Survey Results *Initial public feedback on how the NSW Government managed the 2020 Northern Basin First Flush Event*

**Interests of 144 survey participants**

- Indigenous person: 10
- Have an interest in the environment: 111
- Use works for floodplain harvesting: 36
- Relies on the river for domestic and/or stock water: 59
- Holds an access licence: 63
- Town community member: 74
- Rely on the river for floodplain harvesting: 11

**Geographic spread of participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Darling</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwydir</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namoi</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie–Castlereagh</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barwon-Darling</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrumbidgee</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sydney</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Rivers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lachlan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Murray</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Coast</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How participants found out about the restrictions**

- Word of mouth: 29
- Social media: 26
- WWSW site or comments: 24
- Industry group email: 21
- Radio: 20
- Newspaper: 18
- DPE website, text or email: 16
- TV: 14
- Early warning network: 12
- Did not find out: 11
- Water committee: 1
How well they thought the NSW Government did managing the event

- 79% Good or very good job
- 13% Neutral
- 8% Bad or very bad job

Key criticisms
- Lack of transparency, lack of evidence base for decision making
- Poorly communicated
- Lack of advance planning, advance communications and information after the event

Mistrust in decision-making
- Seemed inconsistent
- Concern/scepticism about floodplain harvesting lifts
- NSW Gov perceived as favouring big irrigation corps
- Perception that priority was given to southern / northern Basin
- Perception that restrictions were in place too long, too short, or were ineffective
- Concerns regarding flow forecasting

What was done well
- Protected water for towns and the environment
- Restricted floodplain harvesting for the first time
- Restrictions provided a degree of balance

Were restrictions and lifts communicated in a timely manner?

- Yes: 43
- No: 89
- I don’t know: 12

Were restrictions and lifts communicated clearly?

- Yes: 25
- No: 104
- I don’t know: 15

Were the reasons for the restrictions and lifts communicated well?

- Yes: 22
- No: 111
- I don’t know: 11

Were participants concerned about how the restrictions were applied?

- Yes: 94
- No: 16
- I don’t know: 34
The survey questions

Mandatory questions

- On a scale of 1-5, how good a job do you think the NSW Government did in restricting and allowing people to take water during the first flush event (1 being a very bad job and 5 being a very good job)?
- How did you find out about the water restrictions that the NSW Government had imposed and/or lifted?
- Did you find out about the restrictions (or that the restrictions had been lifted) in a timely manner?
- Do you think the restrictions and/or their lifting were communicated clearly?
- Do you think the reasons for why the restrictions were imposed or lifted were communicated clearly?
- Do you have concerns about how the legal framework was applied?

Optional questions

- What do you think should be done differently for future management of first flush events?
- What sort of information do you think should be made public in relation to the management of first flush events in the future?