

Wilcannia Weir Replacement

Wilcannia Weir Project going to Water Infrastructure NSW

WaterNSW has been delivering the Wilcannia Weir Replacement project over the last two years. From 1 July 2021 the project will transition to Water Infrastructure NSW (WINSW) within the Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE).

WINSW has been created as a central agency to oversee the planning and delivery of water security projects in New South Wales. It is expected that once projects and assets are delivered by WINSW many will be operated and maintained by WaterNSW. Most of the staff currently involved in the projects will be moving across to WINSW and this includes the current project team working on the Wilcannia Project including Brendan, Mina, Felicity and Tracey, who will continue to work closely with the Wilcannia community.

WaterNSW and Water Infrastructure NSW share the same level of commitment to engaging with communities and we expect to see no change in the approach we have used to date, commitments that have been made and processes in place. We are doing what we can to make it a swift and seamless process. The public exhibition for the Environmental Impact Statement document is now planned for the end of the year, due to more complex operational issues needing to be incorporated into the document.

At the March 2021 consultation session in Wilcannia, the project team showed an animation of how the weir can work in 'dual operation mode'. As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) document we have to consider these operation modes demonstrated in the animation, and provide responses on any associated impacts and benefits. This means the EIS document will be ready to go on public exhibition date in November 2021.

The team is preparing to visit Wilcannia as soon as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted with more information and we will talk to the community about the project, as well as opportunities for local business to become involved in the project.

TAFE NSW - Gili Award



Gili (pronounced 'kill-ee') is an Eora word meaning 'to shine'. It is a very apt name for these awards, as the recipients are a shining example of excellence in Aboriginal education and training within TAFE NSW. Selected from across the state, the nominees highlight and celebrate TAFE NSW Aboriginal student achievements, as well as the innovative programs and dedication of TAFE NSW staff members, that help empower Aboriginal people and communities every day. (TAFENSW)



At the Gili Awards – Byron Hooker (TAFE NSW), Bama Johnson, Mina Suh (WaterNSW), Felicity Rooney (WaterNSW) and Brendan Adams (REDIE)

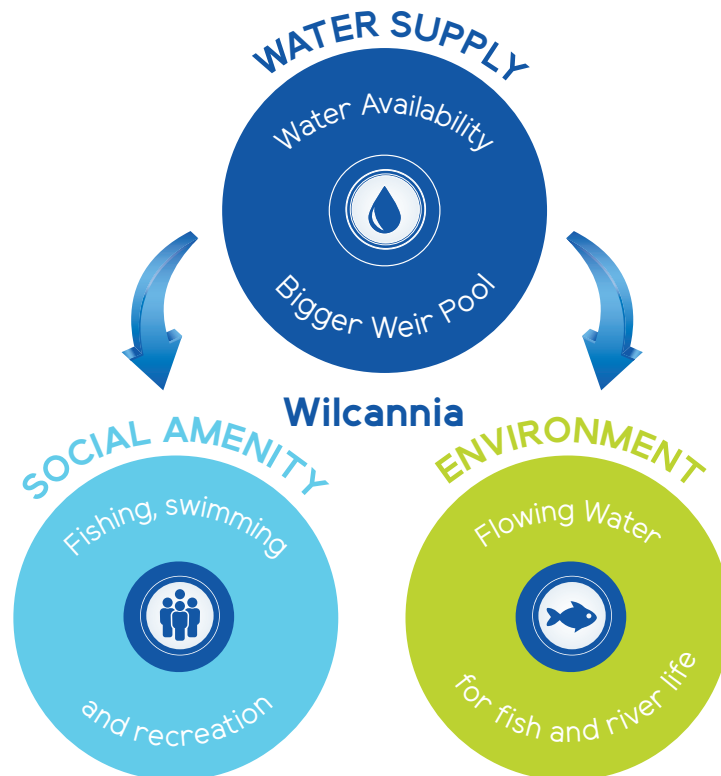
In June at the TAFE NSW GILI AWARDS the Wilcannia Weir project won the Industry Partnership. TAFE NSW nominated the partnership with WaterNSW, Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly and REDIE for this award which acknowledges the success of working together and achieve outcomes to deliver training courses in construction, tourism and hospitality.

The award is testament to the incredible teamwork shown by all involved. So much hard work and support has gone into making this training course successful by the partners and the Wilcannia community.

How will the new weir work?

The main focus of the new weir is for the Wilcannia community to have secure water supply in times of drought, as the new weir can hold back and store more water.

The new weir is being designed with the intent to provide a structure that is sensitive to environmental, social and cultural needs, and as a critical piece of infrastructure for town water supply. This is shown in the diagram below .



In the past, weirs that have been raised and/or built for the purposes of town water supply, have had a potential to have significant impacts to the environment and cultural values. This is because the water levels become higher and the weir pool is deeper, which in times of low or no river flows may increase the risk of blue-green algae and cause salinity issues. The type of fish species commonly seen in these locations can also be affected by this change in flow patterns associated with a deeper weir pool.

At Wilcannia, the project is proposing an innovative weir design this is 1 metre higher than the existing weir and includes a fish way and gates. It will be operated in what is known as 'dual operation modes' to reduce the impacts described above. These two (2) modes of operation are explained below.

Normal Mode (Operating the weir at existing weir full supply Level)

This mode will be operating when there are normal flowing river conditions. The river will be at the same levels as it currently is with the existing weir. It is expected that the weir will be in this mode 90% of the time. This allows the low river flows to pass through the fishway structure. It will also be possible to open the weir gate to allow any additional flows to pass through if the flow is higher.

Security Mode (Operating the weir at full height of the new weir)

This mode is triggered when the flows upstream of the weir are consistently low and indicating the weather pattern is turning to drought. The weir outlet gate(s) are fully closed with the fishway also fully closed. This allows the weir pool storage to capture the remaining flows within the river system for town water security, with the new weir filling up to the additional 1 metre in height. The success of this mode is dependent on being able to fill the weir pool before the river flows stop or become too low to fill the pool.

When there is a flood, water will be able to spill over the top of the new weir and the fishway and the whole structure may become covered in water.

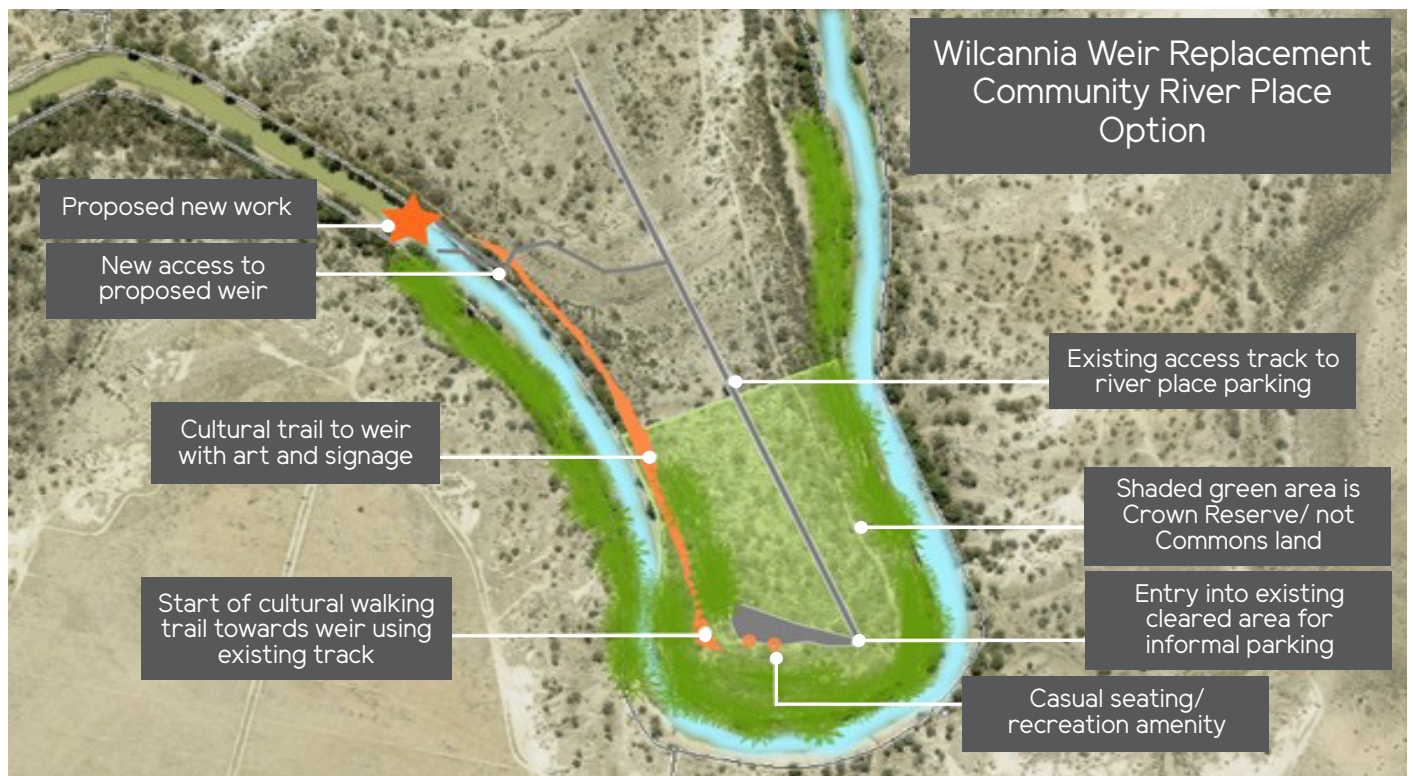
We need your feedback on the Community River Place

This proposed Community River Place is being designed as a low-key recreation area where community and visitors can picnic, fish and swim.

The place where we had initially planned to put the recreation area, beside the new weir, is no longer feasible. WaterNSW consulted with Crown Lands and we found out the area is classified as a 'Commons', so it will be a challenge to provide the recreation area at this location. We are now looking at the southern end of Union Bend Road, which is a Crown Reserve/ park and could include a recreation area. This is also in the gazetted Aboriginal Place. We have been talking with Council and Heritage NSW, but we want feedback from the community on this idea, including asking these questions below:

- *Can we use the cleared area for some casual parking?*
- *Should the walking track from the road join up with the old walking track?*
- *How should we use rocks from the old weir – should they be placed as a yarning circle or used as informal seating?*
- *What should we do to protect Granny Mosely's tree – should it be fenced off, have signage, or should the trail detour around the tree?*
- *What kind of signage should we provide for cultural knowledge and wayfinding?*
- *How would you like to see the drawings of river life made by the school and community workshops, used at the recreation area and new weir site?*

The project team visited in May to hear feedback on developing this area to include basic facilities such as tables, a walking track and interpretive signage. The next step is to develop a formal landscape plan.



The project team are returning to Wilcannia when the current COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.
A flyer will be sent with dates of our next visit soon.

Keep in touch

- 📞 Call us on **1300 662 077**
- ✉ Email Us at **WilcanniaWeir@waternsw.com.au**
- 🌐 Visit us at **waternsw.com.au**
- 🐦 Follow us on Twitter **@WaterNSW**



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment**



This project is delivered under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by the NSW Government, and is jointly funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and the NSW Government

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What progress has been made on the new weir?



Completed additional site river surveys and heritage surveys



Made changes to the location of the proposed recreation area



Resolving complex issues around the "dual operation mode" of the weir



Starting detailed design early to reduce risk of delays during construction work

Now that we are starting the detailed design it means the construction contractor who tenders to build the weir, need only to have construction experience, rather than needing both design and construction experience. By starting detailed design earlier it also reduces the risk of delays during construction.

Detailed design starts in July 2021 and the engagement of the construction contractor begins in November 2021. The preferred contractor will then be selected by February 2022. The first job of the contractor is to start preparing the supply items needed for construction work such as gates, precast, walkways, etc. This means we will be able to start on site earlier if the opportunity arises and further reduce the risk of onsite construction delays due to problems with supply items. However, no works can start in the riverbank and immediate surrounds until the EIS document has Federal Government approval.

Wilcannia Weir - Timeline

