

Draft NSW Water Strategy submission form

The NSW Water Strategy will be the first 20-year water strategy for all of NSW. It will provide a blueprint to help us tackle the key challenges and opportunities for water management across the state.

For more information about the strategy or to download a copy of the strategy, please visit dpie.nsw.gov.au/nswwaterstrategy.

Your voice is important

We would like to hear your views on the draft strategy, including whether you think it identifies the right priorities, challenges, opportunities and actions.

Please provide your feedback in the submission form below and email your completed submission to nsw.waterstrategy@dpie.nsw.gov.au or post to NSW Water Strategy, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta NSW 2124 **by 28 March, 2021**.

The form will take approximately 15 minutes to complete and your response can remain anonymous if you wish (see question 1).

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

If you have any questions about making a submission, please email:

nsw.waterstrategy@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Making your submission public

We collect information about you, which may include personal information, to assess submissions in response to the department's dealings and activities, and to perform other functions required to complete the project. This information must be supplied. If you choose not to provide the requested information we may not be able to assess your submission.

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, unless you have chosen to remain anonymous.

If you would like your submission and/or feedback to be kept confidential, please let us know when making your submission. You will be asked for your confidentiality preference at question 1.

If you request that your submission be kept confidential, it will not be published on our website or included in any relevant reports.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.

industry.nsw.gov.au/privacy

1. Information on confidentiality and privacy*

I give permission for my submission to be made 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

2. Your details

Name*

Contact phone number*

Postcode*

Email address*

Do you identify as an Aboriginal person?

- Yes
 No

Are you an individual or representing an organisation?*

- Individual
 Organisation

3. Organisation or business details

Who do you represent?

- Government Please specify
- Peak representative organisation Please specify
- Local Water Utility
- Other (please specify)

4. Draft vision

The NSW Government has developed the draft NSW Water Strategy as part of a suite of long-term strategies to maintain the resilience of the state's water services and resources over the coming decades.

The proposed vision for the draft NSW Water Strategy is sustainable water resources for thriving people, places and ecosystems, both now and for future generations.

Which aspects of water management are most important to you and your local community?

* Ensure supply in likely increasing reduction of input into the system.

* Environmental protection and sustainability.

* Recognise that water is a 'finite' resource.

* Recycling and reuse of waste water; bringing it up to potable standard for human consumption.

* Concerns about the trading of water as a commodity in a market place - is this in the best interests of the whole community?

Do you support the proposed vision for the draft NSW Water Strategy?

Yes

No

Please tell us more about your response:

In general yes - we clearly need to be doing more to secure supply and provide quality supply to all as well as needing to respect environmental needs as a high priority.

Recognition of limitations of supply and the need to manage water better is critical to ensuring the needs of present and future populations.

5. Draft objectives

The draft NSW Water Strategy sets high level objectives and principles to guide water service delivery and resource management across NSW. We have identified six core objectives which underpin the draft strategy. These are based on the *Water Management Act 2000*. They are:

- protecting public health and safety
- liveable and vibrant towns and cities
- water sources, floodplains and ecosystems protected
- cultural values respected and protected
- orderly, fair and equitable sharing of water
- contribute to a strong economy.

Which objectives are most important to you?

Please rank the objectives from most important to least important (where 1 is most important and 6 is least important).

- 3 Protecting public health and safety
- 4 Liveable and vibrant towns and cities
- 1 Water sources, floodplains and ecosystems protected
- 5 Cultural values respected and protected
- 2 Orderly, fair and equitable sharing of water
- 6 Contribute to a strong economy

Do you have any comments on any of the proposed objectives?

* The order is 1. Water sources, 2. Orderly, 3. Protecting, 4. Liveable, 5. Cultural, 6 Contribute.

* Water sources, floodplains and ecosystems protected is just fundamental to the underpinning of any strategy. The rest come after this is supported, managed, guaranteed.

6. Draft guiding principles

The draft strategy also proposes seven principles to guide the long-term strategic planning for water resource management in NSW. These principles work in tandem with the draft objectives to guide development and implementation of actions.

The guiding principles are:

- healthy environments sustain social and economic outcomes
- water is a limited (although recyclable) resource
- systems thinking to optimise outcomes
- data-enabled planning and decision-making
- transparency and accountability to engender community trust
- forward thinking to build preparedness and resilience
- giving effect to Aboriginal rights and access to water.

Which principles are most important to you?

Please rank the objectives from most important to least important (where 1 is most important and 7 is least important).

- 2 Healthy environments sustain social and economic outcomes
- 1 Water is a limited (although recyclable) resource
- 3 Systems thinking to optimise outcomes
- 6 Data-enabled planning and decision-making
- 5 Transparency and accountability to engender community trust
- 4 Forward thinking to build preparedness and resilience
- 7 Giving effect to Aboriginal rights and access to water

Do you have any comments on any of the guiding principles?

* The order is 1. Water is, 2. Healthy environments, 3. Systems, 4. Forward, 5. Transparency, 6. Data, 7. Giving effect.

* Water is a limited (although recyclable) resource - again a fundamental concept from which the others follow.

7. Opportunities, challenges and actions for improved state-wide water management

The draft NSW Water Strategy outlines seven strategic priorities for action, focused on meeting the core objectives based on the *NSW Water Management Act 2000*. These strategic priorities are:

1. Build community confidence and capacity through engagement, transparency and accountability
2. Recognise Aboriginal rights and values, and increase access to and ownership of water for cultural and economic purposes
3. Improve river, floodplain and aquifer ecosystem health, and system connectivity
4. Increase resilience to changes in water availability (variability and climate change)
5. Support economic growth and resilient industries within a capped system
6. Support resilient, prosperous and liveable cities and towns
7. Enable a future focused, capable and innovative water sector.

Under each priority the draft strategy identifies several opportunities and challenges, and a total of 41 proposed actions to improve water management across the state.

Do you have any comments on the seven strategic priorities identified?

* They appear to follow naturally from the objectives and principles.

Do you have any comments on any of the proposed actions identified?

* Priority 3's and 4's actions are fundamental to the success of the strategy.

* These must be supported by those of Priority 7.

Without these we cannot really have the other priorities implemented.

Are there any additional opportunities, risks and challenges that should be considered in the draft strategy?

* More emphasis on the recycling and reuse of existing water resources needs to be given especially in the context of regional local government area planning and management of resources.

* In my area one of the first responses is to raise issues of storage (e.g., 'let's build a dam sometime in the future scenario so that we can be drought proof') rather than expenditure on recycling and reuse (although there is some attention to low level recycling / reuse for agricultural purposes in some parts of the MCC local government area.).

* More needs to be done to push local government to work on this so that the level of recycling and reuse reaches a standard suitable for safe human consumption.

What actions should be prioritised for immediate implementation and how should they be implemented?

* More emphasis on recycling and reuse of the finite water resources available, less emphasis on possible longer term solutions, such as, increased water storage which are expensive and reliant on assumptions about water flowing into catchments which appears less likely given the climate change constraints we are operating under presently and increasingly so into the future.

* More thorough and accurate monitoring of who uses how much, when, and where is critical.

8. Other comments

Do you have any other comments on the draft NSW Water Strategy?

Let's hope that governments and communities get behind this as a comprehensive and wholistic approach is needed to address the current and future needs and demands on this vital resource.

9. How did you hear about the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft NSW Water Strategy?

Please select all that apply from the list below:

- Newspaper
- Radio
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website
- Direct email
- Social media
- Have your say NSW website
- Word of mouth
- Other (please describe)

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