

Overview: Better Bidgee Program

About the Better Bidgee Program



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The NSW Government is investigating a range of measures for the Murrumbidgee River system as part of rescoping the Yanco Creek Offtake Project. These measures are part of a new Better Bidgee program (the program).

Following the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting in April, Water Infrastructure NSW has rescoped the Yanco Creek Offtake Sustainable Diversion Limits Adjustment Mechanism (SDLAM) Project and investigated options that could be supported by the community.

Our focus over the past few months has been evaluating the years of community feedback regarding the need to improve connectivity, environmental, cultural and community outcomes.

We know that these issues can only be addressed by taking a holistic, system-wide approach to water infrastructure planning and operations, working in tandem with changes in water policy and strategy. We also know that feedback from our stakeholders and communities is critical to ensuring we progress the best options for delivering outcomes.

We have recently launched a major consultation and engagement program, which will enable us to work side-by-side with communities to investigate solutions to create a Better Bidgee. This is a shift towards beneficial outcomes for communities and the environment.

Options are currently being investigated by the project team, most of which are in the very early planning stages. Community feedback and input will play a crucial role in shaping which initiatives are progressed, and what these initiatives look like, to deliver a Better Bidgee.

Proposed initiatives

We are proposing a range of existing and new measures that together deliver better outcomes to make the management of the Murrumbidgee River system more flexible, ensuring rivers and floodplains are maintained and improved, while ensuring sustainable local communities, agriculture and industries are supported.

Community support is critical to getting this right – we need feedback, input and support from the community to help us make decisions on how we might progress a Better Bidgee.

A key focus for the Better Bidgee program is improving native fish access to open up more than 1,000 km of the Murrumbidgee River system by installing fishways at key blockages, addressing cold water pollution discharge from large dams, and installing screens on pumps and diversions to save tens of millions of fish annually.

The key components/projects include:

Yanco Creek Offtake – improved environmental outcomes ([view the fact sheet](#) and [project website](#))

Reconnecting the Bidgee: fish passage ([view the fact sheet](#))

Addressing cold water pollution ([view the fact sheet](#))

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Fish friendly water extraction ([view the fact sheet](#))

Gooragool and Mantangary Lagoons ([view the fact sheet](#))

Balranald Weir/Yanga Lake ([view the fact sheet](#))

Initiative Map

The locations of the initiatives making up the Better Bidgee program are shown in the map below.



Stakeholder engagement

Communities will be at the heart of the Better Bidgee program. We are committed to working in partnership to develop the program to deliver outcomes with broad community support.

We will provide numerous opportunities for local communities and stakeholders to have their say on the design of the program and throughout the development and delivery phases of any projects. This feedback will be a key input into decision making and will help shape the program's future design.

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We are also keen to hear any alternative or additional ideas local communities may have to deliver economic, cultural and environmental outcomes for local communities and the environment across the Murrumbidgee River system.

We will be reaching out to local communities to discuss the proposed ideas making up the Better Bidgee program. Upcoming engagement and partnering opportunities will be listed on the [Better Bidgee webpage](#) and on our [stakeholder engagement page](#).

Engagement with First Nations people

We recognise and acknowledge the unique relationship and deep Connection to Country that First Nations people have as the Traditional Owners and First Peoples of Australia.

The wisdom and experience of the First Nations communities will play a critical role in informing the development and approach to the Better Bidgee program.

We have a dedicated engagement team who will guide our program engagement with these communities, and we look forward to working with them to deliver real, tangible and widely accepted outcomes.

Find out more

For more information on the Better Bidgee program:

- call 1300 081 047
- email our engagement team at better.bidgee@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- visit dpi.nsw.gov.au/better-bidgee

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