

Regional Water Strategies Public Exhibition 2



Submission Questionnaire

Gwydir Regional Water Strategy Challenges and shortlisted actions

The NSW Government is taking action to improve long-term water security for Gwydir. The Gwydir Regional Water Strategy sets out a shortlist of proposed actions to help deliver healthy and resilient water resources for a liveable and prosperous region.

Your voice is important

This is your opportunity to let us know which actions you support and think should be implemented to help set the region up for the future.

This questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and your response can remain anonymous if you wish (see question 7).

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire, please email: regionalwater.strategies@dpie.nsw.gov.au

You can also provide feedback via [our submission platform](#).

1. Your details

* Email address:

* Name:

* Address:

* Contact phone number:

* **Do you identify as an Aboriginal person?** (select one)

Yes No Choose not to answer

* **Are you making this submission as an individual or as a representative of an organisation?** (select one)

Individual Organisation

2. Organisation or business details

If making this submission as a representative of an organisation, who do you represent? (select one)

Government (select one)

Commonwealth New South Wales State other Local

Local Water Utility

Peak representative organisation (select one)

Environment Industry Business group or business chamber Community

Aboriginal organisation (select one)

Yes No

Other (please specify) _____

N/A

3. Regional water challenges

We have identified **five water challenges** that are an immediate priority. More detail about each regional challenge is available in the [Consultation Paper](#).

1 Reducing water service risks and improving water supply resilience for the region's towns and villages

Less reliable flows in unregulated rivers and creeks will increase risks to water security and water quality for the towns, rural landholders and new industries that rely on them. A drier future climate could also reduce the reliability of groundwater resources.

2 Supporting licence holders in the face of declining water availability

Aquatic ecosystems, including the Gwydir Wetlands, and the region's main industry of agriculture rely heavily on general security licences, which have low reliability and often receive zero or low water allocations during drought. Multi-year droughts impact the region's economy and the health of its natural ecosystems. Ongoing changes to climate could increase drought frequency and severity.

3 Delivering water to the end of the river system and connected valleys

High evaporation rates and small river channels at the end of the catchment make it difficult to deliver water from Copeton Dam to industry and environmental assets. Large on-farm storages—where regulated river water is often stored before use—also experience high evaporation losses.

4 Barriers to Aboriginal water rights

'We can't sing our song no more, we can't live on the river no more to look after her, for you all' (Gomeroi).

Yaama Nginda Gomeroi Wunnungulda. We are Gomeroi, we have our way of doing business. You have to be invited to sit around our fire. We share language and we engage together. You are asked to identify who you are and what you represent and be clear in your intent. Then, and only then can we do business together.

5 Improving the health and resilience of the region’s aquatic ecosystems

River regulation, extraction and water infrastructure operations have changed flow variability, water quantity and water quality. This has impacted the health of water-dependent ecosystems and assets in the region and connected valleys. There are challenges in being able to use water for the environment effectively during dry and wet periods to protect and enhance the region’s natural systems and assets.

Do you agree that these are the priority water challenges for the Gwydir region that we need to focus on? (select one)

Yes No

If no, please outline what you see as the priority water challenges in this region over the next 20 – 40 years?

4. Addressing the challenges

We have developed three regional priorities with actions under each. We want to know which of the actions you support.

The regional priorities are:

- 1 Water for critical human and environmental needs
- 2 Sustainable water resources for new and existing users
- 3 Best use of existing water for the environment.

Priority 1: Water for critical human and environmental needs

The actions shortlisted under this priority will:

- support local councils to provide secure and affordable town water supplies that are resilient to changing climate conditions
- review how we share water considering long-term climate forecasts
- improve flows from the Gwydir region for needs in the Barwon–Darling River.

Proposed action		Do you support this action?
1.1	Investigate innovative water projects for Uralla	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.2	Support urban water efficiency measures in Moree	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.3	Develop and publish clear policy on how the region’s groundwater resources will be managed sustainably into the future	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.4	Investigate how much water should be set aside in Copeton Dam for dry periods	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
1.5	Investigate ways to improve connectivity with the Barwon–Darling River on a multi-valley scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

A) Do you have any comments on the proposed actions identified?

Priority 2: Sustainable water resources for new and existing users

The actions shortlisted under this priority will:

- facilitate access to higher security, or alternate sources of water, while observing legislated limits to take
- explore opportunities to make sure the water entitlement and access framework can cater to the development of emerging industries
- support Aboriginal people to be more involved in water management, by both sharing their traditional knowledge and contributing to decision making.

Proposed action		Do you support this action?
2.1	Improve public access to climate information and water availability forecasts	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.2	Support adoption of on-farm water-efficiency measures	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.3	Assess the potential costs and benefits of event-based trade of supplementary flows	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.4	Increase the availability of high security water access licences	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.5	Investigate managed aquifer recharge in the Gwydir region	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.6	Develop ongoing arrangements for participation of local Aboriginal people in water management	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.7	Support place-based initiatives to deliver cultural outcomes for Aboriginal people	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.8	Support Aboriginal business opportunities in the Gwydir region	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2.9	Ensure the water management framework can support sustainable economic diversification	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

A) Do you have any comments on the proposed actions identified?

Priority 3: Best use of existing water for the environment

The actions shortlisted under this priority will:

- lessen the impact of infrastructure on water-dependent ecosystems and species
- reduce constraints that limit what can be achieved from water for the environment
- amend river operations so water in the system can achieve multiple benefits.

Proposed action		Do you support this action?
3.1	Fully implement the NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.2	Invest in continuous improvement to water modelling in the Gwydir region	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.3	Provide clarity and certainty for environmental needs during drought operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.4	Mitigate the impact of water infrastructure on native fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.5	Identify regionally significant riparian, wetland and floodplain reaches to protect or rehabilitate	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.6	Remediate unapproved floodplain structures	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.7	Modify or remove physical and operational barriers to delivering water for the environment in the western Gwydir catchment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.8	Protect ecosystems that depend on groundwater	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3.9	Assess gaps in the flow regime that are preventing achievement of environmental water requirements and identify cooperative actions to reinstate them	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

A) Do you have any comments on the proposed actions identified?

5. Other comments

A) Should any proposed actions in this consultation not be shortlisted and why?

B) Should any other options in Attachment 1 of the Consultation Paper be shortlisted?

6. Implementation of the Gwydir Regional Water Strategy

An Implementation Plan will be included in the final Gwydir Regional Water Strategy.

A) Which actions should be implemented first and why?

Making your submission public

To promote transparency and open government, we intend to make all submissions publicly available on our website, or in reports. Your name or your organisation's name may appear in these reports with your feedback attributed.

If you would like your submission and/or feedback to be kept confidential, please let us know when making your submission.

If you request that your submission is to be kept confidential, it will not be published on our website or included in any relevant reports; however, it will still be subject to the *Government Information Public Access Act 2009*.

Your submission will be stored securely, consistent with the Department's Records Management Policy and you have the right to request access to, and correction of, your personal information held by the Department.

Further details can be found in our privacy statement available on our website.
www.industry.nsw.gov.au/privacy

7. Information on confidentiality and privacy *

I give permission for my submission to be publicly available on the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website.

Yes No

I would like my personal details to be kept confidential.

Yes No

8. Would you like to be kept updated on progress on the development and implementation of the Gwydir Regional Water Strategy?

Yes No

If yes, please provide your details below.

* Email address:

* Name:

* Address:

* Contact phone number:

9. How did you hear about the Public Exhibition of this strategy?

We are interested to know how you heard about the opportunity to make a submission. Please indicate the communication methods below:

- Newspaper
- Radio
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website
- Direct email
- Social media
- Have your say NSW Government website
- Communication from peak body
- Word of mouth
- Other (select and provide details) _____

10. Additional Information

If you would like to provide any supporting documents to help us understand your feedback, please email these from the same email you provided in this form or attach supporting documents to this form if you are returning your submission by mail.

All submissions on the Gwydir Regional Water Strategy Consultation Paper will be reviewed following the public exhibition period.

Please email your completed submission and any supporting documents to:

regionalwater.strategies@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Or post to:

Regional Water Strategies
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Submissions close Wednesday 29 June 2022, 11:59 pm.

Further details on all regional water strategies can be found on our website
www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/regional-water-strategies



Thank you for your submission.