

June 2022 | ISSUE #36

Hydrometric gauging stations and upgrades in northern Murray Darling Basin



Example of gauges. Photo credit : Water NSW

Work has begun on the 5 new or upgraded gauging stations for communities in the northern Murray-Darling Basin to deliver critical water data to water users, communities, and water management agencies across northern NSW. The gauging stations are located near Wilcannia, Bourke, Walgett, Quambone and Brewarrina, and are part of the Hydrometric Network and Remote Sensing Program, funded by the Australian Government.

The NSW Government is in the process of identifying a further fifteen new or upgraded sites to improve water monitoring in the northern Murray–Darling Basin.

The gauging stations will deliver transparent, accurate and accessible data in real time to water users, communities and stakeholders alike, building on more than 1300 monitoring sites already available in real time to the public. Information available from the new stations will include stream levels, flow volumes, and water quality.

These sites will enhance the network so we can better manage stream connectivity, compliance, environmental water release, and extreme events. The new stations will add even more localised data, helping us better understand local conditions so we can better balance the needs of water users and the environment, and better prepare for floods and droughts.

Water users can access the data through tools including WaterNSW's [Water Insights portal](#) and [WaterLive App](#) and the Bureau of Meteorology's [Water Information Portal](#) and [Water Data Online](#).

Starting from July 2022, the department will seek stakeholder input on locations for the remaining stations via the department's [have your say page](#)

Washing machine replacement pilot program extended



Another 2,500 social housing tenants now have the chance to upgrade their washing machine for as little as \$150, to help save water and ease the cost of living, after the NSW Government expanded its successful washing machine replacement pilot.

There has been a great response to the new program since it launched in April with 3,000 washing machines. Building on this success, the NSW government is almost doubling the number of available machines, expanding the program statewide and extending the application period to 30 September 2022.

Each of these machines will save approximately 25,000 litres of water per year, which means that in one year the program could save enough water to fill 55 Olympic swimming pools. A new water and energy efficient front loading washing machine can also save you up to \$270 a year on water, energy and detergent bills.

If you are eligible under this scheme your contribution towards the cost of a new washing machine will be between \$150 to \$250, depending on the size and the model you choose. These discounted prices could save you more than \$600 off the recommended retail cost. There are no extra costs for installation or removal of your old machine.

Applications are open now and will close on 30 September 2022 (unless all machines are allocated before then). To confirm your eligibility and apply to purchase a new discounted washing machine, please visit the [department's website](#) or contact us at: washingmachines@dpie.nsw.gov.au

\$1.1 billion for a stronger NSW water future

The NSW Government recently announced that \$1.1 billion will be invested as part of the 2022-23 NSW budget. This will ensure the state has sustainable, secure and healthy water resources now and into the future.

This Budget includes funding for the planning and delivery of a raft of major water infrastructure projects, as well as new policies and programs that will better support the community even in the driest periods.

Budget highlights for water are:

\$369.6 million over the next 4 years including new funding of \$90 million to deliver the Safe and Secure Water program which co-funds vital water and sewerage infrastructure projects in every corner of regional NSW.

\$19.8 million over the next 3 years to begin implementing the NSW Water Strategy including delivering the state's first Groundwater Strategy, a dedicated Aboriginal Water Strategy, and developing Southern Floodplain Management Plans.

\$14.8 million over 2 years to modernise and streamline the water licensing and approval systems for water users.

\$8.9 million over 4 years to maintain assets within the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme to help minimise flood risk across the Newcastle and Hunter regions.

For more details visit our website

eDNA spills the beans on native fish populations on the NSW coast



Matt Balzer from DPE Water Science preparing a self-preserving filter for sampling fish and aquatic vertebrate eDNA. Mid Hunter Catchment. Photo credit : Daniel Svozil

The department's water science team is using new, advanced techniques to find out more about fish and other aquatic plants and animals without needing to catch, remove, or even see these plants and animals! Our scientists are surveying waterways for environmental DNA (eDNA) to evaluate outcomes under water sharing arrangements for native coastal fish populations.

We have used eDNA since 2021 in their coastal monitoring and evaluation program. The advantage of eDNA is that the presence of fish, frogs, platypus or other aquatic fauna and flora can be quickly and easily surveyed by filtering a small volume of water for analysis of DNA fragments in a waterway.

Last year, results from a similar survey of the Richmond River suggested that migratory fish are successfully using the rivers as aquatic 'highways' to reach breeding and foraging sites across the catchment. Further eDNA data will fill key knowledge gaps and shed new light on native fish communities in some catchments for the first time in a decade

Have your say : Greater Metropolitan water sharing plans



Community members are invited to learn about and comment on 2 proposed water sharing plans for the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region.

The draft plans for the Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources 2023 and Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources 2023 are proposed to replace existing plans which expire on 30 June 2023.

Water sharing plans set the rules for how water is shared and ensure it is specifically provided for the environment, while providing security for licence holders to plan their business activities. They are valid for 10 years and are subject to a review by the NSW Natural Resources Commission at the end of their term. The Department of Planning and Environment uses the most up-to-date data and scientific risk assessments in drafting new plans.

The Department of Planning and Environment is holding a number of community information sessions, both face-to-face and online, to provide an overview of the draft plans. Public consultation on the draft plans will run until 7 August 2022.

To find out more and register for an information session, visit dpie.nsw.gov.au/wsp.

Have your say on key water plans for Far West NSW



During June and July the department is undertaking extensive consultation across Western NSW on several key programs to give water users, stakeholders and communities a clear understanding of how future water options in the region align and interact.

Communities in Menindee, Bourke and Walgett met with our staff to hear more about the draft Western Regional Water Strategy, proposed amendments to the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan, and the proposed rules for floodplain harvesting access licences to be included in the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan.

There is still time to have your say, with the public exhibition on the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan amendment and the floodplain harvesting access licences open until 8 July, and the Western regional water strategy will be open until 13 July.

For more details on these proposals and how to make a submission please check out [Water Management in Far West NSW](#)

Reconnecting River Country Program update



The Reconnecting River Country Program is ramping up its next round of stakeholder engagement activities over the coming months. The project team will reach out to landholders, First Nations communities, public land managers and regional community groups in July and August to:

- continue conversations about property-scale and environmental benefits, inundation mapping, program benefits and impacts and mitigation
- commence discussions and seek feedback on flow options and their frequency, timing and duration
- discuss the feedback received on several key aspects of the program, such as the proposed Landholder Negotiation Framework and Impact Management Toolbox
- introduce new program information tools, including the interactive virtual room and the 'How to do an On-Country Assessment' video.

For more information on upcoming engagement activities and the program visit the [virtual room](#).

New online course to help declared dam owners



Photo credit : Dams Safety NSW

Dams Safety NSW (DSNSW), in collaboration with TAFE NSW, has launched a new online training course, 'Surveillance of embankment dams - routine inspections'.

CEO of Dams Safety NSW, Chris Salkovic, said the course has been developed as a direct result of feedback from stakeholder engagement to find out how the Regulator could improve its services.

"Many declared dam owners, and other stakeholders, raised the need for targeted training, particularly for small dam owners who don't necessarily need to attend a long face-to-face training session that covers more than they require," Mr Salkovic said.

"This non-accredited course is aimed at anyone responsible for inspecting embankment dams in NSW, but is particularly for those who inspect embankment dams declared by Dams Safety NSW.

“You’ll learn about embankment dams and how to inspect and assess them. You’ll find out about the equipment and records you need, and what to do in the unlikely event that you find signs of problems.”

It is recommended that participants have at least six months’ experience inspecting dams before attempting the course.

COURSE COST: \$210

Note: After successfully completing this course, and provided you work for an organisation with a declared dam in NSW, you can choose to be assessed for competency against the National Water Training Package unit of competency 'NWPCAD011 - inspect and report on embankment dam safety', for an additional fee.

Did you know?

Did you know that Manly Hydraulics Laboratory regularly assesses and removes surplus water monitoring equipment to ensure equipment is always up to date with the latest technology and to reduce their environmental footprint? The team removed 600kg of surplus equipment which is disposed of through waste management providers and/or recycled. This supports MHL’s environmental commitment.

MHL, which provides monitoring and water engineering advice up and down the NSW coast, has data on flood, estuary, rainfall, ocean tide, offshore tide, water quality, flow, cameras, and wave sensor data which is accessed by industry and over 1 million public web visitors a year.

Updates from NRAR

New report on the value of water in NSW released



Water is precious and valuable; it brings communities together, keeps industries moving and sustains life. For the first time a dollar value has been put on access to water resources in NSW, with a [report](#) commissioned by NRAR estimating the market value of the state's water access licences at \$29 billion and rising.

This increasing value of water entitlements is driven by demand from growers, with irrigated agriculture production contributing on average between \$2.45 and \$3.5 billion to the NSW economy each year. Find out more, and read the full report, on [NRAR's value of water page](#).

How to avoid overdrawing your account



Did you know your water account is like a bank account? You can't take more out of it than you have in it. To avoid an overdrawn water account, make sure you;

- have sufficient water allocation in your account before taking water
- only take water in line with your licence and approval conditions
- enter any outstanding meter reads or non-metered water take in [iWAS](#), WaterNSW's internet water accounting system.

Overdrawing your account breaches the conditions of your water access licence, restricts access to water for other users downstream, and can negatively affect water sources and dependent ecosystems. Further information on overdrawn accounts is available on [NRAR's website](#).

Want help to comply with the NSW water laws?



NRAR recently attended AgSmart, Tocal and Riverina Field Days where the water regulator spoke with more than 300 visitors about water use and where they can find answers to their questions.

You can still catch NRAR at [AgQuip](#), [Henty](#), [Murrumbateman](#), [ANFD](#) and [Primex](#) field days later this year.

To learn more about NRAR and your obligations as a water user, come and see them at one of this year's field days or visit [NRAR's website](#).

Have your say

Current and upcoming consultations and information events:

Barwon-Darling Water Sharing Plan proposed amendments 1 June – 8 July 2022

Public comment is being sought on proposed amendments to the Water Sharing Plan for the Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source 2012. The proposed amendments will improve the operation and implementation of plan rules, provide additional opportunities for trade and introduce new rules to better regulate and manage floodplain harvesting in the Barwon-Darling Unregulated River Water Source.

Visit [Draft amendments to the Barwon-Darling water sharing plan](#) for more information on the proposed changes. You can [Have your say](#) on the proposed amendments by providing written feedback by Friday 8 July 2022

Draft Regional Water Strategy – Western 1 June – 13 July

The draft Western Regional Water Strategy is being consulted on together with the amendments to the Barwon–Darling Water Sharing Plan and the licensing and regulation of floodplain harvesting in the region.

Visit [Water management in the far west](#) for more information. You can [have your say](#) on the draft strategy by providing written feedback by Wednesday 13 July 2022.

[View all](#)

Stay up to date

The Water Engagement Roundup is a monthly webinar that provides updates on current consultation and engagement about important water policies and programs. Register for the next webinar.

Latest water news from the department

- [\\$1.1 billion for a stronger NSW water future](#)
- [Thousands more households to benefit from washing machine pilot](#)
- [Draft strategy to deliver secure water future for Gwydir](#)
- [\\$145 million to rebuild northern rivers water infrastructure](#)

[View all](#)

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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 1300 081 047
water.relations@dpie.nsw.gov.au

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