

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If you request that your submission be kept confidential, it will not be published on our website or included in any relevant reports.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

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?

Water security in our inland towns

Achieving water security for towns while minimising the environmental impact of local water extraction on the environment.

Equity between water users

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

- Yes
 No

Please tell us more about your response:

The strategy deals with the big picture of balancing water use between large water demand users - the environment and agriculture.

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).

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

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

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).

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

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

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?

The building of community confidence and capacity deals with the bigger picture of what is happening between competing users - environment and agriculture. Whereas the concerns at a town community level are not covered well. This is understandable given the small demand towns place on the overall system in inland NSW. However, the cost of not having secure domestic water supply is disproportionately high especially when water for domestic use and drinking needs to be carted into rural towns.

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

None explicitly address rural town water use

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

The risk of rural town running out of water and ending up with water that is not of drinking quality due to depletion of local water supplies.

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

Uralla has commenced a community consultation on options for water security, being run by ZNET Uralla - a community group in partnership with UNSW and Uralla Shire Council, with funding from NSW Government IRCCC Grant. This project is about half way completed so we do not yet have a complete picture of how our community feels about options for water security.

However, some points to note:

- there is enormous appetite for our community to engage on this issue as evidenced by the response to workshops, surveys and stakeholder interviews held to date
- a nuanced and insightful understanding of the pros and cons for many of the options including water recycling
- a strong concern for the environmental tradeoffs that may come about from different water security options
- a real local connection with where our water comes from and desire to have a "say" in future options.

In a water constrained environment that climate change is exacerbating, working with communities on options (including water recycling) is pivotal to acceptance of new technologies and key to engendering support for local water authorities to implement the most sensible technological solutions.

8. Other comments

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

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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