

July 2022 | ISSUE #37

New inundation mapping for the Reconnecting River Country Program now available



The Reconnecting River Country Program has reached another major milestone with new inundation mapping now available across the program area.

The new interactive maps were developed due to stakeholder requests for greater detail on the extent of inundation. They will help provide communities with more information on the likely benefits and implications of the different flow options proposed by the program.

Two types of interactive maps are available:

- general maps, which show estimated inundation for the program area
- property-scale maps, which include information on property boundaries, aerial imagery and property-scale inundation.

The maps were developed using comprehensive hydraulic modelling. This was checked against satellite imagery and/or aerial photography during high flow events (natural and dam release) in the region over recent years.

Landholder and stakeholder feedback will now play a vital role in ground truthing and finalising the inundation mapping and flow options, in the next phase of the program.

To view the interactive maps, visit the program's [virtual room](#). More maps will be added as they are finalised.

Have your say on the draft NSW Groundwater Strategy



In a first for NSW, we are developing a long-term strategy to improve the way we manage and share the state's vital groundwater resources.

Groundwater is becoming increasingly vulnerable due to changing climate conditions, population growth and increased land use. A long-term direction – harnessing the latest science available – is needed to ensure the way we manage groundwater continues to evolve to tackle the critical challenges it faces.

The draft NSW Groundwater Strategy will have an enhanced, state-wide focus on sustainable groundwater management for the next 20 years. It will also deliver on a key priority of the NSW Water Strategy.

We are currently seeking community feedback on the draft NSW Groundwater Strategy until Sunday 14 August 2022. Public consultation included the hosting of 2 online public webinars in July.

To register for a webinar and to have a say on what's happening right under your feet with NSW's groundwater resources, [visit our website for more information](#).

Construction of Finley water treatment plant begins



Berrigan Shire Council Mayor Matthew Hannan (left), Minister for Lands and Water Kevin Anderson (centre) and Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole (right) at Finley water treatment plant. Photo credit: Alister Laidlaw

Works have begun on a new water treatment plant for the town of Finley in the Riverina region. The \$6.6 million plant will provide up to 1,000,000 litres of safe and reliable drinking water daily to over 2,500 residents.

Once completed, the new plant will replace the existing plant which was built in 1940. Modern treatment processes and control systems will improve water quality and efficiency, and reduce operating costs.

When visiting Finley, Minister for Lands and Water, Kevin Anderson said the new water treatment plant will be equipped to support population and business growth. “By working with Berrigan Shire Council to co-fund the upgrade, we’re ensuring the community will continue to have access to high-quality drinking water for decades to come.”

The project is being delivered with \$4 million from the NSW Government’s \$1 billion Safe and Secure Water Program and \$2.6 million from Berrigan Shire Council. The plant will be owned and operated by Berrigan Shire Council when construction is completed in mid-2023.

[Learn more about the Safe and Secure Water Program.](#)

Draft replacement Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sharing Plan



The department is inviting members of the community to have their say on the Bega Water Sharing Plan which is currently on public exhibition until Sunday 21 August.

The plan establishes rules for water management, including limits on the total volume of water that can be extracted from the water sources, in the Bega/Brogo and Murrah-Wallaga areas. Water sharing plans are subject to review every 10 years and the current plans for the Bega/Brogo and Murrah-Wallaga areas will expire on 30 June 2023.

Face to face meetings were held in the community during July. You can also catch our [webinar](#) on Thursday 4 August, or watch a recording of the webinar online from Monday 8 August.

Feedback and issues raised during the public exhibition phase will be considered when finalising the plan. Submissions can be made up until 21 August.

The finalised replacement plan is proposed to commence on or before 1 July 2023.

[Visit our website to register for the webinar or for more information.](#)

Draft Greater Sydney Metropolitan water sharing plans – public consultation period extended

Community members are invited to learn about and comment on 2 proposed water-sharing plans for the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Region. Engagement on the plans has been rescheduled, and the public extension period extended, due to recent flooding in 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.

The plans establish rules for water management, including the limit on the total volume of water that can be extracted from unregulated and groundwater sources in the Greater Metropolitan Region.

Please visit our website for more information on the plans and engagement events.

Wilcannia Weir Replacement Project EIS open for public comment



The proposal to replace the 80-year-old weir in Wilcannia has moved one step closer with the public exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) open until Sunday 14 August.

The proposed Wilcannia Weir Replacement Project has been declared as State Significant Infrastructure (SSI), as it is considered important to NSW for economic, environmental, or social reasons. The project aims to deliver greater water security and reliability for the town's residents, as well as to support water flows and fish migration for a healthier Darling River.

Community and stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback during the exhibition period using the online NSW Planning Portal.

All comments will go to the Department of Planning and Environment's Planning and Assessment Group as part of the review, assessment, and determination processes.

Learn more at the [Wilcannia Weir Replacement project page](#).

Updates from NRAR



NRAR tech capabilities featured on ABC Landline

On a recent ABC Landline episode, the independent Natural Resource Access Regulator (NRAR) showcased its intelligence-led approach to water regulation. This approach includes using drones, satellite imagery, an acoustic profiler boat, flow meters and more.

NRAR uses a rapidly expanding suite of technology to monitor and assess compliance with water laws across NSW. Technology increases the accuracy and efficiency of its work, which means the chance of NRAR detecting non-compliance has never been greater.

You can view the [ABC Landline episode here](#).



NRAR takes action against rulebreakers

The independent Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) responds to breaches of water law in a range of different ways. The response depends on the

severity of the breach, the degree to which the offender is responsible, their attitude to compliance and the public interest in the offence.

Some of NRAR's recent enforcements include:

- A Queensland-based earthmoving company and a landowner who contracted the earthmoving company to build several unlawful bores were [both convicted and fined more than \\$30,000](#). They will also pay \$40,000 in associated legal fees.
- An irrigator, who allegedly exceeded their bore extraction limits, has [entered into an enforceable undertaking with NRAR](#). This will see them forfeit more than a third of their FY21-22 groundwater allocation and contribute \$15,000 towards fish stocking in the Namoi River.
- A [company in Walgett has been issued two stop work orders](#) for allegedly not complying with the [NSW non-urban](#) metering rules.

Healthy farms. Healthy rivers. Healthy fish.



The NSW Government is working with landholders across the northern Murray-Darling Basin to improve the health of riparian zones with the Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program.

A riparian zone is an area on and along the banks of a river or waterway.

Healthy riparian zones are an important buffer zone between the floodplain and waterways. They support diverse vegetation, help maintain bank stability and retain nutrients and soil, improving water quality.

Incentive grants are available for landholders, Aboriginal organisations, community groups, and individuals across the NSW northern Murray-Darling Basin for works adjacent to waterways. Works that would be eligible for funding include riparian fencing, alternate stock water supply, re-vegetation, minor erosion control, and exotic woody weed control.

The success of the program so far has been driven by landholders, who have committed to improving and protecting over 200 kilometres of riverbanks.

Expressions of interest for Round 2 are open and will close on 26 August. Please visit the [Local Land Services website](#) or [contact the team](#) for more information.

Screening our Streams project



8-inch Riverscreen floating diversion screen operating at Porker Citrus on the Darling. Photo credit: David Sickerdick

Western Local Land Services is offering landholders a chance to support the local environment while improving the quality of water delivered to their properties.

The ‘Screening our Streams’ project provides \$5,000 to install a fish-friendly screen on a pump intake. Fish-friendly screens do not slow water rates, but prevent native fish, larvae and eggs, as well as any floating weeds or debris, from entering the pump.

Screens are installed at the intake point to protect the pump from clogging. This minimises wear and tear on the pump and reduces the amount of time required for pump shutdown to clean secondary filters – saving you labour and money.

Interested landholders should visit the [Local Land Services website](#) to read the guidelines and conditions before submitting an expression of interest (EOI) form. Please note that the size and cost for screens differ due to the requirements of each site, so it’s important to contact suppliers to determine suitability and seek a quote.

EOIs will be accepted up to 2 December 2022, or until funding is fully allocated. This project is funded by the Murray-Darling Healthy Rivers Grant Program.

Metering and Measurement Information Roadshow



Department of Planning and Environment staff, along with NRAR and Water NSW, recently visited the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions to discuss the non-urban metering and measurement reforms and requirements on water users to comply with metering and measurement rules.

With the Southern Inland compliance date of 1 December 2022 fast approaching, important information was provided to remind water users about steps they need to take to comply with the rules.

The [presentation](#) and [webinar](#) recording from the information sessions are now available.

For more information about the metering and measurement reform and upcoming engagement activities, visit the department's [website](#).

Non-urban water metering updates - applying for an exemption to the mandatory metering equipment condition

The non-urban water metering rules include requirements for metering equipment which apply to all water supply works in NSW. These rules are being rolled out in stages and are applied by conditions on Water Supply Work Approvals.

There are some exemptions to the rules. The majority of these exemptions apply to works automatically if the specified circumstances for the exemption are met. You can check the online guidance tool to see if your works qualify for an automatic exemption.

If your works cannot physically comply with the requirements for metering equipment, and your works do not qualify for an automatic exemption, you can lodge an application for an exemption with the department. Applications submitted to the department need to demonstrate that it is not possible for water taken to be measured by compliant metering equipment.

The department has published a factsheet to help applicants ensure their application includes the necessary information needed for assessment. The factsheet includes information about situations when a work cannot physically comply with the requirements for metering equipment, how to lodge an application, and the application assessment process. Submitting an application with the necessary information will result in shorter assessment times for applicants.

The factsheet complements the department's existing online application form. For more information visit our website.

Have your say

Current and upcoming consultations and information events:

Draft replacement of the Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Groundwater Sources

The [water sharing plan](#) establishes rules for water management including the limit of the total volume of water that can be extracted from the groundwater sources in the Greater Metropolitan region

To find out more and have your say, stakeholders can:

- Read the [draft water sharing plan \(PDF, 241.97 KB\)](#)
- View the [draft plan map \(PDF, 8271.03 KB\)](#)
- Read supporting [fact sheets and report cards](#)
- Make a comment via the [Have your say page](#)
- [Download a submission form](#)

Draft replacement of the Water Sharing Plan for the Greater Metropolitan Region Unregulated River Water Sources

The [water sharing plan](#) establishes rules for water management including the limit of the total volume of water that can be extracted from the unregulated water sources in the Greater Metropolitan region

To find out more and have your say, stakeholders can:

- Read the [draft water sharing plan \(PDF, 391.77 KB\)](#)
- View the [draft plan \(PDF, 18178.88 KB\)](#)
- Read supporting documents including [fact sheet and report cards](#)
- Make a comment via the [Have your say page](#)
- [Download a submission form](#)

Drop-in information sessions for Draft Water Sharing Plans Groundwater and Unregulated River Water Sources.

Public information sessions that cover information on Water Sharing Plans for both Groundwater Sources and Unregulated Rivers will be run as 'drop in sessions' The community is invited to drop in at any time over the four-hour period. Please note the dates for the Picton and Windsor sessions are yet to be rescheduled following flood events.

All sessions will be run from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

- Kangaroo Valley - [Thursday 28 July 2022, Kangaroo Valley Showground](#)
- Wollongong - [Friday 29 July 2022, WIN Sports and Entertainment Centres](#)
- Lithgow - [Tuesday 2 August 2022, Lithgow Workies Club](#)
- Katoomba - [Wednesday 3 August 2022, Katoomba RSL](#)
- Penrith - [Thursday 4 August 2022, Penrith RSL](#)
- Parramatta - [Friday 5 August 2022, 4 Parramatta Square](#)

Draft replacement of the Water Sharing Plan for Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sharing Plan

Thursday 4 August, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Public exhibition of the replacement Water Sharing Plan for the Bega River Area Regulated, Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2022 will run from Wednesday 13 July to Sunday 21 August 2022.

The water sharing plan establishes rules for water management including the limit of the total volume of water that can be extracted from the water sources in the Bega/Brogo and Murrah-Wallaga areas.

To find out more and have your say you can:

- Read the draft [water sharing plan \(PDF, 498.69 KB\)](#).
- [View a map \(PDF, 3474.81 KB\)](#) of the water sharing plan area
- Read [supporting documentation](#) including background documents, fact sheets, report cards and a risk assessment.
- [Register for an online webinar](#)

NSW Groundwater Strategy

Thursday 28 July, 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

The NSW Groundwater Strategy sets the strategic priorities for long-term groundwater resource management in NSW to support the state's economy, communities and the environment.

To find out more and have your say you can:

- Read the [Draft Groundwater Strategy](#).
- Have your say through a [stakeholder survey](#).
- [Register for an online webinar](#).

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

- [Rising river alert: Upper Murrumbidgee River below Tantangara Dam](#)
- [Wilcannia Weir EIS on display](#)
- [Bage Area Water Sharing Plan open for feedback](#)
- [State-first strategy to secure future of NSW groundwater](#)
- [Rising river alert - Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam](#)
- [New water allocations reflect record rainfall in recent months](#)

[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:

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