

Meeting Basin Plan requirements in relation to Aboriginal values and uses for water

The NSW Government is consulting widely with Aboriginal people in relation to Aboriginal values and uses for water.

The NSW Government recognises that Aboriginal people have a cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to their lands and waters, and that these provide important insights for water and natural resource management.

NSW water resource plans have been drafted, taking into consideration water-dependent cultural values and uses important to Aboriginal people. Changes have been made to NSW water sharing plans to reflect Aboriginal peoples' values and uses for water. These are outlined in each water resource plan (WRP).

How First Nations people and Aboriginal organisations are consulted

The NSW Government is consulting with 29 Aboriginal Nations across the Basin area of NSW using a Nation-by-Nation approach. Consultation includes face-to-face talks with Traditional Owners and community workshops. This methodology enables First Nations to continue their traditional roles as custodians, sustains the presence of individual Nations and allows them to contribute to water resource plans within the context of their cultural boundaries.

The government is working closely with Northern Basin Aboriginal Nations (NBAN) and Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN) to ensure each consultation is undertaken in a culturally appropriate way.

The NSW Government is also working with key Aboriginal stakeholders, such as the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, Local Aboriginal Lands Councils and native title groups to ensure they are included.

The information collected and how it is used

Aboriginal Nations provide information on their objectives and outcomes for the management of their water-dependent values and uses. Part of the culturally appropriate consultation framework acknowledges the rights First Nations people have over their own knowledge. Information gathered during the consultation process that is identified by Traditional Owners as First Nations Cultural Knowledge can only be used for specific purposes in the accreditation of WRPs.

Giving feedback

The NSW Government will consult on each draft water resource plan and invites responses from all interested parties.

More information

The NSW Government has always advocated for an approach to the Murray–Darling Basin Plan that balances economic, environmental and social concerns, and puts local communities first.

For more information about the water resource planning process, please visit industry.nsw.gov.au/water-resource-plan-consultation