

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If you request that your submission be kept confidential, it will not be published on our website or included in any relevant reports.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

Water security and resilience, protecting public health and safety, protection of water sources and ecosystem, efficient and fair use of resources.

Please also refer to attached letter.

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

- Yes
 No

Please tell us more about your response:

Please also refer to attached letter.

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).

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

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

Please also refer to attached letter.

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).

- 3 Healthy environments sustain social and economic outcomes
- 2 Water is a limited (although recyclable) resource
- 5 Systems thinking to optimise outcomes
- 6 Data-enabled planning and decision-making
- 4 Transparency and accountability to engender community trust
- 1 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?

Please also refer to attached letter.

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?

Please also refer to attached letter.

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

Please also refer to attached letter.

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

Please also refer to attached letter.

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

Please also refer to attached letter.

8. Other comments

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

Please also refer to attached letter.

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) Water Directorate

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28 March 2021

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Re: Draft NSW Water Strategy (February 2021)

I write in response to the call for submissions on the draft NSW Water Strategy and thank you for the opportunity to comment. In addition to the feedback offered in this letter, MidCoast Council supports the submission from the Water Directorate. We welcome the development of the NSW Water Strategy after an absence of robust strategic planning for water, particularly in regional NSW.

Priority 1 – Build community confidence and capacity through engagement, transparency and accountability

- We support this priority
- There is mention of reinforcing NRAR's role and building confidence. This will require adequate resourcing of NRAR.
- The strategy may benefit from the inclusion of actions targeting improving water literacy education.

Priority 2 – Recognise Aboriginal rights and values and increase access and ownership of water for cultural and economic purposes

- We support this priority and it great to see a big focus on Aboriginal engagement and input.

Priority 3 – Improve river, floodplain and aquifer ecosystem health, and system connectivity

- We support this priority.
- Flow data from river gauging stations is very valuable and we rely on it heavily. Consideration should be given to adding turbidity and other water quality parameters to more sites. This would help to monitor the health of the catchment and give water utilities valuable raw water quality information before extraction.

Priority 4 – Increase resilience to changes to water availability (variability and climate change)

- We support this priority.
- We support the investigation of options for a more consistent approach to water restrictions across NSW, whilst acknowledging that there are different climate conditions and associated water consumption needs across regional NSW
- A focus on higher users and irrigators would be welcomed, as well as education about the fair use of water. This may involve building relationships between irrigators and water utilities in high priority catchments.

Priority 5 – Support economic growth and resilient industries within a capped system

- We support this priority.

Priority 6 – Support resilient, prosperous and liveable cities and towns

- We support this priority.
- The Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Framework is too prescriptive, hindering innovation, good strategic planning and performance improvement. The framework is used more as regulation rather than guidance. This is a significant issue which we hope will be picked up and addressed as part of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program.
- We support the promotion and improvement of IWCM. We support the principles of IWCM but would like to see the prescriptiveness of the IWCM framework significantly reduced.

Priority 7 – Enable a future focussed, capable and innovative water sector

- We support this priority and support a greater focus on recycled water options, including removing all barriers to the use of purified recycled water for drinking.

We would conclude by saying that whilst there are many positive opportunities for improvement, addressing the fundamentals in water regulation is overdue. Water regulation and management cannot continue to be done the way it has always been done.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] if any further information is required on this submission.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

