

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

# Fish Passage: Reconnecting the Northern Basin Project

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## What We Heard

October 2025



# Acknowledgement of Country



The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

We recognise Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to society.

Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the

People and Community symbol.

Fish Passage: Reconnecting the Northern Basin Project

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# 1 Executive summary

## About the project

The Fish Passage: Reconnecting the Northern Basin project seeks to reinstate waterways to allow native fish to flourish, while at the same time balancing the needs of local water users.

It aims to improve native fish migration and boost river health, supporting a 70 GL reduction in water recovery targets in the Northern Basin under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. It will address barriers to fish passage by installing fishways on infrastructure within our river systems.

The project involves:

- the incorporation of partial width rock-ramp fishways at the existing weir sites at Banarway, Calmundi, Louth and Tilpa to improve fish passage
- the removal of an unlicensed structure on the Darling-Baaka River.

Native fish need to migrate to complete key life stages and to avoid drying habitats during drought. The distance migrated ranges from a few kilometres to entire river systems in the case of species like Golden Perch.

The project would reinstate 506km of fish passage along the Barwon-Darling River system and 83km of fish passage along the Macintyre River.

The project is funded by the Australian Government under the Northern Basin Toolkit and is being delivered to support the Murray–Darling Basin Plan.

It is being delivered by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Department), in close consultation with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Fisheries (NSW Fisheries), and WaterNSW who will be the owner of the weirs.

## What we heard

Water is one of our most valuable natural assets. We recognise that the most effective way to successfully manage water is by collaborating with our stakeholders and the greater community.

We are committed to developing and maintaining respectful, trusted, and collaborative relationships with our stakeholders and communities to ensure the best outcomes for water infrastructure projects.

During the engagement period we heard the communities of Louth, Tilpa, Walgett and Collarenebri are strongly opposed to any reduction in their local weir heights. We also heard care and support for fishways, enabling fish populations and other in-stream fauna to successfully migrate and breed, boosting river health.

As outlined in this report, the key themes raised by key stakeholders and the broader community were:

- water security
- support for the project’s intended outcomes

- fishway design and effectiveness
- project scope
- environmental outcomes and impact
- cultural heritage
- economic benefits
- site prioritisation process
- community engagement
- transparency and accountability
- project delivery
- system wide planning
- construction impact.

### What we did

The NSW Government has taken action to address community concerns about water security in Western NSW, by investigating a revised design of the fishways so they have no impact on local weir heights.

The Department, in consultation with NSW Fisheries, has been working to finalise a new design. Technical investigations need to be undertaken to confirm this approach.

The new design includes a small capping sill across part of the weir crest that will allow the fishways to operate effectively and maintain the current full supply level.

The work will not just install fishways, it will fix the leaks in the weirs to bring water loss down.

This solution enables native fish to migrate and breed, while also safeguarding local water supplies and meeting the needs of local communities.

**We sincerely thank all community members and stakeholders for your valuable insights, thoughtful feedback, and active participation so far.**

**Your contributions have played a vital role in shaping the project's direction, and we look forward to continuing this meaningful collaboration as the project progresses.**

Community drop-in sessions will be held in Tilpa, Louth, Walgett, Collarenebri and online between Tuesday 28 October and Wednesday 5 November 2025.

The sessions are an opportunity for the community to learn more about the updated fishway designs for Tilpa, Louth, Banarway and Calmundi weirs and provide feedback.

### Session schedule:

- **Tilpa:** Tuesday 28 October 2025, 10:00 am – 11:00 am  
Tilpa Community Hall, 1 Darling Street
- **Louth:** Tuesday 28 October 2025, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm  
Louth Tennis Club, 30 Bloxham Street

- **Walgett:** Wednesday 29 October 2025, 10:00 am – 11:00 am  
Walgett Sports Club, 10 Montkeila Street
- **Collarenebri:** Wednesday 29 October 2025, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm  
Collarenebri Sports Club, 26–30 Walgett Street.

Prior registration is not required to attend the drop-in sessions.

- **Online Webinar** - an online webinar will also be held on **Wednesday 5 November 2025**, from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm - [Register to attend](#)

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## 2 Introduction

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### 2.1 About this report

This report provides an overview of community and stakeholder feedback on detailed design for 4 identified weir locations for the Fish Passage: Reconnecting the Northern Basin Project, received between January 2025 – August 2025.

The purpose of this report is to outline the key themes and feedback from key stakeholders, First Nations and the broader community for the 4 weir sites, including Banarway, Calmundi, Louth and Tilpa.

The report includes:

- an overview of the engagement process and participation by community and stakeholders
- a summary of what we heard on proposed detailed design at the 4 weir sites and our responses to the feedback received.

This report provides a summary of the community feedback received during the engagement process, highlighting key themes and perspectives shared by participants. It is intended to reflect the breadth of input rather than serve as an account of every comment or submission. Every effort has been made to capture the diversity of views expressed and all contributions have been considered in the development of this summary.

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### 2.2 Background

The Fish Passage: Reconnecting the Northern Basin project seeks to reinstate waterways to allow native fish to flourish, while at the same time balancing the needs of local water users.

Native fish need to migrate to complete key life stages and to avoid drying habitats during drought. The distance migrated ranges from a few kilometres to entire river systems in the case of species like Golden Perch.

The project aims to address barriers to fish passage by installing fishways on infrastructure within our river systems.

Fishways are structures placed on or around constructed barriers, such as dams or weirs, to provide a passageway to help fish migrate safely upstream and downstream.

The project involves:

- the incorporation of partial width rock-ramp fishways at the existing weir sites at Banarway, Calmundi, Louth and Tilpa to improve fish passage
- the removal of an unlicensed structure on the Darling-Baaka River.

The project would reinstate 506km of fish passage along the Barwon-Darling River system and 83km of fish passage along the Macintyre River.

The project will generate significant benefits including:

- increased movement of native fish species across the northern NSW Murray-Darling Basin
- increased abundance of native fish species in the system
- enhanced cultural values for First Nations communities - native fish are an important part of First Nations cultures in the region
- support for regional economies and the creation of local job opportunities during construction
- increased regional tourism opportunities as native fish populations increase.

The project is funded by the Australian Government under the Northern Basin Toolkit, and is being delivered to support the Murray–Darling Basin Plan by the department in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Fisheries.

The Australian Government has allocated up to \$56.8 million to fund the project.

## 2.3 Engagement overview - January 2025 to August 2025

The Water Group is committed to fostering respectful, trusted partnerships with communities and stakeholders to deliver successful water infrastructure projects.

In response to community consultation and feedback received in 2024, the Department reviewed and revised initial fishway designs to better balance ecological needs with local water security concerns, in consultation with NSW Fisheries and supported by an independent expert review of water modelling.

In 2025, the NSW Government proposed a smaller reduction in weir heights and proposed to explore new off-river water storage at Louth and Tilpa. We engaged widely with key stakeholders and the broader communities on these revised proposals and sincerely thank all participants for their input.

The NSW Government has taken action to address community concerns about water security in Western NSW, by investigating a revised design of the fishways so they have no impact on local weir heights.

The Department, in consultation with NSW Fisheries, has been working to finalise a new design.

The new proposed design includes a small capping sill across part of the weir crest that will allow the fishways to operate effectively and maintain the current full supply level.

This solution enables native fish to migrate and breed, while also safeguarding local water supplies and meeting the needs of local communities.

Technical investigations will be undertaken to confirm this approach.

### 2.3.1 Communications and engagement snapshot from January 2025 to August 2025



### 2.3.2 How and who we engaged

Date	Activity	Description	Stakeholders	Key metrics
January 2025 – August 2025	Briefings	Briefings with local Members of Parliament	Local Members of Parliament	5 meetings
May 2025 – August 2025	Meetings	Individual meetings with local councils	Local councils and representative bodies	7 meetings

Date	Activity	Description	Stakeholders	Key metrics
January 2025 – August 2025	Meetings and discussions	Meetings and discussions with First Nations community	First Nations organisations, groups and individuals including Elders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walgett LALC</li> <li>Collarenebri LALC</li> <li>DEG Dharriwaa Elders Group</li> <li>Wilcannia LALC</li> <li>CR Anne Dennis, NSW State Lands Council</li> </ul> Updates provided to Gomeroi Native Title and Bourke LALC.	34 discussions
March 2025 – August 2025	Meetings	Meetings with water sector organisations and groups	Local water utilities, water sector organisations, water user and advocacy groups	2 meetings
May 2025	Discussions	Contact with potential directly affected landholders	Landholders within the footprint of all 4 weir sites	16 discussions
July 2025	Community Information Session	Drop-in session in Walgett	All stakeholders	23 attendees
July 2025	Community Information Session	Drop-in session in Collarenebri	All stakeholders	20 attendees
August 2025	Community Information Session	Drop-in session in Tilpa	All stakeholders	26 attendees
August 2025	Community Information Session	Drop-in session in Louth	All stakeholders	58 attendees
August 2025	Community Webinar	Online community webinar with the recording also	All stakeholders	40 attendees

Date	Activity	Description	Stakeholders	Key metrics
		hosted on webpage		

## 3 What we heard

### 3.1 First Nations engagement outcomes

We employed a variety of meeting styles, including face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails, to engage with Traditional Owners, the Local Aboriginal Land Council, and key First Nations stakeholders. Additionally, community members were invited to attend Community Information Sessions and participate in a feedback survey.

Feedback from First Nations stakeholders reflected a generally supportive response toward the project proposals. Many participants expressed appreciation for being consulted and acknowledged the importance of ongoing communication. However, there is a growing sense of frustration and concern regarding delays in project commencement. Stakeholders are eager to see tangible progress and outcomes, particularly in relation to turtles and fish not being caught.

There is also a strong emphasis on ensuring that cultural values, local knowledge, and community priorities are meaningfully embedded in project planning and delivery.

Stakeholders have highlighted the need for transparency, timely updates, and continued opportunities for co-design and input.

#### Summary of themes and responses

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
<b>Support for the project’s intended outcomes</b>	First Nations community members and stakeholders are broadly supportive of the project and the intended outcomes.	The Department acknowledges and appreciates all feedback expressed by First Nations community members and stakeholders. We sincerely thank First Nations communities for this valuable feedback.  The new solution being proposed	As part of our strong commitment to working closely with First Nations, the department has engaged with First Nations groups to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives, cultural values, and knowledge into water planning and decision-making.

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
		<p>enables native fish to migrate and breed, while also safeguarding local water supplies and meeting the needs of local communities.</p>	
<p><b>Project delivery</b></p>	<p>Increasing concern about the lack of visible progress; stakeholders are seeking clarity on timelines and next steps.</p>	<p>We acknowledge these concerns regarding project progress.</p> <p>As the project confirms the fishway design solution, the updated timelines and next steps will be communicated through upcoming communications and engagement activities.</p>	<p>The NSW Government is committed to clear and timely communications to ensure stakeholders remain informed and involved throughout the project lifecycle.</p>
<p><b>Community engagement</b></p>	<p>Strong interest in ongoing consultation, particularly with Traditional Owners and Elders.</p>	<p>We deeply value the wisdom and input from Traditional Owners and Elders.</p> <p>The Department will continue to create opportunities for First Nations participation in the project including in cultural heritage assessment, site preparation and works delivery.</p>	<p>The Department will continue to work with local First Nations stakeholders and community to ensure culturally safe and inclusive consultation throughout the planning and decision-making process.</p>
<p><b>Cultural heritage</b></p>	<p>Emphasis on ensuring cultural heritage and values are respected and integrated throughout the project lifecycle.</p>	<p>We understand the importance of an emphasis on cultural heritage and values.</p> <p>Cultural heritage and values will be integrated into all stages of the project,</p>	<p>Cultural heritage surveys are required to ensure statutory compliance and to inform mitigation strategies during design, planning and construction.</p>

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
		guided by Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments and community input.	
Transparency and accountability	Requests for more information around decision-making, funding, and implementation processes.	<p>We acknowledge the requests for more information around decision-making, funding, and implementation.</p> <p>The department will enhance transparency through regular updates and accessible documentation.</p>	The department aims to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives, cultural values, and knowledge into water planning and decision-making to achieve cultural, social, economic, and environmental benefits. This commitment is supported by ongoing engagement.

### 3.2 Broader community engagement outcomes

We employed a variety of communication styles and engagement opportunities to inform and consult key stakeholders and the broader community. This included digital and traditional communication methods and a diversity of engagement opportunities including in-person discussions, online briefings and meetings, community information sessions, online webinar and phone calls to seek key stakeholder and community feedback during the engagement period.

Community responses were mixed, but there was strong opposition to lowering weir heights.

Key themes included:

- support for fish passage solutions and river health improvements
- strong opposition from Louth, Tilpa, Walgett, and Collarenebri communities to any reduction in weir height. While the communities understand the need to improve native fish movement, they have been abundantly clear that it cannot be at the expense of their town water storage.
- concerns from communities about not being heard.

A summary of the themes and responses is detailed in the table below.

## Themes and responses

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
Water security	<p>A clear view that lowering weirs for fish passage is unacceptable – that human water needs must be prioritised and that ecological improvements are important but should not come at the expense of community water security.</p> <p>Additional off-river raw water storage facilities at Louth and Tilpa would also be unacceptable as a solution to mitigate water losses.</p>	<p>We sincerely thank all community members and stakeholders for your valuable insights, thoughtful feedback, and active participation so far.</p> <p>The NSW Government has taken decisive action to address community concerns about water security in Western NSW, by reviewing the designs of fishways so they have no impact on local weir heights.</p> <p>The new design includes a small capping sill across part of the weir crest that will allow the fishways to operate effectively and maintain the current full supply level.</p>	<p>The solution will enable native fish to migrate and breed, while also safeguarding local water supplies and meeting the needs of local communities.</p>
Water security	<p>A strong desire for the weirs to be raised to provide more water security.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the strong community desire to raise weirs as a means of enhancing local water security. While the current project design does not prohibit any future desire to change the weir, it is important to note that raising weirs is outside the scope, funding and timeframes of this project.</p>	<p>This initiative is funded under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, with a focus on delivering specific environmental outcomes. It is not supported by the Australian Government’s National Water Grid or other NSW Government infrastructure programs aimed at town water supply. We remain committed to listening to community priorities and ensuring they are</p>

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
			considered in broader water planning processes.
Water security	A clear desire for robust and accurate methods to calculate water losses from evaporation and leakage.	<p>Comprehensive water balance modelling has been undertaken, incorporating assessments of evaporation, leakage, and infiltration.</p> <p>Importantly, the modelling conducted by the NSW Government has been independently reviewed and validated.</p>	These rigorous processes are designed to ensure transparency and build community confidence in the accuracy of the water modelling used to inform decision-making.
Fishway effectiveness	Desire for greater clarity and confidence that fishways will function effectively and achieve their intended ecological outcomes, including supporting the return and movement of native fish species.	<p>Fishways improve connectivity and allow fish to migrate, spawn, and access habitats.</p> <p>Designs are site-specific and aim to balance ecological function with minimal impact. They include resting pools and flow channels to support fish of various sizes and swimming abilities.</p> <p>Fishways are designed for native species and monitored for effectiveness through ecological assessments including fish movement studies, ecological monitoring, and hydraulic modelling.</p>	<p>Rock ramp fishways are proven designs used in Brewarrina, Kyogle, and Toorale. They support fish migration and ecosystem health.</p> <p>The proposed rock ramp fishways are low-maintenance, mimic natural stream flows, and are designed for native species.</p> <p>They are part of a range of measures used to support fish.</p>
Fishway effectiveness	Interest in whether the fishway designs will be effective for small-bodied fish	Designs are site-specific and aim to balance ecological function with minimal impact. They include resting pools and	The proposed rock ramp fishways mimic natural stream flows and allow for passage of a wide range and size of native

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
	species and juveniles.	<p>flow channels to support fish of various sizes and swimming abilities.</p> <p>The updated design will allow native fish to migrate through the river system which is the primary project objective but also addresses other aquatic species in the river system.</p>	<p>fish species as well as turtles.</p> <p>These fishways are proven to support fish movement.</p>
Fishway design	Interest in why vertical slot fishways or other designs weren't selected for the project.	<p>Vertical slot fishways were carefully considered during planning but ultimately not chosen due to their higher cost, structural complexity, and greater impact on the surrounding weir pool environment.</p> <p>Instead, rock ramp fishways were selected as the preferred option as they are low-maintenance, mimic natural stream flows, and are designed for native species.</p>	Rock ramp fishways offer a more natural and environmentally integrated solution, are more cost-effective, and better suited to the site conditions. These fishways support fish movement while maintaining ecological balance and minimising disruption to existing water infrastructure.
Economic benefit	Desire for greater transparency around how economic benefits have been assessed.	Economic modelling supports regional benefits and was conducted as part of the business case and reviewed independently.	<p>This project aims to deliver environmental and economic outcomes including tourism and job creation.</p> <p>Benefits include improved river health, increased fish populations, tourism growth, and regional job creation.</p>

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
Site prioritisation process	Interest in the rationale behind site selection – including why locations such as Louth and Tilpa were prioritised over others like Bourke.	The sites were selected based on ecological priority and feasibility.	Environmental assessments assisted site selection based on ecological priority and feasibility.
Cultural heritage	Interest in whether the project has impacted Aboriginal cultural heritage and if any significant sites have been identified.	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessments have been carried out across all project sites.	<p>These surveys are a vital part of ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and play a key role in shaping design, planning, and construction decisions.</p> <p>They help identify culturally significant areas and guide mitigation strategies to protect heritage values throughout the life of the project.</p>
Community engagement	Desire for a range of options to have been presented to community for feedback.	<p>We acknowledge this desire and recognise that some participants preferred to explore a wider set of possibilities, and we appreciate their perspectives.</p> <p>The approach taken aimed to focus community input on specific areas where feedback would most meaningfully inform decision-making.</p> <p>All feedback received – including suggestions for additional options – has</p>	These insights will help inform and strengthen future engagement activities in line with best practice.

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
		<p>been considered and will help shape future project planning and engagement activities.</p>	
<p><b>Community engagement</b></p>	<p>Concern that the broader Tilpa community is only being consulted now.</p>	<p>We understand the concern regarding the timing of consultation with the broader Tilpa community.</p> <p>The Australian Government confirmed additional funding for a fishway at Tilpa Weir in 2024, which enabled design development.</p> <p>Feedback received in 2023 on fishway designs for Louth, Banarway, and Calmundi weirs was used to inform the proposed design for Tilpa.</p>	<p>The NSW Government remains committed to ensuring community feedback is considered as part of the decision-making process and will continue engaging with local communities as the project progresses.</p>
<p><b>Community engagement</b></p>	<p>Concern that local knowledge and lived experience within the community are not being adequately acknowledged or reflected in decision-making processes.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the concern that local knowledge and community feedback may not be fully reflected in decision-making.</p> <p>Engaging directly with residents — listening to those who live in and understand the area — is a vital part of shaping this project.</p> <p>In response to extensive community input, the NSW Government has revised fishway designs to ensure they do not affect local weir heights, addressing key concerns</p>	<p>We remain committed to meaningful engagement that aligns with NSW Government guidelines and ensures community voices continue to inform the project’s direction.</p>

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
		around water security in Western NSW.	
Community engagement	Desire to know next steps and when the community will be updated following this round of engagement.	<p>The NSW Government has taken action to address community concerns about water security in Western NSW, by reviewing the designs of fishways.</p> <p>Community drop-in sessions will be held in Tilpa, Louth, Walgett, Collarenebri and online between Tuesday 28 October and Wednesday 5 November 2025.</p> <p>The sessions are an opportunity for the community to learn more about the updated fishway designs for Tilpa, Louth, Banarway and Calmundi weirs and provide feedback.</p>	We remain committed to meaningful engagement that aligns with NSW Government guidelines and ensures community voices continue to inform the project's direction.
Project scope	Interest in whether the project scope can be revisited or reset, including reconsideration of timelines, funding arrangements, and design decisions.	We understand the interest in revisiting the scope of the project. However, the current scope is defined under the Northern Basin Toolkit funding and must be delivered by December 2026.	These funding agreements set clear parameters around what can be delivered and when.
System-wide planning	Community feedback highlights the need for a more integrated and holistic approach to waterway management, beyond standalone	<p>We appreciate this valuable feedback on waterway management.</p> <p>While this project is specifically scoped to deliver fish passage infrastructure under the</p>	The insights shared will help inform wider strategies for managing and restoring river systems.

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
	fishway infrastructure projects.	Northern Basin Toolkit funding agreement, all feedback received will be referred for consideration in future planning.	
Environmental impact	Interest in what consideration is there of the needs of native fish, if there is a focus on the needs of water users.	<p>Designs are site-specific and aim to balance ecological function with minimal impact. They include resting pools and flow channels to support fish of various sizes and swimming abilities.</p> <p>The updated design will allow native fish to migrate through the river system which is the primary project objective but also addresses other aquatic species in the river system.</p>	The solution will enable native fish to migrate and breed, while also safeguarding local water supplies and meeting the needs of local communities.
Environmental impact	Interest in if the weirs should be removed or lowered to support a flowing river habitat for native fish.	Successful fish passage while safeguarding local water supplies is key.	The solution will enable native fish to migrate and breed, while also safeguarding local water supplies and meeting the needs of local communities.
Environmental impact	Interest in the potential impact of the project on local snail populations, particularly threatened species.	We understand the community’s concern about the future of local snail species. Threatened species impact assessments are currently underway, including consideration of captive care and breeding programs.	The project team is working closely with NSW Fisheries to minimise impacts and actively support the recovery of endangered species as part of broader environmental stewardship efforts.

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
Environmental impact	Question about why biodiversity offsets are not included as part of the project scope.	Biodiversity offsets are not included in this project, as they fall outside the scope defined by the Northern Basin Toolkit funding agreement. This funding is specifically targeted toward achieving direct environmental outcomes, such as improving fish passage and enhancing river connectivity.	The project is designed to deliver tangible ecological benefits in line with these objectives.
Environmental impact	Interest in the potential impacts of the fishway on upstream habitats and surrounding environments.	The fishway has been designed to minimise inundation and protect upstream ecosystems. Detailed modelling and environmental assessments have guided the design process to ensure that upstream habitats are preserved and that ecological outcomes are achieved with minimal disruption to the surrounding environment.	These detailed modelling and environmental assessments are used to guide design decisions.
Environmental impact	Interest in whether carp benefit from fishways and what actions are being taken to manage their impact.	Carp are capable swimmers and may use fishways, but their use is minimal and does not significantly affect overall outcomes.  Fishways are designed to be passive and inclusive, allowing movement for a wide range of species without targeting specific ones.	Carp management is being addressed separately through a combination of ecological approaches.  NSW Fisheries is actively exploring safe and effective control measures, including habitat restoration, scientific research, and virus-based biocontrol.

Theme	Feedback/ suggestion	Response	Justification
			These strategies aim to reduce carp populations while protecting native species and maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems.
Construction impact	Interest in whether roads be impacted will be impacted during construction activities.	Some roads may need upgrades to safely accommodate construction traffic. These potential changes will be assessed as part of the environmental approvals process, which includes evaluating and mitigating impacts on surrounding infrastructure.	We're committed to working closely with relevant local authorities and landowners to ensure any roadworks are planned and communicated clearly. Detailed information will be shared with the community before construction begins to help manage expectations and minimise disruption.
Construction impact	Interest in whether the river would need to be dried out during construction.	No, the river will remain flowing throughout construction. Cofferdams – temporary watertight enclosures – will be used to isolate specific work areas.	This approach allows construction to proceed safely while maintaining river flow and protecting surrounding ecosystems.

### 3.3 Next steps

We sincerely thank all community members and stakeholders for your valuable insights, thoughtful feedback, and active participation.

Your contributions have played a vital role in shaping the project's direction, and we look forward to continuing this meaningful collaboration as we progress the project.

Community drop-in sessions will be held in Tilpa, Louth, Walgett, Collarenebri and online between Tuesday 28 October and Wednesday 5 November 2025.

The sessions are an opportunity for the community to learn more about the updated fishway designs for Tilpa, Louth, Banarway and Calmundi weirs and provide feedback.

#### Session schedule:

- **Tilpa:** Tuesday 28 October 2025, 10:00 am – 11:00 am  
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Walgett Sports Club, 10 Montkeila Street
- **Collarenebri:** Wednesday 29 October 2025, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm  
Collarenebri Sports Club, 26–30 Walgett Street.

Prior registration is **not required** to attend the drop-in sessions.

- **Online Webinar** - an online webinar will also be held on **Wednesday 5 November 2025**, from **11:30 am to 12:30 pm** - [Register to attend](#)

Technical investigations will be undertaken to finalise a new design for the fishways.

Future engagement will continue through project refinement and construction, including:

- opportunities to directly meet, or discuss the project, with members the project team.
- online information and engagement opportunities

The Department will continue to work with local First Nations stakeholders and community to ensure culturally safe and inclusive consultation throughout the planning and decision-making process.

Future First Nations engagement activities will include:

- regular updates for First Nations stakeholders
- clear information and updates on environmental protection measures and cultural safeguards
- community-focused summaries of infrastructure construction, operation and benefits
- opportunities for First Nations participation in the project where possible, including in cultural heritage assessment, site preparation and works delivery.

## More information

For more information on the project:

- visit [water.nsw.gov.au/fish-passage-project](https://water.nsw.gov.au/fish-passage-project)
- call 1300 081 047
- email [water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au](mailto:water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au)