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Take our simple survey so we can communicate with you better

Please take a few minutes to take our survey on how we communicate with you. Your feedback will help us better understand your needs so we can improve your access to the information and services you want.

Message from the Minister

It's hard to believe that just a little over a year ago, most of NSW was in the grip of one of the worst droughts on record. Now, we're seeing record rainfall right along the east coast, and dangerous flooding along the coast out to the northern Murray-Darling Basin.

I want to thank everyone who is working hard to protect our communities, particularly the SES and WaterNSW who are maintaining a dedicated 24-hour incident management team to monitor weather and dam inflows.

For water users and residents impacted by floods, please continue to listen and take advice from local emergency services and the SES.

This month the NSW and Commonwealth governments have announced milestones for two key infrastructure projects in regional NSW. Last week the preferred route for the proposed new Dungowan Dam pipeline was announced. The new pipeline will be key to improving water security for the region. Lachlan Valley communities are also one step closer to improved water security with the announcement of two prospective design and construction partners for the proposed Wyangala Dam wall raising.

Melinda Pavey
Minister for Water, Property and Housing

Draft NSW Water Strategy



We released the first 20-year water strategy for all of NSW for public exhibition on 15 February. The draft NSW Water Strategy is an overarching, state-wide strategy to improve the resilience of the state's water resources over the coming decades.

The NSW Water Strategy will address key challenges and opportunities for water management and service delivery across the state and set the long-term strategic direction for the NSW water sector.

The NSW Water Strategy is part of a suite of long-term water strategies, and will work in tandem with 12 regional water strategies and two metropolitan water strategies.

You can give feedback on the strategy until 28 March 2021 by visiting [our website](#).

Do you know the rules?



The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) knows that water users want to comply with the law but sometimes don't know the rules.

Your water licence or approval includes conditions which set out the rules you need to follow. It is your responsibility to know the conditions that apply to you.

Water users can find out more about the licence and approval conditions by using the [NSW Water Register](#) on the WaterNSW website. Keep your water access licence or works approval numbers or lot and DP numbers handy.

We'll provide more information to help you know the rules soon!

Progress update on proposed new dams



Potential design & construction partners shortlisted for Wyangala Dam wall raising

Lachlan Valley communities are one step closer to better water security with the announcement of two prospective design and construction partners for the Wyangala Dam wall raising project.

After an extensive assessment process, Acciona and Seymour Whyte have been shortlisted for the main works contract. This project would see the dam wall raised by 10 metres and its storage capacity increased by 53 per cent.

Both Acciona and Seymour Whyte have been selected based on their strong regional experience, as well as their expertise in dam projects and major complex infrastructure.

During the next eight months, each partner will work with the project team to develop two potential designs for the project, and provide expert construction advice for the project's business case and Environmental Impact Statement.

The successful contractor will be announced in 2022 if the Wyangala Dam wall raising project is approved for construction.

Read more about the [Wyangala Dam wall raising project](#).

Preferred route announced for the proposed new Dungowan Dam pipeline

This month the NSW and Commonwealth governments announced the preferred route for the proposed new Dungowan Dam pipeline.

The route runs south of Dungowan Creek and the Peel River from the new Dungowan Dam to Tamworth Regional Council's Calala Water Treatment Plant. It was selected following months of extensive studies, assessments and technical investigations.

The pipeline will be built in two stages, with Stage 1 establishing a new reliable connection from the recently completed Chaffey Dam pipeline to Tamworth's current town water supply. Stage 2 will be built in conjunction with the proposed new Dungowan Dam, pending the outcomes of a final business case and Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

As well as delivering better water security, the project is expected to provide a significant boost to Tamworth's economy. Many local businesses are expected to be engaged throughout the project, increasing employment and investment opportunities.

Read more about the [Dungowan Dam](#).

Namatjira Aboriginal community raw water tank upgrade



The [Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program](#) (ACWSP) team work to improve water supply and sewerage services in eligible Aboriginal communities in NSW.

The team has been working to upgrade the raw water storage tanks at Namatjira. The steel reservoir is now beyond economic repair and needs to be demolished and

replaced with an alternative raw water storage system. The replacement will improve irrigation and firefighting water supply for the community. The ACWSP team aims to have these new raw water tanks completed by the end of 2021.

This project is a collaboration between the department, Dareton Local Aboriginal Land Council, Public Works Advisory, Wentworth Shire Council and local contractors. Construction is expected to start in April 2021.

Caring for water is caring for Country.

Update on water transparency consultation

We recently asked for community feedback on our water market information platforms, including the [WaterInsights Portal](#) and [Trade Dashboard](#). We asked for this feedback to better understand what information we should be sharing and how we can make our tools easier to use.

We received over 200 responses, with over half from the NSW Riverina region or western NSW. Some of the findings are that stakeholders:

- have low awareness of some of the water information available, including our platforms
- have low awareness of the Australian Taxation Office's annual reports on foreign ownership
- support consolidating all water and trade information in one location
- need us to improve accessibility and useability of the current information and platforms
- strongly agree that information about water licences should be made publicly available for all licences equally
- support publishing trade purpose categories and the intended use of traded water.

We're reviewing the responses and will use these to help inform our next steps. For more information about the review [visit our website](#).

ACCC Water Markets Inquiry

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has been conducting an inquiry into water markets in the Murray-Darling Basin since 2019.

The ACCC submitted its Final Report to the Commonwealth Government and we expect it will be released publicly in the coming weeks.

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment plans to consult with stakeholders once the Final Report is released to help inform positions the NSW Government may take in response the recommendations made by the ACCC.

Further details on this consultation will be available on our website when the report is released.

NRAR works with leading satellite providers to conduct its monitoring campaign



In 2020, the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) worked with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) and Geoscience Australia to conduct the largest, most systematic monitoring project in its history.

Using satellite data from the European Space Agency, the United States geological survey and commercial service provider Planet, NRAR monitored an environmental flow as it travelled across 306,400 square kilometres and past more than 3,500 on-farm storages.

NRAR's Chief Regulatory Officer, Grant Barnes, said our partnerships with the MDBA and Geoscience Australia give NRAR "eyes in the sky".

ABC Rural wrote a feature story on NRAR and its technology, you can [read the full story here](#). Watch a video on [NRAR's use of satellite imagery](#). Read more about [our work with technology](#).

Join us for the Water Engagement Roundup

We are pleased to be launching regular Water Engagement Roundups. The Roundup is a monthly webinar where you can learn about current engagement events run by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Water.

During the webinar we will highlight key details, including

- what's on, where and why
- ways to learn more and participate

- the value of your contributions and how they may be used.

Participants will also be able to ask questions about the engagement process. We'll upload a video of the webinar to our website shortly after the session.

You can [register for the next webinar](#) on 21 April or visit our [website](#) to find out more about upcoming events.

IPART releases draft rural water price reviews

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is currently reviewing costs and prices for Water management services provided by the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation (WAMC) and Water NSW's rural bulk water services.

IPART released its draft reports and draft price determinations for these services on Tuesday 16 March and is now seeking submissions from stakeholders. IPART will also hold an online public hearing on the draft prices on Tuesday 30 March 2021, where people may ask questions or have their say.

IPART is an independent pricing regulator that reviews and investigates many economic and policy issues. It is a NSW government agency but makes its decisions independently of the NSW Government.

More information is available on IPART's website.

Introducing the Town Water Risk Reduction Program



The department has established the Town Water Risk Reduction Program to work together with the town water sector to identify long-term solutions to improve outcomes and service delivery. We are seeking opportunities to work together across the sector, and to find where and how we can improve.

The program uses a partnership approach, which recognises and uses expertise within councils, local water utilities and relevant government agencies. The department will collaborate with these stakeholders to develop opportunities to improve performance and reduce risk. The program will also establish working groups to address different focus areas.

Visit our [website](#) for more information, or [email the project team](#) if you are interested in participating.

Representation in the regions

In recent weeks some stakeholders have asked if we can re-introduce regional managers to improve the access stakeholders have locally to senior managers. Jim Bentley, Deputy Secretary, has met with a number of stakeholders who have raised this request.

Because it's important to be consistent in our approach to policy and service matters across the state, we don't support having regional managers to whom the local teams report. However, Jim has agreed to work towards improving access to senior managers at a local level. He has committed to consulting with stakeholders on potential changes to how the department works in this regard.

If you are interested in this topic please feel free to get in touch.

Review of the southern floodplain management plans



The NSW Government has begun five-year reviews of ten rural southern floodplain management plans. Floodplain management plans are the framework for coordinating the development of flood works on a whole-of-valley basis.

The *Water Management Act 2000* requires that these plans are reviewed in their fifth year after commencement, to determine “whether its provisions remain

adequate and appropriate for ensuring the effective implementation of the water management principles”.

The Government is seeking feedback on three questions:

- Is the floodplain management plan(s) adequate and appropriate for ensuring the effective implementation of the principles of Section 5 of the *Water Management Act 2000*?
- Are there issues with the plan(s) that were identified since commencement and affect the effectiveness of implementation?
- Are there potential amendments to the plan(s) that should be considered?

You can make a submission online, by email or post. Submissions close on 29 March 2021.

[Please visit our website](#) for more information or to make a submission.

Two new regional water strategies on public exhibition



The draft North Coast and Namoi regional water strategies went on public exhibition on 3 March and will be on display until 14 April. These are two of twelve strategies that outline how we plan to manage water over the next 20-40 years. Six other strategies were exhibited in 2020.

The strategies aim to inform future planning and management of our water resources. The strategies bring together the most up-to-date information and the best and latest climate evidence together to balance the needs of different water users across NSW.

We consulted with local government, local water utilities and Aboriginal communities to develop the draft strategies, and are now asking the wider

community to provide feedback. We want to know about the opportunities and challenges you see and how you think they should be addressed.

For more information or to have your say, please [visit our website](#).

Yanco community drop-in sessions across the Riverina



In February, the NSW Sustainable Diversion Limit Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) team invited members of the local community, advisory groups and local authorities to attend public information sessions on the Yanco Creek Modernisation Project. The project proposes options to enable more efficient water use in the Yanco Creek system.

The sessions detailed how the project has worked with the local community to improve environmental outcomes, ensure water security, implement the best water technology infrastructure and develop better water efficiency practices across the Yanco Creek system. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide input on the proposed works.

“We received great insights from participants that will help inform how the final project is shaped,” said Matt Kendall, Project Manager, Yanco Creek Projects. “We are committed to a co-design approach to ensure the community are engaged and feedback is incorporated”.

Please [visit our website](#) for more information on the project.

Register now for a free bore survey



Are you in the Great Artesian Basin? Do you want to know your bore water pressure and flow? Would you like to make sure your bore is considered for future funding?

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, we'd like to hear from you. The department is calling on landholders in the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) with a water supply bore to register for the GAB Bore Survey Project. We've surveyed 800 bores already, and provided a water quality and bore condition report to each landholder.

We are running bore surveys throughout the GAB in 2021. If your bore has not been surveyed yet and you would like to know if you are eligible, please get in contact with the team. The confidential surveys assess water pressure, quality and flow as well as bore condition. The results are useful to primary producers and farm managers and will inform future funding for the Cap and Pipe the Bore programs.

The bore survey costs are paid for by the Australian and NSW Governments in partnership. [Register now](#) and a member of our team will be in touch to confirm the details.

New on the water website

- Looking for groundwater factsheets, maps, or reports? Check out our new groundwater document library.
- The Northern Basin flow event environmental review report is now available. You can read about the north-west flows event in early 2020 on our website.
- The 2019-2020 General Purpose Water Accounting Reports for the NSW Murray, Lower Darling, Border Rivers and Peel catchments are now online. This series of annual reports will be progressively published online as completed.

Drought update

Visit our website for the latest on drought and managing recovery in NSW.

Release of Trade Waste Management Guidelines 2021



The department has released the 2021 [Liquid Trade Waste Management Guidelines](#). The guidelines will assist regional councils to manage liquid trade waste discharged to their sewerage systems. The guidelines were developed with advice from experienced trade waste officers from 15 regional NSW councils.

Sewerage and liquid trade waste must be effectively regulated to protect community assets and to reduce the health and environmental risks. That means councils must approve discharge of any liquid trade waste to their sewerage systems. The guidelines provide tools to make the approval process efficient and transparent.

The guidelines explain what can and cannot be discharged to the sewerage system. They describe classifications of liquid trade waste and advise on regulating waste in each classification. They include information on treatment, approval conditions and work examples.

We will run webinars to assist councils to understand and implement the guidelines and provide further [supporting materials online](#).

Have your say

The following strategies and plans are on public exhibition:

- 8 February - 18 April: [Coastal Harvestable Right Review](#)
- 15 February - 28 March: [Draft NSW Water Strategy](#)
- 18 February - 29 March: [Review of 10 southern floodplain management plans](#)
- 3 March - 14 April: [Namoi Regional Water Strategy](#)
- 3 March - 14 April: [North Coast Regional Water Strategy](#)

- 22 March – 18 April: [Floodplain Harvesting licence rules in the water sharing plan for the Macquarie valley](#)

[View all](#)

Latest water news from the department

- [NRAR focuses on unlawful spearpoints in Harrington](#)
- [NRAR celebrates women in water for International Women's Day 2021](#)
- [First state water strategy](#)
- [NRAR responds to incident in Lake Albert](#)
- [NRAR returns to Coffs Harbour to build on improving compliance](#)

[View all](#)

Contact

Water News is our monthly update on water planning, management and reform in NSW. If you have any questions or feedback contact us at:

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[View previous newsletters](#)



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