

Water

Department of Planning and Environment



June 2023 | Issue #46



Visual guides explain flood works and water flow

New video explains how we are managing unapproved flood works to improve water flows

The Improving Floodplains Connection (IFC) program has released a video and infographic to show how making changes to structures that have been built on floodplains can allow water to reach flood-dependent cultural areas, bird-breeding and animal habitats.

These structures are known as flood works. Flood works must be approved and include structures such as levees, water storages, supply channels and access roads which can change the flow of water on the flood plain. Some unapproved works that

have been built are now restricting water flow to important environmental and cultural areas. The IFC program is addressing this by targeting unapproved flood works in the northern Murray-Darling Basin and accelerating the remediation or removal of priority unapproved flood works in the Border Rivers, Gwydir, Barwon-Darling, Namoi and Macquarie valleys.

The Improving Floodplain Connections program is funded by the Commonwealth and NSW Governments. Without the focused funding, this work would take up to 15 years to complete. Instead, the work is expected to be completed in 2024.

See the visual guides:

- [Infographic](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/562110/improving-how-water-flows-across-our-floodplains.pdf) (https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/562110/improving-how-water-flows-across-our-floodplains.pdf).
- [Animation](https://vimeo.com/825294150) (https://vimeo.com/825294150).

[Read more about the Improving Floodplain Connections program](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-programs/healthy-floodplains-project/improving-floodplain-connections) (https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-programs/healthy-floodplains-project/improving-floodplain-connections).



Switching on the start of simpler water licensing and approvals in NSW

Switching on simpler water licensing and approvals in NSW

From mid-2023, Major Project applicants and councils will enjoy an enhanced customer experience engaging with DPE Water, thanks to improvements to the [NSW Planning Portal](https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-work/nsw-planning-portal) (https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-work/nsw-planning-portal).

portal).

These improvements are just the start of many being developed as part of the 2-year [Water Licensing Improvement Program \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade/reducing-red-tape-for-water-licences-and-approvals\)](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade/reducing-red-tape-for-water-licences-and-approvals) that will enable:

- customers to manage Major Project post-approval requirements more easily in the Planning Portal. This will include clearer advice on timeframes for advice, the ability to communicate directly with the Water Group, and a record of interactions with the Planning and Water groups in the department
- councils to view an up-to-date status of Water Group's assessment of integrated development applications.
- Customers are also set to spend less time finding the licensing information they need on the Water Group's website, with an overhaul of its [licensing webpages \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade\)](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade). This will make it easier for customers to self-serve and know which agency to contact about their licence or approval.



What are your priorities for water management

Tell us your priorities for water management

Planning for and delivering water resource management services that meet the needs of our customers is important to the Water Group, WaterNSW and NRAR.

We have heard that customers want:

- ongoing water reliability and security
- to better understand the impacts of climate change on water

- to have confidence in how government decisions are made

We want to hear more from our customers so that water planning and management services deliver long term value to customers and reflect what our customers most need.

To help plan the water management services that the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation (WAMC) will deliver in 2025-30, we will be seeking feedback from customers. We will listen to customers this year via a joint Voice of Customer survey, WaterNSW Customer Advisory Group meetings, customer focus groups, and an online webinar.

You can also provide your feedback on what matters to you via [WaterNSW's Have your Say website \(https://engagement.waternsw.com.au/WaterNSW-Pricing-Proposal-2025-2030\)](https://engagement.waternsw.com.au/WaterNSW-Pricing-Proposal-2025-2030).

Customer feedback will help us develop the WAMC pricing proposal we submit to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in 2024.

We will let you know about more opportunities to Have your Say in future Water News.

Have your say (<https://engagement.waternsw.com.au/WaterNSW-Pricing-Proposal-2025-2030>)

Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme (HVFMS) – new phone number

The HVFMS has a new phone number. Please call [1300 081 047 \(tel:1300081047\)](tel:1300081047) to report any issues related to the scheme. This includes reporting flood damage, changing landholder contact details, finding out more information on the scheme or to make a complaint about current works being conducted. You can also contact us via email infor.hvms@dpi.nsw.gov.au (<mailto:infor.hvms@dpi.nsw.gov.au>).

Read more about our work (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/hunter-valley-mitigation-scheme>)



Aerial view of Walgett

Working in partnership with Walgett council to resolve water quality issues

Walgett water quality has improved significantly since the town switched to river water permanently in late May, with the water treatment plant working effectively to treat the river water to a high standard.

Switching from bore water to river water is a very complex process, made even more so because the water treatment plant had not been in use for some time to treat river water.

The Department of Planning and Environment and Sydney Water have been on-site over the past few weeks to support the process and carry out water quality testing. We acknowledge the local community and residents and thank them for their patience and understanding while we and Walgett Council worked hard to get the town back on river water.

Our department staff will continue to provide technical support both on the ground and remotely to ensure Walgett has the help it needs. The NSW Government has also provided funding for new parts for the reverse osmosis plant which will be installed by Council over the coming weeks. This is all part of our [local water utilities programs](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities) (<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities>) to support local water utilities in their delivery of safe, secure, sustainable, and affordable services and management of water service risks.

Select Indicator Group - Indicator SubGroup - Indicator Name

Infrastructure - Performance - Main Breaks per 100 Km - WS

Select Report Year

2021-22

National Median
12.15

Weighted Median
11.08

Connected Properties Band

- 1. SMALL (<=1500 prop)
- 2. MEDIUM (<=4000 prop)
- 3. BIG (<=10000 prop)
- 4. MAJOR (>10000 prop)

Select Connected Properties Band

(All)

Select one or multiple LWU(s)

(All)

Select Region

(All)

Not Applicable as LWU does not provide Water Services

Not Applicable as LWU does not provide Sewage Services

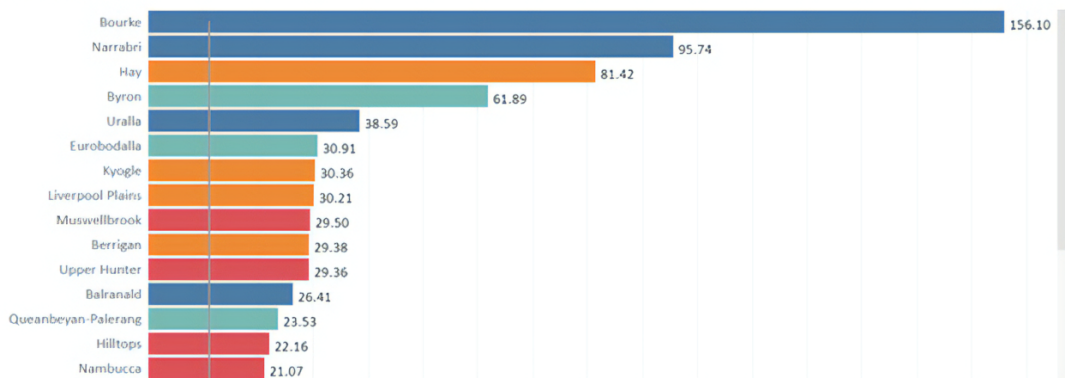
Main Breaks per 100 Km - WS

Units: No. per 100km main

Total number of breaks, bursts and leaks in transfer mains and reticulation mains per 100km of main, excluding weeps and seepages in above-ground mains that can be fixed without shutting down the main. This excludes breaks in the property service connections.

The weighted median is the median of the available validated data for the indicator with the number of connected properties applied as weights.

The national median is the median of available data from the latest national performance report. The included data is only for the LWUs with more than 10,000 connected properties.



2021-22 LWU performance monitoring data now available

2021-22 LWU Performance Monitoring Data now available

The department has added the 2020-21 data to the Local Water Utilities Performance Monitoring dashboard. The dashboard is a platform to analyse and compare annual performance of regional NSW's local water utilities over 9 years.

The indicators for monitoring progress are grouped under various performance themes. There is a glossary tab at the end which lists all the indicators, their corresponding tab and National Water Initiative code used in the National Performance Report. You can also select between geographic regions.

You can access the [local water utilities dashboard](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities/lwu-performance-monitoring-data)

(<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities/lwu-performance-monitoring-data>) online. You can also [email the team](mailto:LWU.PerformanceReporting@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

(<mailto:LWU.PerformanceReporting@dpie.nsw.gov.au>) with feedback or ways to improve the dashboard.

Independent inquiry into Menindee fish deaths

The NSW Government has asked the Office of the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer (OCSE) to conduct an Independent Review of the unprecedented deaths of millions of fish at Menindee in March 2023.

In this Review, the NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer will consider the likely cause of the fish deaths event, its effects, the overall response and then make recommendations. It is anticipated that the review will be completed and released by August 31. The findings and recommendations will drive the NSW Government's strategic response.

The Review's Terms of Reference and further information about how to make submissions can be found at the Menindee Fish Deaths webpage.

NSW Government agencies, along with Commonwealth and local partners continue to actively monitor and manage the dissolved oxygen levels in the river. Water quality updates are issued weekly, outlining water monitoring and management to identify potential risks to ecological communities, implement mitigating measures and respond to potential or actual mass fish death events. [Read the weekly updates \(https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/managing-drought-recovery/blackwater\)](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/droughts-floods/drought-update/managing-drought-recovery/blackwater).

Read more about Menindee fish deaths
(<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/menindee>)



Wetlands on the Murray River near Howlong

Reconnecting River Country Program invites landholders to help shape the next phase of the program

The Reconnecting River Country Program is seeking feedback to help us develop the program. We invite potentially affected stakeholders and private landholders in the program area to join the discussion and provide feedback on:

- flow option extent mapping, to assist with model refinement, potential mitigation and management options
- a range of proposed higher flow options.

Your feedback will help us develop materials and tools which aim to identify, measure and mitigate impacts from higher flows for the environment.

About the program

The Reconnecting River Country Program will relax constraints for the delivery of water for the environment, based on the best available science and on-ground experience. The program aims to improve environmental, social and cultural outcomes for communities along the Murray and Murrumbidgee River systems.

If you are a potentially affected stakeholder or private landholder, please [register to participate](https://oeh.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3yn5rJ8QjUNm3gW) (https://oeh.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3yn5rJ8QjUNm3gW) in the Reconnecting River Country Program. For more information about the program, please visit the [program webpage](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw/sdlam/reconnecting-river-country-program) (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw/sdlam/reconnecting-river-country-program>) or [information hub](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw/sdlam/reconnecting-river-country-program/information-hub) (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw/sdlam/reconnecting-river-country-program/information-hub>), email admin.rrcp@dpi.nsw.gov.au (<mailto:admin.rrcp@dpi.nsw.gov.au>) or call [1300 081 047](tel:1300081047) (<tel:1300081047>).

NRAR updates



Children at remote schools benefit from funding boost

NRAR delivers positive community outcome

Children at remote primary schools along the Darling-Baaka River have learned more about river ecology thanks to an enforcement action by the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR).

The education program was delivered by Western Landcare with funding from an NRAR enforceable undertaking (EU) with an irrigator who significantly exceeded their bore extraction limit.

Seven schools have benefitted so far, with children taking part in a range of activities designed to teach them about water bug surveys, pests and native fish species, and river ecology near their schools. The program will continue in more schools from May.

EUs are a legally binding alternative to court action, which an individual or company can propose if they've breached NSW water laws. NRAR only accepts EU proposals that it considers to be the most appropriate regulatory response, which can deliver positive outcomes in the public interest.

[Find out more about the program \(https://www.nrar.nsw.gov.au/news/children-at-remote-schools-benefit-from-funding-boost\)](https://www.nrar.nsw.gov.au/news/children-at-remote-schools-benefit-from-funding-boost)

Natural Resources Access Regulator Regulation 2018

Community members are invited to comment on the proposed remake of the Natural Resources Access Regulator Regulation 2018, which is due to expire on 1 September 2023.

The new proposed NRAR Regulation is in the same terms as the current NRAR Regulation, with minor amendments to clause 7, which lists prescribed relevant agencies for the purpose of information exchange. The proposed changes update the list to reflect current agencies and to incorporate additional agencies.

Public consultation on the draft Regulation will commence on Tuesday 13 June and run until midnight, Monday 3 July 2023.

Find out more and have your say
(https://oeh.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0lgAMS3MAhK6060)



Have a chat with an NRAR officer

Chat about your obligations as a water user in NSW

NRAR's friendly officers attend field days across NSW every year to help answer your questions about the water rules and how they apply to your situation.

They make it easy to understand your obligations and comply with the complex water rules, providing information about common problem areas including:

- basic landholder rights
- metering requirements
- where to get water licence and approval advice
- works on waterfront land.

You can find NRAR staff at the Mudgee Small Farm Field Days Friday 7 – Saturday 8 July.

[Visit our website for more information on upcoming field days \(https://www.nrar.nsw.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/talking-with-the-community\).](https://www.nrar.nsw.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/talking-with-the-community)



14 – 28 June: Southern floodplain management plans information sessions

We are seeking your information about recent floods to help us understand flood behaviour in the Murray (including the Edward, Wakool, Niemur, Tuppall and Bullatale floodplains), Murrumbidgee, Billabong Creek and Lachlan valleys.

For more information please visit our [stakeholder engagement \(https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/stakeholder-engagement\)](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/stakeholder-engagement) page.

Water Engagement Roundup webinars

The Water engagement roundup webinar series returns in 2023.

The webinar is a monthly update about current consultations and engagements on important water policy and programs for NSW.

Since 2021, the engagement roundup webinars have provided updates on many water management topics including floodplain harvesting, water allocations, groundwater, NSW Water Strategy, Regional Water Strategies and metering.

In a recent survey, the top 5 topics our audience want to hear about in the 2023 engagement roundup series are floodplain management, water science, licensing and approvals, metering and inlands water sharing plans.

The Water engagement roundup webinar is held on the third Wednesday of each month from 11am to 12noon.

All webinars are recorded, and all questions asked during the webinar are answered. The recordings and past questions and answer are available on the Water website.

Invitations to attend the Water engagement roundup webinar are emailed to all subscribers to Water eNews.

[Watch past recordings and read the questions and answers \(https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/stakeholder-engagement/roundup/stay-up-to-date\).](https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/stakeholder-engagement/roundup/stay-up-to-date)

Latest water news from the department

- [Metering deadline looms for Southern Inland \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/metering-deadline-looms-for-southern-inland\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/metering-deadline-looms-for-southern-inland)
- [Nelligen water and sewerage upgrade underway \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/nelligen-water-and-sewerage-upgrade-underway\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/nelligen-water-and-sewerage-upgrade-underway)
- [Walgett water update \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/walgett-water-update\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/walgett-water-update)
- [Rising River Alert – Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/rising-river-alert-snowy-river-below-jindabyne-dam-18-may-2023\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/rising-river-alert-snowy-river-below-jindabyne-dam-18-may-2023)
- [NSW Government update on Dungowan Dam \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/nsw-government-update-on-dungowan-dam\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/nsw-government-update-on-dungowan-dam)
- [Upper Murrumbidgee environmental high flows to commence in July \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/upper-murrumbidgee-environmental-high-flows-to-commence-in-july\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news/upper-murrumbidgee-environmental-high-flows-to-commence-in-july)

[View all \(https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news\).](https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/news)



Contact us

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 Enquiries

Phone [1300 081 047 \(tel:1300081047\)](tel:1300081047).

[water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au \(mailto:water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au\)](mailto:water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au).

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[\(https://www.instagram.com/nswdpe/\).](https://www.instagram.com/nswdpe/)



(https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjdGX64tXQMEcoi7vIWdn2kXBgtKA_a5G).

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4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150

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We pay respect to the Traditional Custodians and First Peoples of NSW and acknowledge their continued connection to their country and culture.

Privacy

Your privacy is important to us. Our stakeholder management system is compliant with NSW Government's information security requirements. The data is stored in NSW for five years and users manage data under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. We will not disclose your personal information to anybody else unless you have given your consent or we are required to do so by law. More information on how the Department complies with [privacy](https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/privacy) (<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/privacy>) requirements can be found on our website.

About us

How we work
(<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/about-us/how-we-work>) ▼

How water is managed
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Consultations and events (<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/stakeholder-engagement>)

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Our work

Water Infrastructure NSW (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-infrastructure-nsw>)

Allocations (<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/allocations>)

Licensing (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade>)

Non-urban metering (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nsw-non-urban-water-metering>)

Water sharing plans (<https://water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/plans-and-programs/water-sharing-plans>)

Supporting water utilities (<https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/water-utilities>)

NSW Government

I work for NSW (<https://iworkfor.nsw.gov.au/>)

NSW Ministers (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/ministers>)

NRAR (<https://www.nrar.nsw.gov.au>)

WaterNSW (<https://www.waternsw.com.au>)

Sydney Water (<https://www.sydneywater.com.au>)

Hunter Water (<https://www.hunterwater.com.au>)

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