

## Attachment C: Progress on the Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan

### NSW – MDBA Bilateral Agreement Action 4 Report

30 June 2021

#### NSW requirement

NSW will provide to the Authority a **report** on delivery of the *Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan* (NSW Government, September 2019).

- 4.1 NSW will provide to the Authority a **report** on delivery of the Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan (NSW Government, September 2019).
- 4.2 If any part of the delivery of the *Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan* is not complete, NSW will provide, in addition to the report required by paragraph 4.1, a **report** explaining the reasons for non-completion.
- 4.3 This reporting requirement will continue until all floodplain harvesting licences have been issued and there are WRPs for the New South Wales Border Rivers, Barwon-Darling Watercourse, Gwydir, Namoi and Macquarie-Castlereagh WRP areas incorporating floodplain harvesting management policy.

#### Report on delivery of Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan (NSW Government, September 2019), and reasons for non-completion

##### Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan deliverables

1. *Use the best available facts, data and scientific analysis to underpin the licensing framework and explain this work to you*

<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Updates</b>
1.1 Report on how sensitivity and uncertainty in the model has been treated by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and how much it affects users	Q4 2019	Complete	Documentation will now be included in valley-based model reports.
1.2 Report on the significance of additional rainfall runoff due to irrigation and how this is being managed	Q4 2019	Complete	The <a href="#">report for additional rainfall runoff</a> is available on the website. We propose that runoff from irrigation areas will not be licensed as floodplain harvesting in certain circumstances.
1.3 Write to individuals to explain the parameters that we will use to work out their licence entitlements	Q1 2020	Complete	Complete for all valleys
1.4 Publish valley-based model build report	Q3 2020	In progress	Complete for Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie valleys. We will complete this for the Barwon–Darling and Namoi valleys, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.
1.5 Publish valley-based model scenario report	Q3 2020	In progress	Complete for Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie valleys. We will complete this for the Barwon–Darling and Namoi valleys, subject to finalisation of water

			management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.
1.6 Publish valley-based environmental benefit reports	Q3 2020	In progress	Complete for Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie valleys. We will complete this for the Barwon–Darling and Namoi valleys, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.
1.7 Hold a focus workshop with peak water user groups in northern NSW valleys to provide information about how the modelling approach applied to individual farms is supported by sensitivity testing	Q3–Q4 2019	Complete	Workshop and field trip held with peak water user groups October 2019 in Moree.
1.8 Hold workshops with stakeholders to explain the model build, model scenario and environmental assessment reports on a valley-by-valley basis	Q3 2020	In progress	Complete for Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie valleys. We will complete this for the Barwon–Darling and Namoi valleys, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.

## 2. Set clear rules for floodplain harvesting and consult with you about them

<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Updates</b>
2.1 Publish all independent reviews about policy implementation (the Independent Review of NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy Implementation and a summary of the probity review into floodplain harvesting licensing)	Q3 2019	Complete	Reports for <a href="#">the Independent Review of NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy Implementation</a> and a summary of the <a href="#">probity review into floodplain harvesting licensing</a> are available on the website. The results of peer review of modelling reports for each valley are available on the website.
2.2 Release a response to each recommendation of the Independent Review of NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy Implementation	Q3 2019	Complete	See the <a href="#">Floodplain Harvesting Action Plan</a>
2.3 Release a guideline about how the department is implementing the policy	Q3 2019	Complete	<a href="#">Guidelines</a> available on the website.
2.4 Release proposed water sharing plan and water resource plan rule changes for floodplain harvesting	Q3 2020	In progress	Complete for Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie valleys. We will complete this for the Barwon–Darling and Namoi valleys, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.

2.5 Hold workshops with stakeholders to explain the guideline	Q3 2019	Complete	n/a
2.6 Hold workshops with stakeholders about proposed water sharing plan and water resource plan rule changes	Q3 2020	In progress	Complete for Border Rivers, Gwydir and Macquarie valleys. We will complete this for the Barwon–Darling and Namoi valleys, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.
2.7 Release draft entitlements for comment	Q3–Q4 2020	In progress	Draft entitlement released for comment in Border Rivers valley during Q1. We will release draft entitlements for comment in remaining valleys, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.
2.8 Finalise licences and amend water sharing plan and submit water resource plan for re-accreditation	Q2 2021	In progress	Licensing will come into effect, subject to finalisation of water management regulations associated with floodplain harvesting.

### 3. *Ensure rules are followed*

<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Updates</b>
3.1 Meet Compliance Compact obligations by publishing a program for improved measurement of floodplain harvesting	Q2 2019	Complete	<a href="#">Improvement program</a> available on the website
3.2 Release the final Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy	Q4 2019	Complete	The <a href="#">NSW Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy</a> is available on the website.
3.3 Require licence holders to install telemetry-ready, continuous water-level loggers on all on-farm storages used for floodplain harvesting	Q2-2021	In progress	Implementation will be through the Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy, supporting guidelines and Water Management Regulation (2020). See website for details.
3.4 Start enforcement of the new floodplain harvesting licensing framework through the Natural Resources Access Regulator	Q3 2021	Future action	n/a
3.5 Develop a best-practice guideline for floodplain harvesting measuring in partnership with Queensland and Murray–Darling Basin Authority	Q2 2021	In progress	Preliminary discussions with Queensland are underway for the development of best-practice guidelines.
3.6 Implement best-practice guidelines	Q3 2021 onwards	Future action	n/a
3.7 Support the development of technologies that enable better auditing and compliance of floodplain harvesting, including through the department's Water Technology Pilot Program	Q3 2019 onwards	Ongoing	Information about the Water Technology Pilot Program is available on the website.

3.8 Encourage the Natural Resources Access Regulator to address unapproved flood works on a risk basis to improve outcomes for the environment and downstream water users	From Q3 2019	Ongoing	We propose to adopt an interagency approach for accelerated compliance program with the department's Water group and Crown Lands branch, NRAR, and WaterNSW.
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#### 4. Improve floodplain harvesting management over time

<b>Our commitment</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Updates</b>
4.1 Collect floodplain harvesting diversion data by implementing the Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Strategy	From Q3 2021	Future action	Implementation will be through the installation of local intelligence devices (telemetry systems) with floodplain harvesting meters, as outlined in the <a href="#">NSW Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy</a> .
4.2 Consider opportunities to expand the river gauging network to improve the quantification of return flows from the floodplain to the river	Q3 2021	Future action	We are assessing options as part of the Northern Basin Toolkit and Hydrometric Networks and Remote Sensing Project.
4.3 Continue to invest in remote sensing to improve our understanding of flood flow breakouts and return flows from the floodplain to the river	Q3 2021	Future action	We are assessing options as part of the Northern Basin Toolkit and Hydrometric Networks and Remote Sensing Project.
4.4 Undertake modelling to assess the effects of climate change on floodplain harvesting, as well as on downstream water users and the environment	Q3 2021	Future action	Will be guided by regional water strategies.
4.5 Invest in robust monitoring and evaluation programs to better understand the hydrological and ecological effects of floodplain harvesting	Q3 2021	In progress	We are developing a monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) framework to better understand the hydrological and ecological effects of floodplain harvesting. We expect to publish the plan in Q3 2021.
4.6 Recalibrate models using floodplain harvesting measurement data	From Q3 2021	Future action	n/a
4.7 Improve model capability by explicitly representing flows from the floodplain to the river using all new data and information collected	From 2025	Future action	n/a
4.8 Review water sharing rules and amend them as necessary to improve the management of floodplain harvesting over time, based on improved data and information	From 2025	Future action	n/a