

What We Heard Summary

Lachlan Region Draft Regional Water Strategy



December 2021

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is developing 12 regional water strategies to provide long-term tailored water management solutions for NSW's regional communities.

A comprehensive consultation program accompanied the release of the draft strategy. The **What We Heard** report summarises the key issues we heard during the public exhibition. It highlights how your feedback has informed the next steps in developing the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy. This consultation summary contains highlights of the [What We Heard](#) report.

We received a range of feedback on the draft strategy, including the individual proposed options. The following themes emerged during this consultation:



Climate and modeling

The new climate modelling generated interest, with discussion focused on its use in future decision making for water management in the region. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of using the new evidence to drive demand management and water efficiency options as well as develop better training and information sharing opportunities to assist communities prepare for climate change.



New and existing water infrastructure

The majority of feedback was related to the existing government commitments and options related to Lake Cargelligo. Stakeholders wanted more information and analysis of these infrastructure options, including detailed cost benefit assessments. Concern for environmental impacts of large infrastructure projects was expressed.



Aboriginal water rights and connection to Country

There was broad support for improving the recognition of First Nations/Aboriginal People's water rights, interests and access to water and Country. Suggestions were made for more engagement to support the development and achievement of tangible outcomes in the region.



Town water security and water-related amenities

The importance of protecting town water security in the region featured in the feedback. Stakeholders expressed concerns about the impacts of future climate change on water security and suggested initiatives to ensure communities have a secure water supply now and into the future.



Environmental health and connectivity

The need to protect the environment, ecosystem health and water quality was communicated in the feedback. Stakeholders expressed the view that the proposed options needed to include more consideration for the environment and water resources in the catchment. Feedback indicated that more options were needed to address downstream water needs.



Entitlement reliability and risk management

The potential climate change risks for future water availability and the reliability of entitlements in the region, were of major concern. Stakeholders emphasised the need to better understand the risks, to develop appropriate mitigation strategies, and to be better prepared for the future.



Groundwater

The importance of improving our knowledge of groundwater resources and their connection to surface water, was emphasised. Stakeholders also raised concerns about the impact of climate change on groundwater recharge.



Read the full [What We Heard](#) report at:
www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/regional-water-strategies

PUB21/823

Our Response

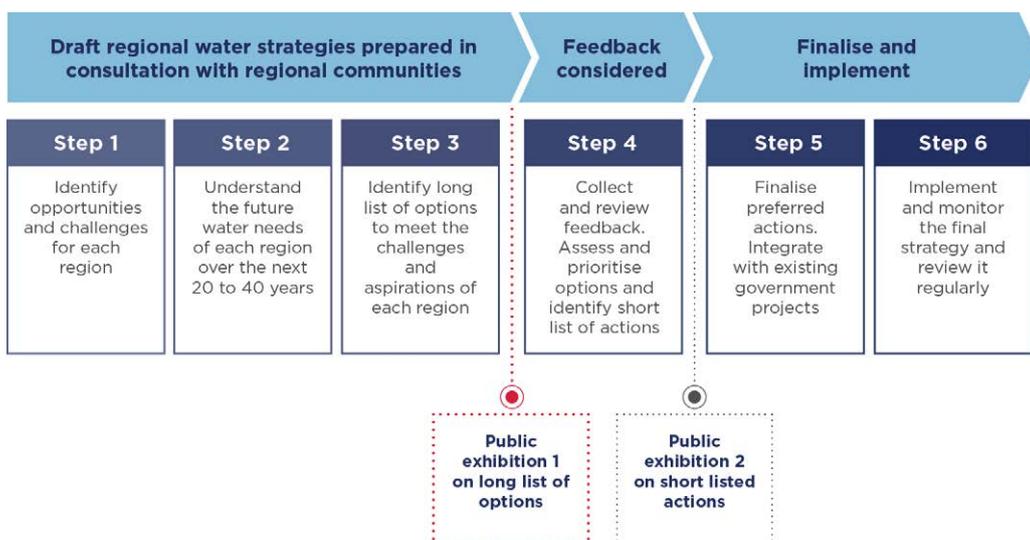
Your feedback has been used to refine and focus the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy and the options that will be shortlisted for further investigation. The NSW Water Strategy addresses issues raised in the feedback that are consistent across the state.

Our detailed response, set out in the draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy **What We Heard** Report, includes the following:

- Opportunities to progress *Aboriginal water rights* will be explored in the final regional water strategy as well as through priority 2 in the NSW Water Strategy.
- *Environmental and ecosystem health and connectivity* throughout the Lachlan catchment will be supplemented with additional options.
- There is an opportunity to consider *integrating land use and water management* earlier and more strategically through the planning system.
- Sustainable *groundwater* management will be enhanced with a state-wide focus through the NSW Groundwater Strategy.
- Additional options that support *economic prosperity and resilience* in the region are being examined under the NSW Water Strategy and the Future Ready Regions Strategy.

We will be undertaking a second round of public consultation on the short listed actions before the Lachlan Regional Water Strategy is finalised.

The draft Lachlan Regional Water Strategy was on public exhibition from 25 September - 13 December 2020. The development process for the regional water strategies is illustrated in the diagram below.



Engagement at a glance



5

phone consultation



1,390

unique website page visits



66

formal submissions



3

public information sessions

23 attendees



3

Aboriginal community sessions

9 attendees



2

live webinar

30 attendees