to supporting close involvement and participation of Aboriginal people in water infrastructure, research and management. We acknowledge that there is much for us to learn from the perspectives, knowledge, relationships, cultural practices and environmental protocols that are alive and vibrant in Aboriginal communities. Further, with the anticipated water infrastructure spend in the next decade, it is important for us to design early, and in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, how best to ensure that communities can share and benefit in the outcomes of these investments.

This Strategy for Delivering Aboriginal Community Outcomes (the strategy) and its implementation demonstrate Water Infrastructure NSW's commitment to putting Aboriginal engagement and inclusion at the centre of how it does business and delivers on its objectives.

The strategy outlines five key focus areas where Water Infrastructure NSW will focus its efforts.



Context

Establishment of Water Infrastructure NSW

Over the next 10 years, NSW water agencies will deliver at least \$4 billion of new bulk water and wastewater infrastructure into regional and metropolitan NSW. This may increase as our regional water strategies are finalised and infrastructure solutions are identified.

The current structure of the NSW water sector has created a disconnect between the Government's strategy and the delivery of outcomes.

Various water sector projects are designed and delivered by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Water division (DPIE Water), three State Owned Corporations (WaterNSW, Sydney Water and Hunter Water) and 93 different Local Water Utilities.

Misaligned objectives between agencies, competition for technical skills, insufficient planning and coordination, as well as funding and budgetary complexities, has resulted in delays and inefficient project delivery.

Water Infrastructure NSW was established in June 2020 within DPIE Water, as part of the broader suite of reforms to the water sector to help address these issues.

Responsibility for projects being developed and delivered by DPIE Water transitioned to Water Infrastructure NSW in November 2020, with responsibility for developing and delivering other major water infrastructure projects to transition to Water Infrastructure NSW over the course of 2021.

Role of Water Infrastructure NSW

Water Infrastructure NSW is expected to deliver on a number of objectives:

- lift the capacity of the water sector to deliver critical water services
- provide better strategic oversight and coordination of critical water infrastructure investment
- coordinate services and capabilities across the sector to reduce competition for technical skills and minimise delivery risks for significant projects
- provide more efficient and effective development and delivery of nominated projects.

Water Infrastructure NSW will do this by:

- acting on behalf of DPIE Water as project sponsor for all government-initiated water infrastructure priority projects and programs
- leading the oversight and governance of those projects being developed and/or delivered by a State-Owned Corporation (SOC) on behalf of Government
- developing, procuring and delivering assets on behalf of DPIE, including either transferring the asset to its owner on completion or owning and operating the asset on behalf of the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation
- coordinating and overseeing the entire water sector infrastructure portfolio through monitoring and reporting to the Minister, central Government and Executive
- leading engagement with industry on the water investment pipeline
- working collaboratively with regional councils to expedite delivery of priority projects, to reduce risks and streamline funding and financing of these projects.

Government-initiated water infrastructure priority projects and programs include those being developed and delivered by DPIE Water, projects being funded (partly or wholly) by the NSW Government or projects that the NSW Government has directed State Owned Corporations (SOCs) or Local Water Utilities to deliver, including those projects identified in state and regional water strategies.

Water Infrastructure NSW's role may extend beyond government-initiated projects and programs where it is considered appropriate, such as high-value and high-risk capital projects being developed and delivered by SOCs or Local Water Utilities.

Alignment with Our Place on Country and the Aboriginal Water Strategy

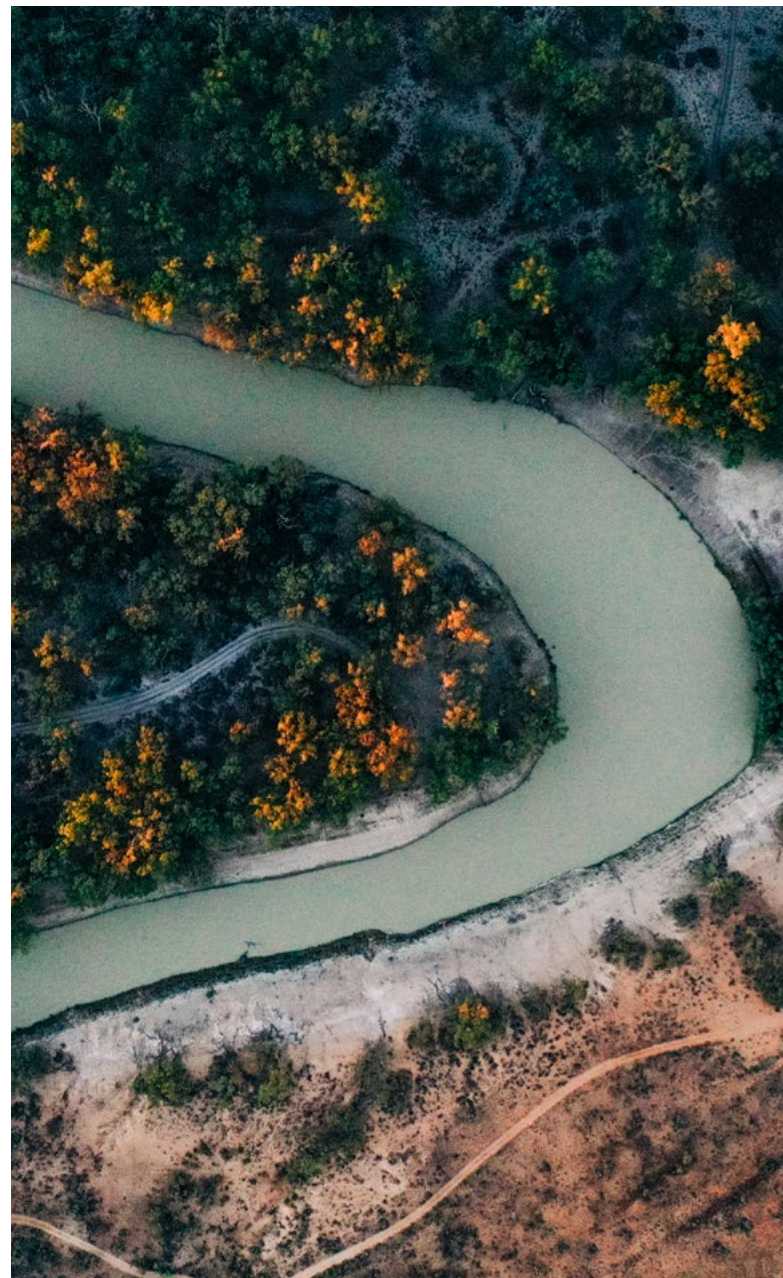
In 2020, DPIE released *Our Place on Country*, the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2020-2023. The vision of the Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy 2020-2023 is for the aspirations of Aboriginal people of NSW to be advanced through the work of DPIE and the Department of Regional New South Wales.

Our Place on Country builds on the following six principles:

- **acknowledge**, value and embed Aboriginal cultural knowledge and world views in program delivery and business as usual
- **respect** Aboriginal people's rights, obligations and roles as Traditional Custodians of the land, sea and waterways
- **promote** and strengthen connections to culture and identity
- **prioritise** economic independence for Aboriginal people through increased employment and enterprise development
- **establish** and maintain meaningful ongoing relationships with Aboriginal people and Country
- **recognise** appropriate engagement and connection with Aboriginal people and Country as core to our service delivery.

A priority action from *Our Place on Country* is delivery of an *Aboriginal Water Strategy* to improve Aboriginal people's access to water for cultural and economic uses.

Water Infrastructure NSW's *Strategy for Delivering Aboriginal Community Outcomes* aligns with the principles and outcomes in *Our Place on Country* and forms its commitment to ensuring Aboriginal community outcomes are at the centre of how we work and how we deliver on our objectives. As implementation of this strategy progresses, Water Infrastructure NSW will ensure deliverables support outcomes identified within the *Aboriginal Water Strategy* and associated work.



Strategy for delivering Aboriginal community outcomes

Our priority initiatives

The table below outlines the priority initiatives we are committed to on our journey in delivering outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Priority	Working Towards	Initiatives
Community Engagement	Conducting best class, sustainable and ongoing engagement with Aboriginal communities on all Water Infrastructure NSW projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have respect for Aboriginal people's knowledge and wisdom around cultural practice and science, ensuring we acknowledge the value this adds to projects and programs• Employ a dedicated Manager of First Nations Engagement and other identified roles to support this stream of work• Develop an overall strategy for Aboriginal community engagement across the Water Infrastructure NSW portfolio• Develop and implement specific Aboriginal engagement plans for each project or program
Cultural Capability	Being a team of culturally competent people who have understanding of and respect for Aboriginal cultures and can work effectively with Aboriginal communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mandate Aboriginal cultural competence training for all staff• Embed cultural safety into all WINSW engagement practices and procedures• Provide tailored and targeted training and mentoring for project teams on local Aboriginal knowledge and traditions

Priority	Working Towards	Initiatives
Employment Targets	Creating sustainable and ongoing employment and contract opportunities for Aboriginal people within Water Infrastructure NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop capacity and set achievable targets for Aboriginal employment across the Water Infrastructure NSW portfolio • Employ and develop Aboriginal people in senior roles • Ensure access to ongoing mentoring, coaching and professional development opportunities for our Aboriginal staff
Building Opportunities	Creation of employment pathways and opportunities for Aboriginal communities associated with water infrastructure programs and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the types of employment opportunities that will be created due to the multi-billion-dollar investment in water infrastructure • Work with other government agencies and external organisations, including Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and businesses, to ensure specific training is available for Aboriginal community members ahead of project commencement • Explore funding opportunities to support community upskilling, training and development initiatives
Economic Participation	Aboriginal communities are best placed to capture economic benefits from infrastructure investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy for Aboriginal economic value capture including identifying procurement strategies, businesses opportunities and training • Develop an implementation and communications plan to work with communities and support them to identify and realise benefits from water infrastructure investments

Our commitment and investment

By implementing and delivering on our five focus areas and priority actions, Water Infrastructure NSW is working towards Aboriginal community outcomes and enablement. At all times our objective will be to put Aboriginal engagement and inclusion at the centre of our work.

Our leadership commits to being accountable for building community trust. We will work to continuously improve our engagement with communities, ensuring our approach is resilient and fit for the future. We will invest in, and upskill, our staff to develop confidence in our approach to Aboriginal engagement. We will conduct research and continue to be adaptive to Aboriginal community needs. We will also invest in our organisation, to ensure we live the inclusive values we champion and support our Aboriginal staff.



Implementing the strategy

Implementation action plan Timing and reporting

To implement the strategy, an Implementation Action Plan (the implementation plan) will be developed to outline the specific actions required to deliver on each of the listed initiatives per key focus area. The plan will also outline accountabilities, timeframes for delivery and key performance measures for each initiative to ensure actions are tied to outcomes.

To develop the implementation plan, an Implementation Working Group will be convened comprising staff from across Water Infrastructure NSW. These staff will not only be responsible for the delivery of assigned initiatives, but also for embedding the strategy and its vision throughout Water Infrastructure NSW.

Throughout development of the implementation plan, targeted consultation with significant stakeholders, including Aboriginal communities, will be key in developing robust approaches to the delivery of priority actions.

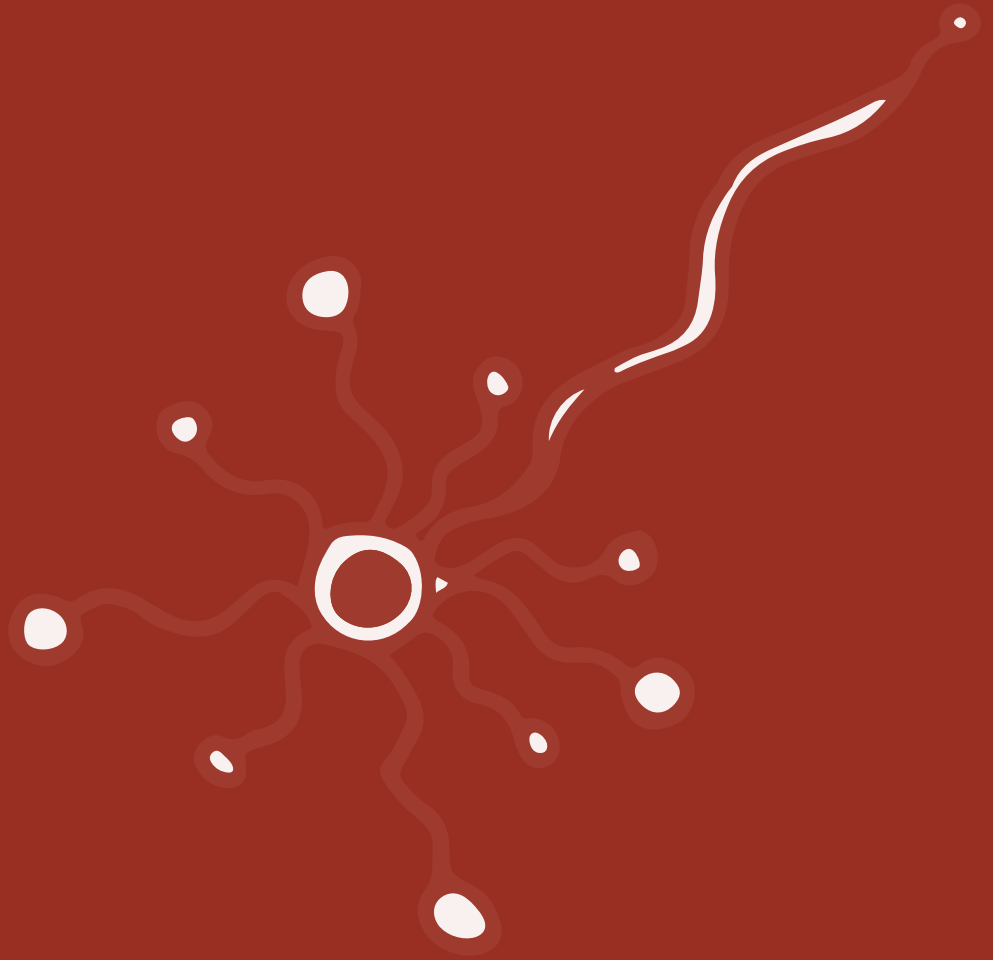
While the timing of achievement of the initiatives will be decided in the implementation plan, the plan itself, is expected to be finalised by October 2021 and will be made publicly available.

Progress reporting against the implementation plan will be undertaken each quarter, with the first quarterly report to occur in December 2021. Progress reporting will be provided to the Water Infrastructure NSW Leadership Team, to allow for intervention if required to progress the commitments made as part of the strategy.

Strategy timeline



For more information visit water.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw



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