

Summary of changes made to the northern inland floodplain management plans – flood enhancement works

This document provides an overview of amendments made in 2025 to rules for flood enhancement works across the northern inland floodplain valleys.

Floodplain management plans are the primary legal framework for coordinating the development of flood works on a whole-of-valley basis. The plans are valid for 10 years and the NSW Government may amend within that 10-year period under certain circumstances, including if the changes are in the public interest.

This fact sheet gives an overview of the changes made to the rules for flood enhancement works in the northern inland floodplain management plans.

Amending the floodplain management plan

The NSW Government has amended the following floodplain management plans:

- *Floodplain Management Plan for the Gwydir Valley Floodplain 2016*
 - *Floodplain Management Plan for the Barwon-Darling Valley Floodplain 2017*
 - *Floodplain Management Plan for the Upper Namoi Valley Floodplain 2019*
 - *Floodplain Management Plan for the Border Rivers Valley Floodplain 2020*
 - *Floodplain Management Plan for the Lower Namoi Valley Floodplain 2020*
 - *Floodplain Management Plan for the Macquarie Valley Floodplain 2021*
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Overview of changes

Refinement of rules for flood enhancement works

The rules for a flood enhancement work in management zones A (including AD and AID) and D (or D1) have been refined to clarify the specific requirements, as described in the following sections.

Ecological enhancement work

An ecological enhancement work is a type of flood work that is intended to provide a positive outcome for flood-dependent ecological assets on a floodplain. These types of works are permitted in management zone A (including AD and AID) and management zone D (or D1) if it can be demonstrated that the primary purpose of the work is to improve flood connectivity to a flood-dependent ecological asset on a floodplain, such as a wetland, and the improvement in flood connectivity contributes to the protection or conservation of the asset.

Ecological enhancement works must also be part of a government program that is in place and remains current at the time of the application. Examples may include the Gwydir Reconnecting Watercourse Country Program or a natural resource management project funded by a Local Land Services grant. The requirement for the standard and hydraulic assessment criteria to be met remains unchanged.

Aboriginal cultural value enhancement work

An Aboriginal cultural value enhancement work is a type of flood work that is intended to provide a positive outcome for flood-dependent places of Aboriginal cultural significance such as a significant lagoon. These types of works are permitted in management zones A (including AD and AID) and D (or D1) if it can be demonstrated that the primary purpose of the work is to improve flood connectivity to a flood-dependent Aboriginal cultural value that is listed on one of the databases specified in the floodplain management plan, and the improvement in flood connectivity contributes to the protection or conservation of the cultural value.

Aboriginal cultural value enhancement works must also be part of a government program that is in place and remains current at the time of the application, such as a cultural watering program. The requirement for the standard and hydraulic assessment criteria to be met remains unchanged.

Heritage site enhancement work

A heritage site enhancement work is a type of flood work that is intended to provide a positive outcome for flood-dependent places with heritage significance such as a River Red Gum with a heritage flood marker or a heritage listed wetland. These types of works are permitted in management zones A (including AD and AID) and D (or D1) if it can be demonstrated that the primary purpose of the work is to improve flood connectivity to a flood-dependent heritage site that is listed on one of the databases specified in the floodplain management plan, and the improvement in flood connectivity contributes to the protection or conservation of the asset.

Heritage site enhancement works must also be part of a government program that is in place and remains current at the time of the application. The requirement for the standard and hydraulic assessment criteria to be met remains unchanged.

Why the changes were made

The primary tool to manage development in major floodways (management zone A) and areas requiring special protection (management zone D) is a restriction on the type of flood works that can be constructed. Prior to the amendment, the rules did not provide sufficient clarity about the primary purpose and intent of flood enhancement works in these management zones.

The intent of the rules is to provide for the approval of flood works located in management zones A and D that provide a positive outcome for an ecological, Aboriginal cultural value or heritage site on a floodplain, while managing the risk to other floodplain users, life, property and the environment. The intent of the rules has not changed.

What these changes mean

The change means that applications for flood enhancement works in management zones A (including AD and AID) and D (or D1) will be required to demonstrate that the new requirements have been met. The changes will be accompanied by an updated guidance document to support the assessment and determination of applications for these types of flood works.

While flood enhancement works are required to be part of an active government program at the time of application, applicants are not limited to government agencies.

More information

- [Read the amended floodplain management plans](#)
- [Read about the process for amending floodplain management plans](#) (navigate to Amending floodplain management plans)