

What we heard report

Stage 1 public consultation: Draft Lachlan Valley Floodplain Management Plan

September 2026



Acknowledgement of Country



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.

Wiradjuri artist and designer Nathan Peckham from Yurana Creative created Guwunggan*.

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Executive summary

About this document

The Water Group in the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) is developing a whole-of-floodplain floodplain management plan (FMP) under the *Water Management Act 2000* (the WM Act) for the Lachlan Valley floodplain. This will replace the historical FMPs that were originally developed under the *Water Act 1912* and expired on 30 June 2026:

- Lachlan River (Gooloogong to Jemalong Gap) Floodplain Management Plan (2011)
- Lachlan River (Jemalong Gap to Condobolin) Floodplain Management Plan (2012)
- Lachlan River (Hillston – Lake Brewster to Whealbah) Floodplain Management Plan (2005).

FMPs are legal instruments made under the WM Act. They set rules for what types of flood works can be constructed on a declared floodplain and where.

As part of replacing the historical FMPs for the Lachlan Valley, the department conducted Stage 1 public consultation from 2 March to 19 April 2026 to seek feedback on key elements that will inform the development of the draft Floodplain Management Plan for the Lachlan Valley Floodplain (the draft FMP). This provided an opportunity for landholders, peak bodies and other interested stakeholders to learn more about the proposed changes, make submissions and comment on the key elements being developed for the draft FMP.

This report summarises stakeholder engagement, the key issues raised and the next steps in developing the draft FMP. It outlines where changes are being considered or will be made in response to the feedback, and demonstrates how community and stakeholder views have informed the process.

The report includes:

- an overview of the engagement process and stakeholder participation
- a summary of the feedback received on the proposed key elements of the draft FMP
- our responses to the feedback and the actions being considered.

In response to the feedback received, the department has made over 400 spatial refinements and updated the hydraulic model. Spatial refinements are shown in a series of maps in [Appendix 2](#).

Further opportunities to comment on the draft FMP will be provided during Stage 2 public exhibition in late 2026.

Background

The purpose of Stage 1 public consultation was to provide an early opportunity for community feedback on key elements that will inform the development of the draft FMP before formal public exhibition in late 2026. This included:

- confirming and verifying information that will be used in the draft FMP at a property scale
- enabling the department to respond to stakeholder feedback and, where appropriate, make changes to the key elements prior to developing the draft FMP.

The department was seeking feedback on the proposed floodway network and flood-dependent assets to identify and confirm areas of the floodplain that require protection. Additionally, a [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#) was published on the department's website to explain the draft FMP and provide prompts for feedback.

To ensure the community and stakeholders had an opportunity to have their say, the department held a series of in-person and online appointments throughout the consultation period. An overview of these activities and the key issues raised during consultation is outlined below.

Engagement overview

Community input into the preparation of the draft FMP is critical to ensuring that the FMP deals with local issues in a practical way. Public consultation for each new FMP happens over 2 stages.

Stage 1 public consultation occurred between 2 March to 19 April 2026 and is covered in this report.

To assist the public in understanding the draft FMP and how to make a submission, we published several resources on a [dedicated web page](#), including:

- a [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#)
- a pre-recorded presentation
- an interactive spatial map containing the:
 - proposed floodplain boundary
 - proposed floodway network
 - identified ecological assets
- details of when appointments with departmental staff were taking place and how to register.

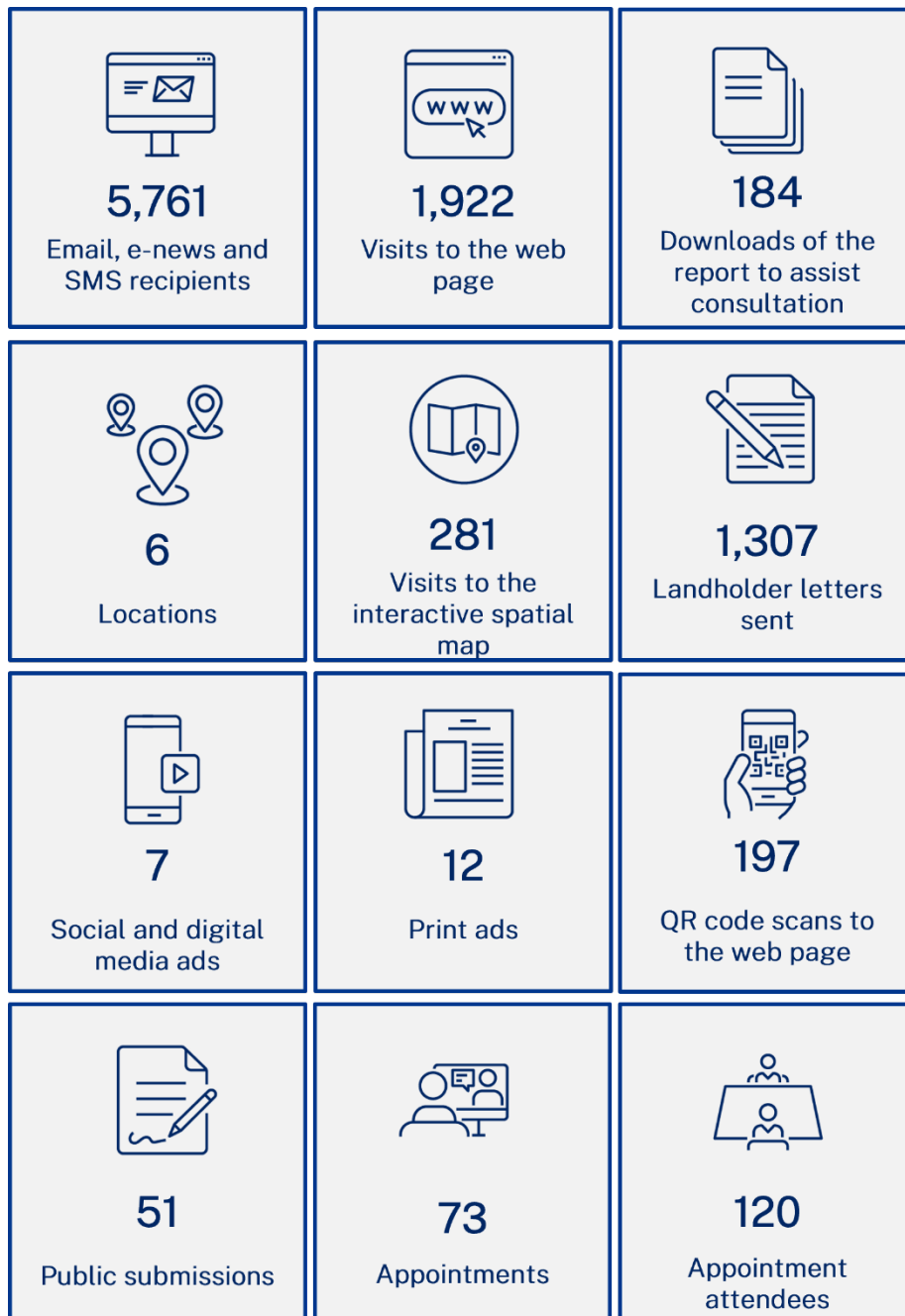
We encouraged stakeholders to give feedback directly through individual appointments with staff and through written submissions. Our website included a 'Have your say' section that provided people with different ways to make a submission, including via an online form, email and post.

To promote the consultation, we:

- posted letters to landholders within the mapped floodways (deep, fast-flowing floodwaters)¹
- ran print, social and digital advertisements
- sent emails to registered landholders, peak bodies, and the department’s Water e-newsletter subscribers.

A summary of the engagement statistics is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Engagement activities at a glance



¹ Letters were targeted using postal address information from NSW Land Registry Services. This was the best available information to the department at the time. We acknowledge that not every landholder may have received a letter. To stay up to date with all current engagements within the department, please [subscribe to our email distribution list](#).

Who we spoke to

Individual appointments with departmental staff were held in-person in Cowra (17 March), Forbes (18 March), Condobolin (19 March), Lake Cargelligo (25 March), Hillston (26 March) and Booligal (26 March), as well as online and over the phone (multiple dates).

During the consultation period, we spoke with 120 individuals across 73 appointments. Appointments were primarily with individual landholders, irrigation corporations and peak irrigator groups. We also spoke with Aboriginal communities as part of targeted meetings.

To ensure broad and equitable engagement, we extended invitations to individuals who participated in the information sessions held in June 2023 (which aimed to collect flooding information), and to representative groups for:

- Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities
- irrigators and other peak water users
- environmental interests
- business interests
- Australian Government, NSW Government and other state government agencies
- regional councils.

Table 1 provides an overview of engagement attendance.

Table 1: Overview of engagement attendance from 2 March to 19 April 2026

Date	Engagement platform	Participants
17 March 2026	Individual appointments at Cowra	7
18 March 2026	Individual appointments at Forbes	36
19 March 2026	Individual appointments at Condobolin	17
23 March 2026	Individual online/phone appointments	4
24 March 2026	Individual online/phone appointments	8
25 March 2026	Individual appointments at Lake Cargelligo	8
26 March 2026	Individual appointments at Hillston	16
26 March 2026	Individual appointments at Booligal	12
17 April 2026	Meeting with the Lachlan Regional Aboriginal Water Committee	5
On request	Additional online/phone appointments	6

Date	Engagement platform	Participants
2 March to 19 April 2026	Total number of participants engaged during the consultation period	120
2 March to 19 April 2026	Formal submissions received	51

What we heard

What we asked

This section provides a summary of the feedback received. We sought feedback on the following key elements that will inform the development of the draft FMP:

- proposed floodplain boundary
- proposed flood events to be used in hydraulic modelling (design floods)
- proposed floodway network, which includes the main floodways, and areas important for the temporary storage of floodwater during times of flood
- flood-dependent and flood-impacted Aboriginal cultural assets and values located within the floodplain
- flood-impacted heritage sites located within the floodplain
- flood-dependent ecological assets that have been identified within the floodplain
- local variances from default rules for flood work approval applications in different areas of the floodplain.

Key issues

We received feedback through written submissions and during individual appointments. The key issues raised are summarised below.

Significant feedback was received regarding mapping inaccuracies, particularly compared with floodways identified in the historical FMPs. In response to this feedback, we have made over 400 spatial refinements and updated the hydraulic model to better reflect the historical FMPs.

Spatial refinements are shown in a series of maps in Appendix 2: Refined Maps.

Floodplain boundary

- Concerns that the proposed floodplain boundary is too extensive and does not accurately reflect actual on-ground flood behaviour.
- Request for additional areas to be included in the proposed floodplain boundary.

In response, the department has extended the floodplain boundary to include Lake Cowal and Bland Creek.

A summary of the feedback received and the department's response is provided in Table 2.

Design floods

- The 2022 and 2021 flood events are not a true representation of how the floodplain functions and therefore modelling outputs from these floods are inaccurate.
- Concerns about limited transparency and lack of detail provided around the modelling used.
- Request for modelling inputs and assumptions to be made available and independently reviewed.

A summary of the feedback received and the department's response is provided in Table 3.

Floodway network

- The proposed inundation extent is too extensive, does not accurately reflect actual on-ground flood behaviour and includes areas that have never flooded.
- The floodways are incorrect, missing and inconsistent with the historical FMPs.
- Existing farm infrastructure not recognised in the floodway network.

In response, the department is in the process of updating the hydraulic model to more accurately reflect the historical FMPs.

A summary of the feedback received and the department's response is provided in Table 4.

Identified Aboriginal cultural assets and values on the floodplain

- The need to recognise Aboriginal cultural values and flow-related cultural outcomes.
- The need for ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal people, agencies and landholders, consistent with the NSW Aboriginal Water Strategy 2025.

A summary of the feedback received and the department's response is provided in Table 5.

Identified heritage sites on the floodplain

- Several stakeholders advised of potential future heritage sites.

A summary of the feedback received and the department's response is provided in Table 6.

Identified flood-dependent ecological assets and values on the floodplain

- Support for the identification and protection of ecological assets on the floodplain.
- Inaccuracy in wetland and ecological asset mapping.
- Misconception that the mapped flood-dependent ecological assets duplicate the wetlands identified in water sharing plans.

A summary of the feedback received and the department's response is provided in Table 7.

Localised variances to rules

- Request for all works to be permitted if they are found to have no effect on neighbouring properties or can be appropriately assessed.
- Request for automatic approval or exemption for historical works, especially those critical to business operations.
- Request for primary access roads of 50 cm height or more to be permitted.

A summary of the feedback received and the department’s response is provided in Table 8 and Table 9.

The feedback received is informing the development of the full draft FMP, which will be released for public exhibition in late 2026.

Historical flood works

Across the southern inland floodplains, including during Stage 1 consultation in the Lachlan, landholders and peak water user groups have consistently raised concerns about the need to obtain a flood work approval for existing flood works. Of particular concern is irrigation infrastructure and access roads or farm tracks that have been in place for decades and constructed in accordance with historical FMPs or guidelines.

In particular, there were concerns about the time and cost involved in applying for a flood work approval and a request for automatic approval or grandfathering for these works. In response, the department is investigating options to address these concerns. More information will be provided as part of Stage 2 public exhibition.

Further, we are collaborating with WaterNSW to develop and publish a suite of supporting information to assist landholders in the process of applying for a flood work approval.

Proposed floodplain boundary

The proposed Lachlan Valley floodplain boundary, shown in Figure 1 in the [Report to assist public consultation](#), was mapped to capture areas that are low-lying, adjacent to a river or creek, and are generally inundated during large flood events while considering flood works that may influence how floodwater moves across the landscape.

The public were asked to comment on the proposed floodplain boundary, in particular at a property scale. Table 2 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 2: Summary of feedback received on the proposed Lachlan Valley floodplain boundary

Feedback	Departmental response
We support the proposed floodplain boundary and believe it to be accurate at the property scale.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
The proposed Lachlan Valley floodplain boundary captures the key areas inundated during major flood events and reflects a solid use of hydraulic modelling.	Noted.
Support the inclusion of properties in the floodplain boundary, specifically: • Sunshine and Round Cowal and adjacent properties • Warili and adjacent properties • Bergen Park and adjacent properties • Glencoe and adjacent properties	Noted.
Request to expand the floodplain boundary to include adjacent areas where flood works exist or are likely to be constructed, including: • Lake Cowal and Bland Creek • Specks Gap • north of the Henry Parkes Way • east of the Jemalong Scheme Channel and south along the Jemalong range • Merrowie and Sunland • east of Canowindra	The department has investigated these areas and refined the floodplain boundary to include Lake Cowal and Bland Creek, as shown in Figure 2 in Appendix 2. The other areas identified have not been included in the proposed floodplain boundary due to a lack of flood flow connectivity to these areas or prior inclusion in neighbouring floodplain risk management plans.
We believe that the boundary of the plan should encompass the land that is inundated in a maximum probable flood event, that is the floodplain. Land that is not flood prone should be excluded.	FMPs apply to a floodplain area at a whole-of valley scale. This can include areas not normally flooded (flood fringe or high ground). It is beneficial to include land within an FMP boundary as it ensures a clear set of rules and assessment criteria for the assessment and determination of applications for flood work approvals. Areas where no FMP applies are subject to guidance published on the floodplain management plan page of the department's website (see section 'Developing floodplain management plans').
Attention should be paid to possible backwater effects from the boundary line.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
Areas to the south of Cane Grass Swamps are fed from the Murrumbidgee, and as such fall outside the Lachlan River scope.	This area has been investigated and while it is acknowledged that it is influenced by flows from the Murrumbidgee floodplain, it is also connected to the flows in the Lachlan Valley floodplain. As such, this area will remain within the proposed floodplain boundary. We have added this concern to the amendment register to be considered as part of any future amendments to the Murrumbidgee Valley FMP or draft FMP.
Areas known as the Cane Grass Swamps, were flooded from the Lachlan scheme prior to river regulation, since that time they are only filled via an existing man-made channel leading from the Lachlan. As such they should be removed from within the boundary.	See response above.
The proposed floodplain boundary includes areas that are local rainfall inundation and not floodwater.	Floodwater refers to water that has overflowed from a river, lake, or other body of water to submerge land, or water that has accumulated due to, for instance, intense rainfall.
There is a distinct disconnect between the proposed mapping and historical flood behaviour.	The proposed floodplain boundary, floodways and inundation extent at some locations may differ from that experienced during flood events as they include a process for the consideration of unapproved flood works, as shown in Figure 8 in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation. In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodplain boundary and floodway network. This results in some areas being shown as inundated due to the presence of an unapproved flood work preventing floodwater from moving into the area.

Feedback	Departmental response
Floodplain boundary modelling should explicitly incorporate the current extent of development, including irrigation infrastructure.	See response above.
The proposed floodplain boundary is too broad and does not accurately reflect actual flood behaviour on the ground.	See response above. FMPs apply to a floodplain area at a whole-of valley scale. This can include areas not normally flooded (flood fringe or high ground). It is beneficial to include land within an FMP boundary as it ensures a clear set of rules and assessment criteria for the assessment and determination of applications for flood work approvals. Areas where no FMP applies are subject to guidance published on the floodplain management plan page of the department's website (see section 'Developing floodplain management plans').
Model-derived boundaries can be overly conservative and may capture land only affected during rare or extreme events. We believe the Lachlan system is particularly sensitive to this and may result in unnecessary regulatory impacts on land use, infrastructure, and agricultural investment.	See response above.
Why is Lake Cowal outside the floodplain boundary when Nerang Cowal is within it?	In response to feedback received, the proposed floodplain boundary has been refined to include Lake Cowal, as shown in Figure 2 in Appendix 2.
We consider that a whole-of-valley Floodplain Management Plan should account for the full Lachlan catchment, including upstream areas such as Cowra, where we believe flood works influence downstream flood behaviour.	The upstream areas of the Lachlan catchment are managed under the Cowra and Gooloogong Floodplain Risk Management Plan. This is the more appropriate instrument for managing local urban flood risk in these areas. Excluding these areas from the proposed floodplain boundary avoids regulatory duplication and confusion.

Feedback	Departmental response
Cowra and Jukes Lane are referenced in modelling but not clearly included in the boundary.	See response above.
It is unclear why Wyangala Dam has not been included within the defined floodplain boundary.	See response above.
The proposed floodplain boundary is substantially different to the boundary in the Floodplain Management Plan – Lachlan River (Jemalong Gap to Condobolin) 2012 in the vicinity of: • Sunshine and Round Cowal • Warili • Bergen Park • White Gates that follows the Henry Parkes Way • Glencoe	The proposed floodplain boundary substantially includes areas covered by historical FMPs. Differences occur at a small number of locations along the extent of the proposed floodplain boundary, where the historical FMPs extend beyond the proposed boundary, including areas north of Henry Parkes Way where flood flow connectivity is restricted by road or railway infrastructure. The proposed floodplain boundary extends beyond the areas covered by historical FMPs to provide a more consistent approach to floodplain management across the valley. Differences between the proposed and historical floodplain boundaries may occur where updated flood data, contemporary hydraulic modelling, improved topographic information, or a better understanding of flood behaviour indicates that changes are needed. The department reviewed the requested changes to the floodplain boundary and refined where appropriate using the latest available information on flood behaviour, approved flood works, floodplain connectivity, historical flood patterns, and site-specific information provided through consultation. The refinements made to the floodplain boundary are shown in Figure 2 in Appendix 2.

Feedback	Departmental response
To coordinate activities and administration by various state and local stakeholders the most appropriate boundary for water management (including floodplains) is to take the basin as the most appropriate institutional framework (International Union for Conservation of Nature 2009).	Noted.

Proposed design floods

The following proposed design floods were used to model and map the proposed floodway network:

- **large design flood of 2022:** 2.2% AEP² at the Lachlan River at Forbes (Cottons Weir) gauge (412004)
- **small design flood of 2021:** 11% AEP at the Lachlan River at Forbes (Cottons Weir) gauge (412004).

We asked the public for comments on the proposed design and if it aligned with their experience of past flood events. Table 3 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 3: Summary of feedback received on the proposed design floods

Feedback	Departmental response
We agree with the proposed design flood events and agree that they align with our experience of past flood events.	Noted.
While the 2022 floods were far greater than that normally experienced, the majority of floodplains are depicted through these designs.	Noted.
The modelling used is reasonably accurate. Local gauges (at Moorong) show the 2022 flood being 20 cm above the levels recorded in 1952 and 1990 making it the biggest recorded flood in our area.	Noted.

² Annual exceedance probability (AEP) is the chance of a flood of a given or larger size occurring in any given year, usually expressed as a percentage (%) or a likelihood of 1 flood in x years. For example, a flood with an AEP of 5% means there is a 5% chance that a flood of the same size or larger will occur in any given year.

Feedback	Departmental response
Preference for the smaller floods of 1990 or 2022 as the floodways were already activated and hence more accurate to identify.	The 2022 flood event was selected as the large design flood and 2021 flood event as the small design flood because of the consistent annual exceedance probability (AEP) values throughout the floodplain and the significant amount of information available (for example, gauge data, aerial photography and satellite imagery) to calibrate the hydraulic models. In comparison, the 1990 flood occurred prior to a gauge being operational at Whealbah and Willandra Weir. More information on why the 2022 and 2021 flood events were selected can be found in Appendix 1 of the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.
Suggest that the larger flood may be the August 1990s event due to the complexity of the 2022 flood and inflow contributions from Eugowra and Parkes. In 1990, the floodway had minimal roughness and was a winter flood, representing a cleaner floodway and floodplain with a larger extent.	See response above. Available land use and vegetation layers covering the floodplain area were used to inform the “roughness” of the ground surface. As part of the model calibration process, flood observations, such as gauge data, satellite imagery, flood images, or footage, were compared with the model results, and parameters, such as roughness, are adjusted if the model did not align with the observed data.

Feedback	Departmental response
The report notes that the prior floodplain management plans used a 6.32% AEP from Gooloogong to Jemalong Gap, and the 1990 flood elsewhere. The use of the 2022 flood event as a design flood (2.2% AEP) may require additional control for flood works approval. From experience, applying a 5% AEP has proven to be appropriate for local access roads.	A large design flood is a large magnitude flood event that generally has a 5% or less probability of occurring in any given year (AEP), while a small design flood is a smaller magnitude flood event that has at least a 10% probability of occurring in any given year (AEP). The 2022 flood event was selected as the large design flood and 2021 flood event as the small design flood because of the consistent annual exceedance probability (AEP) values throughout the floodplain and the significant amount of information available (for example, gauge data, aerial photography and satellite imagery) to calibrate the hydraulic models. More information on why the 2022 and 2021 flood events were selected can be found in Appendix 1 of the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.

Feedback	Departmental response
To only use 2022 and 2021 as design floods is inadequate and not representative of the range of flooding the Lachlan Valley historically sees. Both 2021 and 2022 reached major flood level along the Lachlan River at Jemalong. A flood event such as 2010 was a moderate flood. To reflect small flood behaviour, the FMP will need to look further than 2021.	See response above. It is important to note that the hydraulic models were calibrated and validated using selected historic flood events that are around the design flood magnitude and are likely to activate all flood flow paths. The following flood events were used for calibration and validation: • October to December 2022 flood event as the large calibration event (the large design flood) • October 2021 to March 2022 flood event as the small calibration event (the small design flood) • September 2016 flood event as the validation event. A small design flood is a small magnitude flood event that generally has at least a 10% probability of occurring in any given year (AEP). The 2021 flood event was selected as the small design flood event because it had an estimated AEP of 11% at the Lachlan River at Forbes (Cottons Weir) gauge and 13% at the Lachlan River at Condobolin Bridge gauge.
The 2021 and 2022 floods had different impacts due to levee failures, causing water to reach normally dry areas. Without this, much of the flooded area would be dry. The 2022 floods saw the largest daily dam release in Wyangala dam's history, influenced by air space and dam management. Using 2022 flood data as normal is extreme.	See response above. More information on why the 2022 and 2021 flood events were selected and how the hydraulic model was developed and validated can be found in Appendix 1 of the <u>Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation</u>.

Feedback	Departmental response
Using the 2022 flood event as a single reference flood is inconsistent with past modelling and does not represent a typical flood event in the Lachlan.	See response above. The draft FMP will rely on a small design flood and large design flood. The 2022 flood event was selected as the large design flood and 2021 flood event as the small design flood because of the consistent annual exceedance probability (AEP) values throughout the floodplain and the significant amount of information available (for example, gauge data, aerial photography and satellite imagery) to calibrate the hydraulic models.
The 2021 and 2022 flood events do not provide a sufficiently balanced basis for long-term regulatory mapping. The 2021 event does not adequately reflect larger-system behaviour, while the 2022 event is an extreme event and is not necessarily indicative of how the broader floodplain functions under more typical conditions. This embeds a distorted picture of normal inundation behaviour into the final plan.	The draft FMP will rely on a small design flood (2021) and a large design flood (2022). The hydraulic models were calibrated and validated using selected historic flood events that are around the design flood magnitude and are likely to activate all flood flow paths. The following flood events were used for calibration and validation: • October to December 2022 flood event as the large calibration event (the large design flood) • October 2021 to March 2022 flood event as the small calibration event (the small design flood) • September 2016 flood event as the validation event.
Support the use of the 2021 and 2022 flood events as the proposed small and large design floods, noting these align with recent real-world experience in the Lachlan Valley.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
The magnitude of design floods should not be considered alone; assessment thresholds for acceptable changes to flow depth, velocity, and distribution are equally important.	Agree. The hydraulic models were used to develop depth-velocity products throughout the floodplain. These can be seen in Figure 9 in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation. Further, the rules in the draft FMP will consider changes in flow depth, velocity and distribution because of a flood work.
While flood magnitude matters, it cannot be considered alone; allowable changes in flow depth, velocity, and distribution for a set flood size are more important. For example, a 0.1 m depth increase in a 2% AEP flood might be equivalent to a 0.2 m increase in a 1% AEP flood, with larger floods having more impact.	See response above.
Using the 2021 and 2022 flood events provides a practical basis for modelling flood behaviour and likely reflects current landforms that influence how water moves across the floodplain.	Noted.
The adopted floods seem suitable at Hillston and Forbes gauges, but the 2022 flood was very large and rare (0.5% AEP) at Condobolin.	Noted. A large design flood is a large magnitude flood event that generally has a 5% or less probability of occurring in any given year (AEP). This flood event should also be in living memory of the community, be representative of large floods in the area and have sufficient information available to support analysis. The 2022 flood event was selected as the large design flood event as it satisfied these criteria.
Based on recent FMPs, we expect allowable flow condition changes to be at least 0.2 m for depth and 5% for flow distribution for the draft Lachlan FMP's design floods.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
Upstream gauges such as Nanima should be used. By the time water reaches Cotton's Weir it has already split into multiple flows including the river, Southern Cross, and Bundaburrah Creek.	For areas located upstream of the proposed floodplain boundary, hydrologic models were developed to estimate contributing inflows entering the Lachlan Valley floodplain. These inflows were included in the hydraulic model. In addition, data from the Belubula River at Helensholme gauge, Lachlan River at Nanami gauge, and Lachlan River at Mulyandry gauge were used to calibrate and validate the hydraulic model. More information about the hydrologic and hydraulic modelling is available in Appendix 1 of the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.
Request that all modelling inputs and assumptions be made available and independently reviewed.	All 4 hydraulic models developed for the draft FMP were independently reviewed. Three of the 4 models were reviewed by BMT, a leading flood modelling consultancy and the developer of the widely used TUFLOW hydraulic modelling software, which is extensively applied in flood studies throughout Australia and internationally. Information on how the hydraulic models were developed, validated and calibrated, including modelling inputs can be found in Appendix 1 of the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.
All modelling inputs and assumptions should be available, ground-validated with landholders, and independently reviewed.	See response above. Modelling outputs are validated using satellite imagery, surveying results, LiDAR and topographical information. Further, site-specific information and local flood knowledge provided through consultation, including information relating to flood behaviour, historical inundation and floodplain infrastructure in the identified areas, is considered during ongoing refinement of the proposed floodplain boundary and associated mapping.

Feedback	Departmental response
Local observations and on-ground validation should be used to validate, refine, and finalise modelling outputs.	See response above.
The department should conduct a structured on-ground validation and technical review process in collaboration with local landholders and irrigation operators.	See response above.
Urban floodplain management plans show floodway flow is sensitive to floodplain roughness, like crop presence. Has a sensitivity analysis on this been done?	During the development of the 4 hydraulic models for the draft FMP, sensitivity testing was undertaken to assess the influence of key model parameters on model performance and results. For each model, at least 5 sensitivity scenarios were simulated. Sensitivity analyses across the models included: • Manning’s roughness values ($\pm 20\%$) • Inflows/flow rates ($\pm 20\%$) • TUFLOW HPC control factor (set to 0.5) In some models, additional sensitivity testing was also carried out on parameters such as model cell size, soil losses, and downstream boundary conditions. This testing helped assess model stability and quantify the uncertainty associated with key modelling assumptions.

Feedback	Departmental response
Modelling results mainly reflect main river flooding; calibration evidence on other creeks or floodplain is unclear. The (draft) Lachlan Valley FMP links the 2022 October–December floods (about 2.2% AEP) to larger floods.	For ungauged creeks including catchments located upstream of the proposed floodplain boundary, flow estimates were derived using hydrologic modelling and flow calculations to determine the inflows entering the proposed Lachlan Valley floodplain. These inflows were incorporated into the hydraulic models. The hydraulic models were calibrated and validated using observed flood events, including the October to December 2022 flood event as the large calibration event (large design flood), the October 2021 to March 2022 flood event as the small calibration event (small design flood), and the September 2016 flood event as the validation event. Modelled flood extents were also compared with satellite imagery to assess the accuracy of the simulated inundation patterns and overall model performance.

Feedback	Departmental response
As these are relatively recent floods any infrastructure that is with the network needs to be exempt that was constructed either prior to any floodplain management plan or in compliance with historical guidelines.	In NSW, the requirement for a flood work approval under the WM Act has been in place since 2000. Further, the requirement to licence a flood work under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> was in place from 1984 with those licences automatically converting to approvals under the WM Act. The proposed floodplain boundary, floodways and inundation extent at some locations may differ from that experienced during flood events as they include a process for the consideration of unapproved flood works, as shown in Figure 8 in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation. In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodplain boundary and floodway network. This results in some areas being shown as inundated due to the presence of an unapproved flood work preventing floodwater from moving into the area.
The department should model example cases in the Lachlan FMP area to assess the impact of existing works against the design floods and criteria.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
The impact of vegetation on recent floods varies. Vegetation competing within floodways influences flood activation and extent, with the timing (for example, November 2021) being a key factor.	Available land use and vegetation layers covering the floodplain area were used to inform the “roughness” of the ground surface. As part of the calibration process, flood observations, such as gauge data, satellite imagery, flood images, or footage, are compared with the model results, and parameters, such as roughness, are adjusted if the model does not align with the observed data. The hydraulic models were calibrated and validated using selected historic flood events that are around the design flood magnitude and are likely to activate all flood flow paths. The following flood events were used for calibration and validation: • October to December 2022 flood event as the large calibration event (the large design flood) • October 2021 to March 2022 flood event as the small calibration event (the small design flood) • September 2016 flood event as the validation event.

Proposed floodway network

The proposed floodway network is comprised of **floodways** (approximately 10.8% of the floodplain) and the **inundation extent** (ponding areas) (approximately 33% of the floodplain). The proposed floodway network is shown in Figure 2 in the [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#).

We asked stakeholders if the proposed floodways and inundation extent aligned with their on-ground experience of past flood events. Table 4 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 4 Summary of feedback received on the proposed floodway network

Feedback	Departmental response
The proposed floodway designs have been mapped without any consultation with property owners who were onsite during many of the floods used in data collection.	Prior to this consultation period, we held information sessions in June 2023, which aimed to collect flooding information from local landholders. The information collected assisted in the development of the proposed key elements for Stage 1 public consultation. As part of this consultation period, we held individual appointments in local towns, as well as online and over the phone. We spoke with 120 individuals across 73 appointments and received 51 submissions. The information collected is informing the development of the full draft FMP, which will be released as part of Stage 2 public exhibition in late 2026.

Feedback	Departmental response
The current draft inundation layer shows inconsistencies with observed flood behaviour, mainly in areas within my operational knowledge. The areas are better seen as localised water collection zones, not true floodplain inundation. Water may gather there but ultimately ponds and dissipates rather than adding to connected floodplain flow.	The proposed floodways and inundation extent at some locations may differ from that experienced during flood events as they include a process for the consideration of unapproved flood works, as shown in Figure 8 in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation. In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodplain boundary and floodway network. This results in some areas being shown as inundated due to the presence of an unapproved flood work preventing floodwater from moving into the area. In relation to inundation extent, the temporary storage of floodwater refers to water that has overflowed from a river, lake, or other body of water to submerge land, or water that has accumulated due to, for instance, intense rainfall. Significant feedback was received regarding mapping inaccuracies. In response to this feedback, we have made over 400 spatial refinements and updated the hydraulic model. The spatial refinements made are shown in a series of maps in Appendix 2.
It is unreasonable to expect landholders to comply with the approval process of a work that is in an area inaccurately labelled as inundation extent.	See response above.
The inundation extent highlighted on the FMP map is derived from overland flows from high rainfall and failed licenced levee banks. The inundation isn't reflective of floodwater inundation.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
The inundation area highlighted in the draft FMP, is not flood water necessarily and rather high rainfall overland flows away from the traditional floodway network identified in the 2012 FMP.	See response above.
The mapped inundation layer appears vulnerable to overstatement because of its reliance on limited events, the inclusion of localised ponding, and the apparent influence of abnormal inundation arising from levee breaches.	See response above.
The 2022 event appears to have been affected by abnormal infrastructure outcomes. At least two licensed levees are understood to have breached during that event in the general area I am familiar with. Those breaches resulted in inundation that was inconsistent with the intended operation of the levees.	See response above.
There are some areas of my property which I can accept are inundated extent areas, but certainly not as per the spatial interactive map has reflected.	See response above.
We strongly disagree with proposed inundation areas shown on the map — a large proportion of these highlighted areas are dryland, non-timbered cultivated areas that have been farmed for my life time (65 years) and yet to flood.	See response above.
Upstream from Forbes, there are significant areas marked on the draft plan that are not part of any floodway and are protected by approved flood works.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
The boundaries of the floodway network (certainly on my property) are in my view inaccurate, and in neighbouring properties to the east, I would say they are also an inaccurate reflection based on my 35 plus years of living there and witnessing the water movement.	See response above.
I have significant concerns about the accuracy of the mapped area of inundation. My concern is not with the existence of a floodway concept, but with the extent to which the draft mapping appears to classify broader areas as inundated when they do not, in practice, function as part of the active floodplain system.	See response above.
Hydraulic categories include floodways, flood storage and flood fringe. It is not clear how the inundation extent has been defined in mapping.	The inundation extent is defined as areas of the floodplain where floodwater is temporarily stored during times of flood. Hydraulic model outputs, including depth velocity products and inundation extents were used to develop the floodway network. The inundation extent was determined through multiple lines of evidence including the flood extent of the small design flood (2021) and large design flood (2022), and flood imagery from the 2022 flood event (Sentinel and Landsat). More information on how the floodway network was delineated can be found in Table 7 of the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.
Our property is within the floodplain boundary. Your high tide mark takes out our house at Richies Lane Canowindra. The 2022 flood still had 2–3 metres to even approach this level.	This feedback has been reviewed at this location and refinements applied based on the information provided and other available information.

Feedback	Departmental response
Missing floodways from previous plans. There are several foodways that are completely missing from the draft plan, for example Greens Creek downstream of Forbes, and upstream from Jemalong gap.	In response to feedback, we updated the hydraulic model to better reflect the historical FMPs. Spatial refinements that resulted from this model update are shown in Figures 3 to 14 in Appendix 2.
The proposed floodway boundary near Lake Cowal is significantly narrower than the existing floodway. In our view, this may reduce the floodway's ability to convey and redistribute flood flows, increasing the risk of flood impacts and infrastructure failure.	See response above.
Local observations and on-ground validation should be used to validate, refine, and finalise modelling outputs.	Agree. Modelling outputs are validated using satellite imagery, surveying results, LiDAR and topographical information. Further, site-specific information and local flood knowledge provided through consultation, including information relating to flood behaviour, historical inundation and floodplain infrastructure in the identified areas, is considered during ongoing refinement of the proposed floodplain boundary and associated mapping.
The department should conduct a structured on-ground validation and technical review process in collaboration with local landholders and irrigation operators.	See response above.
All modelling inputs and assumptions should be available, ground-validated with landholders, and independently reviewed.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
Floodways are commonly sown to winter crops. In the 2012 and 2016 floods, the floodway had distances of over 1 km of extremely thick wheat crops. The delay in flows getting down this floodway were significant and raised serious issues along the river and floodways were blocked by illegal works.	The draft FMP does not impact current or future land use. Further, the draft FMP does not deal with localised flooding issues caused by unapproved or non-compliant flood works or activities. To report an unapproved flood work or non-compliant activities, please call the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) on 1800 633 362 or make an online report.
There is an above ground channel within the floodway. This was not 'topped' in the 2022 flood event and the floodwater ran through the floodway opening as designed. We believe the existing channel should not show inundation as the spatial map depicts.	The proposed floodways and inundation extent at some locations may differ from that experienced during flood events as they include a process for the consideration of unapproved flood works, as shown in Figure 8 in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation. In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodplain boundary and floodway network. This results in some areas being shown as inundated due to the presence of an unapproved flood work preventing floodwater from moving into the area. Significant feedback was received regarding mapping inaccuracies. In response to this feedback, we have made over 400 spatial refinements and updated the hydraulic model. Spatial refinements are shown in a series of maps in Appendix 2.
The spatial map shows a floodway that should only be shown as an inundation extent as minimal water reached that section during the 2022 flood event.	See response above.
My irrigation development has no impact on my neighbours as nearly 100% of the 2022 flood stayed on my farm. The map depicts it as a flood channel.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
The proposed floodway network should accurately reflect the areas that are subject to flood inundation during major flood events. We have provided mapping that correctly reflects the inundation extent on our property, not currently represented as an area of inundation on the department's interactive spatial map.	See response above.
Due to the inaccuracies of the interactive spatial map, I request that the lightly shaded blue areas of my property are removed or at least until an accurate and acceptable assessment is carried out. I would suggest 40% of the light blue shaded area on my property is accurate.	See response above.
A central concern is that some areas shown as inundated are, in fact, the result of localised water accumulation. In the general area that I know and operate within, there are places where water collects from local runoff or local overland movement, but that water does not ultimately connect with the floodway network. Instead, it terminates, ponds, and dissipates over time through evaporation and infiltration.	In relation to the inundation extent, the temporary storage of floodwater refers to water that has overflowed from a river, lake, or other body of water to submerge land, or water that has accumulated due to, for instance, intense rainfall.
On our property, the proposed floodway network represents the inundation extent of the 2022 flood.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
Recent advice indicates modelling may exclude known developments, despite their real impacts. Large earthworks in floodplains are expected to significantly alter future flows yet are not fully considered.	In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodplain boundary and floodway network. This results in some areas being shown as inundated due to the presence of an unapproved flood work preventing floodwater from moving into the area. In NSW, the requirement for a flood work approval under the WM Act has been in place since 2000. Further, the requirement to licence a flood work under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> was in place from 1984 with those licences automatically converting to approvals under the WM Act.
Incorrectly proposed floodway network and mapping across areas including Sunshine and Round Cowal, Warili, Bergen Park, White Gates, Glencoe and Jemalong Station.	Significant feedback was received regarding mapping inaccuracies. In response to this feedback, we have made over 400 spatial refinements and updated the hydraulic model. Spatial refinements are shown in a series of maps in Appendix 2.
The floodway network and inundation extents should be updated to recognise the magnitude of the floods used in the mapping process.	See response above.
A proposed levee essentially chokes the floodway at a point where it should open to Lake Cowal. The original levee system allows floodwater relief, preventing pressure buildup and potential failure. The floodway's southern end acts as a major constriction, disrupting natural flood flow and drainage.	The draft FMP differs from the historical FMP in that it will not specify details on the management of individual flood works or remediation actions for flood works. Instead, it sets rules and assessment criteria for applications for flood work approvals and mandatory conditions to be applied to all flood work approvals. To report an unapproved flood work or non-compliant activity, please call NRAR on 1800 633 362 or make an online report.

Feedback	Departmental response
During the 2022 event flood works were not breached upstream from Hillston in compliance with the original FMP resulting in flows being diverted into areas not intended to be flooded. This flood mechanism needs to be investigated and incorporated into the final FMP.	See response above.
The only real difference between the Hillston flood study (September 2021) and proposed floodway network is small areas to the east of the township that are being shown as inundated behind the eastern levee (in 1990) that aren't in the FMP 2022 event. This is most likely caused by assumptions made regarding the level of protection afforded by the eastern levee and upgrades/topping up that has most likely occurred over time.	Noted.
Inundation from local rainfall events should be distinguished from river-based flooding.	Floodwater refers to water that has overflowed from a river, lake, or other body of water to submerge land, or water that has accumulated due to, for instance, intense rainfall.
The proposed extent does not adequately account for the impact of existing, authorised irrigation and flood conveyance infrastructure, or changes due to long-established development.	The proposed floodways and inundation extent at some locations may differ from that experienced during flood events as they include a process for the consideration of unapproved flood works, as shown in Figure 8 in the <u>Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation</u>. In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodway network. This results in some areas being shown as inundated due to the presence of an unapproved flood work preventing floodwater from moving into the area. All flood works and associated infrastructure owned and operated by irrigation corporations were considered in the development of the floodway network.

Feedback	Departmental response
Jemalong Irrigation (JIL) does not support the proposed floodway network where it intersects, overlaps, or restricts authorised irrigation infrastructure. Based on JIL’s operational experience, the modelled floodway network and inundation extents appear to under-represent the influence of existing licenced works, including supply channels, embankments, and regulating structures that were specifically designed and approved to manage flood behaviour.	See response above.
We do not consider the mapped inundation extent near the JIL channel to reflect observed flood behaviour, including during the 2022 flood event, and believe the draft 2026 Lachlan Valley FMP misrepresents the location and function of the main floodway channel in this area.	See response above.

Identified flood-dependent and flood-impacted Aboriginal cultural assets and values

The Aboriginal cultural assets and values located within the Lachlan Valley floodplain and currently registered on the [Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System \(AHIMS\)](#) are shown in Figure 3 in the [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#). This information was presented to demonstrate the abundance of Aboriginal cultural sites throughout the Lachlan Valley floodplain.

We asked the public if any other Aboriginal cultural assets or values on the floodplain should be considered. Table 5 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 5: Summary of the feedback received on the identified flood-dependent and flood-impacted Aboriginal cultural assets and values

Feedback	Departmental response
The process needs to acknowledge Aboriginal cultural values are related to specific places, plants and animals and to the landscape as a whole. As such there are important linkages between flow events and cultural outcomes.	Noted. To ensure that Aboriginal cultural assets and values are protected from the impacts associated with flood works, a search of AHIMS must be conducted in assessing and determining an application for a flood work approval. The department has been explaining and promoting the use of AHIMS as part of consultation with Aboriginal communities to ensure that specific cultural assets and values are protected.
The floodplain wetlands and waterways of the Lachlan are central to its Traditional Owners, the Nari Nari, Ngiyampaa, Wiradjuri and Yita Yita people, who have longstanding and continuing ties to Country, the waterways and life sustained by it.	Noted. A key objective of the draft FMP is to maintain flood connectivity to flood-dependent cultural areas, such as wetlands or billabongs.

Feedback	Departmental response
Continued collaboration is needed between government and non-government agencies, landholders, and First Nations people in the Lachlan.	Agree. The department has undertaken significant consultation with First Nations peoples throughout the Lachlan Valley Floodplain and will continue to do so as the draft FMP is developed. For a summary of consultation to date, please refer to Appendix 2 in the <u>Report to assist public consultation</u>. Ongoing collaboration with First Nations people, landholders, government agencies and other stakeholders is recognised as an important part of floodplain management and future implementation of the FMP.
The floodplain management plan must be consistent with the NSW Aboriginal water strategy (2025).	The draft FMP will be developed within the broader framework of water management legislation, policy and environmental objectives, including the NSW Aboriginal Water Strategy (2025).

Identified heritage sites

The heritage sites located within the Lachlan Valley floodplain and currently listed on the State Heritage Register are shown in Figure 4 in the [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#). This information was presented to demonstrate the range of heritage sites throughout the Lachlan Valley floodplain.

We asked the public if any other heritage sites on the floodplain should be considered. Table 6 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 6: Summary of the feedback received on heritage sites

Feedback	Departmental response
There are no heritage sites located on our property that require consideration.	Noted.
We support appropriate consultation, protection and statutory assessment processes in relation to heritage sites.	Noted.
The heritage register should include any of the relevant local government registers for those local governments within the floodplain boundary.	Noted. FMPs allow for the consideration of heritage sites listed in state or commonwealth heritage registers, and any other source deemed relevant.
Information on potential and planned heritage sites, including grave sites and cemeteries.	FMPs allow for the construction of flood works, such as levees, designed to protect historical sites, regardless of whether they are registered heritage sites.

Identified flood-dependent ecological assets

The following types of ecological assets were identified within the Lachlan Valley floodplain:

- wetlands: semi-permanent (non-woody) and flood-dependent shrubland.
- other flood-dependent ecosystems
- other floodplain ecosystems

The identified flood-dependent ecological assets are shown in Figure 5 in the [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#)

We asked stakeholders if they agree with the types of assets identified and if there are any other ecological assets on the floodplain that should be considered. Table 7 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 7: Summary of the feedback received on identified flood-dependent ecological assets

Feedback	Departmental response
We agree with the types of flood-dependent ecological assets that have been identified on our property.	Noted.
We are strong supporters of both retaining and building the ecological assets of the Great Cumbung region.	Noted.
The datasets should only be used if they are current, accurate and ground truthed.	A variety of information sources have been used to identify the flood-dependent ecological assets. The department is committed to using the best available information in the development of the draft FMP. When newer ecological asset data becomes available it will be considered in the development of the draft FMP and further community feedback will be sought during Stage 2 public exhibition. More information about the ecological asset identification and categorisation is available in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.

Feedback	Departmental response
The 22 native fish within the Basin listed as threatened should be identified as ecologically important — especially for those species where floods trigger breeding events.	Agree. The draft FMP will contain rules that ensure the ongoing protection of fish breeding habitats and fish passage.
We agree with the types of flood-dependent ecological assets that have been identified in the Lachlan Valley floodplain, including wetlands and other floodplain ecosystems. The mapping and datasets used, including the State Vegetation Type Map, previous wetland studies, and the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia, provide a robust basis for identifying flood-dependent ecosystems.	Noted.
We suggest re-examining the area within the Lachlan Valley National Park near Forbes, to ensure all highly flood-dependent areas are accurately captured.	The feedback received will be considered during ongoing refinement to the identified flood-dependent ecological assets. An updated interactive spatial map will be published as part of Stage 2 public exhibition of the draft FMP.
Disagree with the identified ecological assets on my property.	Significant feedback was received regarding mapping inaccuracies. In response to this feedback, we have made over 400 spatial refinements. Refinements to ecological assets are shown in Figures 15 to 19 in Appendix 2. More information about the ecological asset identification and categorisation is available in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation.
Ecological assets mapping appears to show flood dependant ecological assets in areas that overlap with existing irrigation infrastructure and does not distinguish between natural ecosystems and areas that are part of managed water delivery systems.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
Wetlands are already managed under water sharing plans and should not be included in the draft FMP. This duplicates regulation and creates unnecessary restrictions.	FMPs and water sharing plans (WSPs) have different legislative objectives. FMPs provide the framework for coordinating the development of flood works on a whole-of-valley basis. A key objective of the draft FMP is to maintain flood connectivity to flood-dependent ecological assets, such as wetlands. Conversely, WSPs provide the framework for the take of water. The rules allow for equitable sharing of water for all water users, including the environment. WSPs have specific rules for new or amended water supply work approvals and trade that aim to manage the take of water in wetlands. See the department's website for more information on the management of wetlands in WSPs.

Localised variances to some rules for flood work applications

The types of flood works proposed to be permitted within a floodway are detailed in Table 1 in the [Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation](#). Further, feedback was sought on the maximum height to be applied to standard and primary access roads, with 10 cm as the lower end of the threshold and 50 cm as the upper end.

We asked the public if other essential works types should be considered for approval in floodways and what an appropriate height would be for a standard or primary access road. Table 8 and Table 9 summarises the feedback received and the departmental response.

Table 8: Summary of the feedback received on proposed flood works permitted in a floodway

Feedback	Departmental response
The following should be included as permitted works: • maintenance of levee banks • removal of gravel • removal of flood debris • weed control.	Routine maintenance activities that do not meet the definition of a flood work under the WM Act do not require a flood work approval. The rules in the draft FMP only apply to the assessment and determination of applications for flood work approvals.
All works should be permitted in a floodway if the applicant shows they do not alter flow distribution, velocities, or depth on neighbouring properties above set thresholds.	FMPs restrict the types of flood works that can be constructed within a floodway to ensure that floodwater can move freely to or from a river or to assets that rely on it. For areas outside floodways, the proposed rules and assessment criteria will allow for floodplain development to occur in a coordinated manner while minimising negative impacts to neighbouring properties and flood-dependent assets. Flood works also have a cumulative impact on the floodplain landscape over time. The proposed rules and assessment criteria are intended to balance the need to protect life and property with the need to facilitate the orderly passage of floodwater through the floodplain. The proposed rules and assessment criteria will be released for comment as part of Stage 2 public exhibition of the draft FMP.

Feedback	Departmental response
Limitations should depend on impact, not floodway classification.	See response above.
The assessment of works within floodways should be based on demonstrated hydraulic impact (such as changes to flow depth, velocity, and distribution), rather than being limited by work type alone. There are places where works within mapped floodways could be appropriately assessed if it is shown that any impacts are contained within the property and do not adversely affect neighbouring land.	See response above.
As our on-farm channel system is gravity fed, channels are at times above ground. To only permit below ground channels does not adequately acknowledge the practical design of irrigation channel systems in the flood network in our area.	The draft FMP will include proposed rules that will provide a pathway for the approval of existing above-ground supply channels that are located within or across floodways.
The current definition of “supply channels (below ground)” is not suitable for Lachlan Valley irrigation systems and should be revised.	See response above.
It is ridiculous to think that irrigation properties can supply all their water entitlements through below ground channels. Where does the dirt go when constructing these channels?	See response above. The draft FMP will include proposed rules in relation to the spoil associated with the construction of supply channels.
Irrigation channels should be included in the "permitted" list of works allowed in a floodway, with height restrictions and neighbour impact considerations.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
Roadways and other infrastructure not specifically related to water may also be affected under the current mapping approach, even though those assets are essential to property access, safety and day-to-day operation.	A flood work is defined under the WM Act to be any structure that alters the flow of water to/from a river or alters the movement of floodwater during a flood. In NSW, all flood works require a flood work approval, regardless of whether an FMP applies. Some activities considered low-risk or covered by other legislation are exempt from the requirement to obtain a flood work approval. Landholders are encouraged to speak to WaterNSW about whether a proposed or existing earthwork is a flood work and if it needs a flood work approval. For more information, please contact WaterNSW on 1300 662 077 or customer.helpdesk@waternsw.com.au
Permitted flood work types in floodways should explicitly include: • irrigation supply channels (including gravity-fed systems) • drainage infrastructure and associated regulators • works required for operational and environmental water delivery.	The draft FMP will include proposed rules that will provide a pathway for the approval of existing above-ground supply channels that are located within or across floodways. The department will seek further feedback during Stage 2 public exhibition on the use of drains (as a type of flood work) to divert floodwater in the floodplain and whether rules need to be included in the draft FMP.
Suggest consideration or coverage be given to WaterNSW critical access roads required to safely operate river assets in flood.	A flood work is defined under the WM Act to be any structure that alters the flow of water to/from a river or alters the movement of floodwater during a flood. In NSW, all flood works require a flood work approval, regardless of whether an FMP applies. Some activities considered low-risk or covered by other legislation are exempt from the requirement to obtain a flood work approval.

We asked stakeholders what the maximum height of a standard and primary access road would be, with 10 cm being the lower threshold and 50 cm being the upper threshold. Table 9 summarises the feedback received and the department's responses.

Table 9: Summary of the feedback received on maximum height of access roads

Feedback	Departmental response
We propose that the standard height for a primary access road located within a floodway be between 60 cm–100 cm to provide the best practical access to our farm infrastructure while not significantly altering flood behaviour.	Noted. The department is currently reviewing all feedback received to determine an appropriate maximum height for primary access roads.
Roads of height 50cm should be permissible, at 10cm height it is hardly worth constructing the road or depending on it when wet for access.	See response above.
Happy for all farm access roads to have a max 50cm height restriction above natural surface, although some situations may need higher roads providing safe escape in flood times.	See response above.
Standard access roads need to be worked out on an individual basis and the volume of water passing through.	Applying a maximum height to standard access roads within a floodway balances the need to ensure access during times of flood with the potential impact it may have on the flow and distribution of floodwater. There are some specific aspects of the draft FMP rule set that can be tailored to account for local conditions and needs. This includes the maximum height of standard access roads.
For access roads where the works have an effect above the adopted thresholds on the floodway network on neighbouring properties the limit should be 0.2 m. Where it can be demonstrated they have no effect there should be no limitation.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
Primary access roads need to be calculated on the availability of culverts and flow of water to allow for both traffic and water passage.	The proposed rules in the draft FMP will require the installation of causeways for access roads constructed within a floodway to allow for the adequate passage of floodwater. This requirement may also apply in other areas of the floodplain depending on where and how the floodwater moves.
Where standard and primary access roads are concerned, it is critical for the integrity of the roadway that a well-designed table drain is constructed.	Noted. It is important that road construction and maintenance is undertaken in a manner that ensures flood flow connectivity throughout the floodplain.
Some unapproved works are 3 m high, will these works be brought down to 10–50 cms? There needs to be a clear approval pathway between departments.	The draft FMP will include proposed rules that will provide a pathway for the approval of existing access roads that are located within or across floodways.

General feedback

As part of Stage 1 public consultation, stakeholders were able to provide general feedback or any other comments. Table 10 summarises the feedback received and the department's responses.

Table 10: Summary of the general feedback received and the department's responses

Feedback	Departmental response
Works that impact others should require notification.	Noted. FMPs establish rules which provide clarity about where flood works may be constructed on the floodplain, ensuring that flooding impacts are avoided or minimised on neighbouring properties and the surrounding floodplain environment. In some circumstances, FMPs require a flood work application to be advertised.
The draft FMP threatens the legal standing of infrastructure that has been integral to regional productivity for generations.	The draft FMP will provide a pathway for the approval of existing flood works, subject to ensuring that flooding impacts are avoided or minimised on neighbouring properties and the surrounding floodplain environment.

Feedback	Departmental response
Existing flood works are critical to my operation. It is my belief that my flood works are legally licenced and these works have often been in place for many years, in some cases decades. I strongly support the position that all existing flood works — particularly those constructed prior to July 2000 — should be recognised as lawful legacy works and not require reapproval or additional compliance.	In NSW all flood works require a flood work approval under the WM Act, unless exempt, regardless of whether a floodplain management plan is in place. The requirement for a flood work approval under the WM Act has been in place since 2000. Further, the requirement to licence a flood work under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> was in place from 1984 with those licences automatically converting to approvals under the WM Act. The draft FMP will provide clarity about where flood works may be constructed on the floodplain and will streamline the approval process for new and existing flood works. This coordinated approach aims to minimise future changes to flooding behaviour, increase awareness of the risk to life and property from the effects of flooding; and to contribute to improved environmental health of the floodplain. In response to feedback, the department is currently investigating whether the current legislative framework for historical flood works remains adequate.
I strongly advocate for the automatic recognition of all existing flood works — specifically those constructed prior to July 2000 — as lawful legacy works. Works should be exempt from new approval processes or retrospective compliance requirements, as they were developed in good faith under contemporary standards.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
A major issue for landholders is what will be allowed to be retained through grandfathering, what should be recognised under current works approval pathways, and what may require new works approval or licensing as a result of the final plan. Much of the irrigation and farm development in the Jemalong area should be viewed as part of the historic irrigation landscape. Treating long-standing infrastructure as new or non-compliant would be inappropriate. They should be regarded as existing, accepted works unless there's a clear reason to consider them differently.	See response above.
I strongly support all existing works in the inundation extent and outside the floodway network to be exempt from compliance or certification of any sort.	See response above.
A formal, agreed process is required to provide certainty and consistency. This process should include clearly defined steps for identifying, assessing, and approving flood works, as well as reasonable timeframes for decision-making. Importantly, landholders should be protected from retrospective enforcement actions while their works are being assessed. Such a framework would reduce uncertainty, improve compliance outcomes, and enhance trust in the regulatory system.	See response above.
We should follow the same guidelines that were used to approve flood works in past floodplain management plans to avoid operational changes and cost blowouts to landholders and communities.	See response above. In response to feedback, we updated the hydraulic model to better reflect the historical FMPs. The spatial refinements that resulted from this model update are shown in Figures 3 to 14 in Appendix 2.

Feedback	Departmental response
The interactive map should be improved by pinpointing existing hydraulic structures and existing flood works in the landscape, such as levees, embankments, weirs, regulators and roads, as these features influence how water moves across the floodplain.	Noted. Due to privacy considerations, the department did not display property-specific floodplain development on the Stage 1 interactive spatial map.
Existing 2005 plan is still valid – the 2005 Lachlan Floodplain Management Plan is viewed as sound and still applicable. Issues are not with the plan itself, but with lack of implementation and enforcement.	The historical FMP expired on 30 June 2026 and must be replaced by an FMP that aligns with the requirements of the WM Act. The draft FMP will use the best available information, including current hydraulic modelling, improved topographic data, observed flood records and information received through consultation.
The community expects protection from a 1990 flood. The 2011 FMP developed high flow floodways, used in floods in 2016, 2002, and 1990. The 1978/81 guidelines remain the best so far for alignments, heights, and community consultation, ahead of 2011 and this draft.	See response above.
Establishing an evidence-based floodplain management framework that recognises historical development and essential irrigation infrastructure is supported.	Noted.
Request for ongoing technical engagement with the department, including meetings to review floodplain modelling, ensuring the plan is technically robust, practical, and reflects local infrastructure and flood behaviour.	Noted. Stage 2 public exhibition will provide further opportunity for engagement and feedback.
Flood work approval requirements have historically been poorly understood in the Lachlan Valley, leading to many unapproved works, some longstanding. Transitional provisions are necessary.	The draft FMP will provide a pathway for the approval of existing flood works, subject to ensuring that flooding impacts are avoided or minimised on neighbouring properties and the surrounding floodplain environment.

Feedback	Departmental response
The assessment criteria should recognise that modifications to existing unapproved works may have undesirable impacts on neighbouring properties	See response above.
It is clear this legislation is built around the need to control person(s) who have irresponsibly undertaken works that have had a negative impact on neighbouring properties and the river systems themselves. Landholders who have actively worked to protect natural watercourses and associated assets should not be burdened with excessive regulatory bureaucracy and associated cost.	See response above.
The FMP should ensure that the regularisation of irrigation corporation works under the Irrigation corporation regulatory improvement program is facilitated within the FMP. The regularisation of the irrigation corporation works includes regularisation and approval of on farm flood works constructed prior to the commencement of the WM Act in July 2000.	The department has become aware that not all flood work structures authorised under the <i>Irrigation Corporatisation Act 1994</i> converted across to flood work approvals under the WM Act and is currently working to rectify this. Any flood work structure built by an irrigation corporation that was not explicitly authorised under the <i>Irrigation Corporatisation Act 1994</i> or the <i>Water Act 1912</i> will need to apply for a food work approval.

Feedback	Departmental response
The proposed approach has the potential to increase costs, delay approvals, and restrict my ability to manage water effectively on my property. This will directly impact productivity, profitability, and long-term viability.	In NSW all flood works require a flood work approval under the WM Act, unless exempt, regardless of whether a floodplain management plan is in place. The requirement for a flood work approval under the WM Act has been in place since 2000. Further, the requirement to licence a flood work under the <i>Water Act 1912</i> was in place from 1984 with those licences automatically converting to approvals under the WM Act. The draft FMP will provide clarity about where flood works may be constructed on the floodplain and will streamline the approval process for new and existing flood works. This coordinated approach aims to minimise future changes to flooding behaviour, increase awareness of the risk to life and property from the effects of flooding; and to contribute to improved environmental health of the floodplain.
The current draft presents significant risks to the viability of local farming operations and lacks the necessary evidentiary basis required for such a transformative policy. The plan introduces unnecessary layers of bureaucracy that threaten the "bottom line" of Lachlan Valley enterprises.	See response above.
If the proposal is to widen the floodway network, with subsequent licencing and regulating of works in these extended areas, the rollout of such a large-scale regulatory program will need to be practical and not pass cost-burden onto landowners.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
Increased compliance costs, delayed approvals, and restricted water management flexibility will directly erode the productivity and long-term viability of our primary production businesses.	See response above.
The proposed plan will increase costs to landowners in times that are already financially challenging. The approval process will take a significant amount of time — particularly when there are no clear processes in place for how landowners apply for works in inundation extent areas.	See response above. The department is currently working with WaterNSW to develop a range of information to support landholders in applying for a flood work approval.
A transparent process involving the department, WaterNSW, and NRAR is necessary. Confidence in the consultation process is currently low.	The department, WaterNSW and NRAR have different roles and responsibilities. The department is responsible for developing and consulting on the draft FMP. Once the draft FMP commences, WaterNSW is responsible for implementing the FMP through the assessment and determination of applications for flood work approvals. NRAR is an independent water regulator that oversees the enforcement of water management laws in NSW. The department is currently working with WaterNSW to develop a range of information to support landholders in applying for a flood work approval. Further information and opportunities to provide feedback will be provided during Stage 2 public exhibition.

Feedback	Departmental response
Landholders are currently facing an opaque system with no clear roadmap for compliance. I request the development of a streamlined, step-by-step protocol agreed upon by the department, WaterNSW, and NRAR. Landholders must have a single, consistent source of truth to understand their obligations, rather than navigating contradictory advice from different agencies.	See response above.
There is a lack of coordination between agencies involved in floodplain management, including the department, WaterNSW, and NRAR which leads to inconsistent advice, unclear approval pathways, and delays in decision-making. Landholders are often left navigating a complex and fragmented regulatory environment without clear guidance.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
Agencies (NRAR, SES, the department) failed to act on known issues. This caused hardship for landholders and unexpected flooding in towns like Hillston. Also, there is a disconnect within government, particularly regarding conflicting advice about whether unlawful developments would be included in modelling and inconsistency between planning, approvals, and modelling decisions.	The department is aware of the localised flooding issues in and around Hillston. The department is taking steps to improve communication between agencies. In many instances, unapproved flood works will not be considered in the development of the floodplain boundary and floodway network. You can see more about the process for the consideration of unapproved flood works in Figure 8 in the Report to assist Stage 1 public consultation. Additionally, the draft FMP does not specify details on the management of individual flood works or remediation actions for flood works. Instead, it sets rules and assessment criteria for applications for flood work approvals and mandatory conditions to be applied to all flood work approvals. NRAR is an independent water regulator and is responsible for overseeing the enforcement of water management laws in NSW. To report an unapproved flood work or non-compliant activity, please contact NRAR on 1800 633 362 or make an online report.
A balanced and credible final plan should do 4 things: accurately distinguish floodway and true inundation from localised ponding; recognise historic and accepted development; provide clear and coordinated approval pathways; and incorporate landholder and system-level knowledge through direct engagement.	Noted.

Feedback	Departmental response
I am bewildered at how a submission can be put together without personal consultation with property owners and those directly affected by the proposal within the floodplain.	During the consultation period, we spoke with 120 individuals across 73 appointments. Appointments were primarily with individual landholders, irrigation corporations and peak irrigator groups. We also spoke with Aboriginal communities as part of targeted meetings. To promote the consultation, we: • posted letters to landholders within the mapped floodways (deep, fast-flowing floodwaters) • ran print, social and digital advertisements • sent emails to registered landholders, peak bodies, and the department's Water e-newsletter subscribers. Modelling outputs and mapping products are validated using satellite imagery, surveying results, LiDAR and topographical information. Site-specific information and local flood knowledge provided through consultation, including information relating to flood behaviour, historical inundation and floodplain infrastructure in the identified areas, is considered during ongoing refinement of the proposed floodplain boundary and associated mapping. Stage 1 consultation was undertaken to test this information against property-scale observations and identify areas requiring further investigation. Stakeholders will have another opportunity to review updated mapping and the full draft FMP during Stage 2 public exhibition.

Feedback	Departmental response
There is currently no clear process for landholders to consult with planners to add a level of local knowledge to this process.	Stage 1 consultation was designed to collect property-specific feedback through submissions, appointments, meetings and face-to-face engagement with landholders and other stakeholders. Feedback received during Stage 1 informs the development of the draft FMP. Stakeholders will have another opportunity to review updated mapping and the full draft FMP during Stage 2 public exhibition. You can subscribe to the department's Water e-newsletter and email updates to stay updated about consultation opportunities.
There is a need for a more transparent, evidence-based, and locally informed approach to floodplain management. Without taking on feedback, the Lachlan FMP risks imposing significant and unnecessary burdens on landholders, undermining confidence in water governance, and failing to achieve its intended outcomes.	See response above.
I want to emphasise the importance of genuine consultation. There is currently a lack of confidence among landholders that feedback will be properly considered. It is important that local knowledge is genuinely incorporated into the final plan.	See response above. This report summarises the feedback received and where changes are being considered or made. We will also publish a report summarising the feedback received during Stage 2 public exhibition.

Feedback	Departmental response
The fact that the mapping and proposal have been created via imagery alone, without physical assessment of the land/environment that it directly influences, is proof that there are many fundamental issues with the proposal.	Modelling outputs and mapping products are validated using satellite imagery, surveying results, LiDAR and topographical information. Site-specific information and local flood knowledge provided through consultation, including information relating to flood behaviour, historical inundation and floodplain infrastructure in the identified areas, is considered during ongoing refinement of the proposed floodplain boundary and associated mapping. The interactive spatial map is intended to support consultation and identify issues for further review or refinement.
The current consultation process relies too heavily on technology that is not adequate for the complexity of the task. Without better tools, greater transparency, and structured face-to-face engagement, there is a real risk that incomplete or misleading information will be embedded in the final plan.	See response above. Stakeholders will have another opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan, including via in-person appointments, during Stage 2 public exhibition. You can subscribe to the department's Water e-newsletter and email updates to stay updated about consultation opportunities.
Tools for landholders are inadequate for feedback, relying on technology but lacking functions to test hydraulic connectivity, flow direction, inundation duration or depth, model assumptions, or differentiate floodplain flow from ponding.	See response above.
The online process can't produce accurate maps in complex areas. Use snapshots and coordinates as discussion starting points, not final tests. Hold face-to-face forums to review mapping concerns, combining local knowledge with technical review for credible maps.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
We support the proposed approach of inviting stakeholders to provide annotated screenshots of the interactive map and considers this a practical and effective way to capture local knowledge	Noted.

Next steps

The feedback outlined in this report is informing the development of the draft FMP. The department will refine the proposed key elements where it is indicated in our responses that a change will occur. Feedback that is not factored into the draft FMP will be communicated in future documents.

Consultation on the draft FMP is ongoing, and we will continue to communicate with the community and stakeholders. Stage 2 public exhibition of the draft FMP is scheduled for late 2026. We will share project updates on our website at: water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au/lachlan-valley-floodplain

Appendices

Appendix 1: Broader issues

The issues summarised in Table 12 are out of scope for the development of the draft FMP. However, they are provided for information and context.

Table 11: Summary of broader issues raised during Stage 1 public consultation

Feedback	Departmental response
On-ground surveying of the flood banks network is essential, they need to be licenced to prescribed heights and reinstated to approved levels where necessary.	Noted.
Flood works causing flooding issues to neighbouring properties; works were originally unapproved but have now been approved. What happened to defined approval pathways?	The draft FMP differs from the historical FMP in that it will not specify details on the management of individual flood works or remediation actions for flood works. Instead, it sets rules and assessment criteria for applications for flood work approvals and mandatory conditions to be applied to all flood work approvals. To report an unapproved flood work or non-compliant activity, please call NRAR on 1800 633 362 or make an online report.
Concerns about banks and structures blocking inflows and outflows in Lake Cargelligo.	See response above.
Request a review of culverts and drainage at Lachlan Valley Way, Euabalong Road, West Road, the floodway, and Greys Bridge.	See response above.

Feedback	Departmental response
The absence of floodgates in the levee system prevents drainage of floodwater trying to flow towards Lake Cowal on the northern side of the levee system. The 2012 FMP refers to this water making its way back to Manna Creek, when in reality the water is prevented from reaching Manna Creek by the rise in land around Steels Lookout and the gradual upward slope to the north.	See response above.
Need for stronger enforcement powers – calls for: • greater authority and accountability for enforcement agencies (especially NRAR) • possible legislative changes to strengthen enforcement powers • consideration of local councils as enforcement bodies where appropriate • legislation alone is insufficient.	NRAR is an independent water regulator that oversees the enforcement of water management laws in NSW. This feedback has been forwarded to NRAR for consideration.
We are concerned that the approved Cowal Gold Mine bunt wall may place additional pressure on the floodway system.	Noted. A flood work is defined under the WM Act to be any structure that alters the flow of water to/from a river or alters the movement of floodwater during a flood. In NSW, all flood works require a flood work approval, regardless of whether an FMP applies. Some activities considered low-risk or covered by other legislation are exempt from the requirement to obtain a flood work approval.
Over the years I've been subjected to complaints about a legal registered bank in 2016.	The draft FMP differs from the historical FMP in that it will not specify details on the management of individual flood works or remediation actions for flood works. Instead, it sets rules and assessment criteria for applications for flood work approvals and mandatory conditions to be applied to all flood work approvals.

Appendix 2: Refined Maps

Floodplain boundary maps

Figure 2 shows the change made to the proposed Lachlan Valley Floodplain boundary in response to stakeholder feedback. The change extends the proposed floodplain boundary to include Lake Cowal and Bland Creek.

Floodway network maps

Figures 3 to 14 provide an overview of refinements to the proposed floodway network in response to stakeholder feedback and updates to the hydraulic model to better reflect the historical FMPs.

Ecological asset maps

Figures 15 to 19 provide an overview of refinements made to the identified flood-dependent ecological assets in response to stakeholder feedback.

Further refinements may be undertaken prior to Stage 2 public exhibition. An updated interactive spatial map will be published during Stage 2 public exhibition.

Figure 2: Refinements made to the proposed Lachlan Valley Floodplain Boundary near Lake Cowal

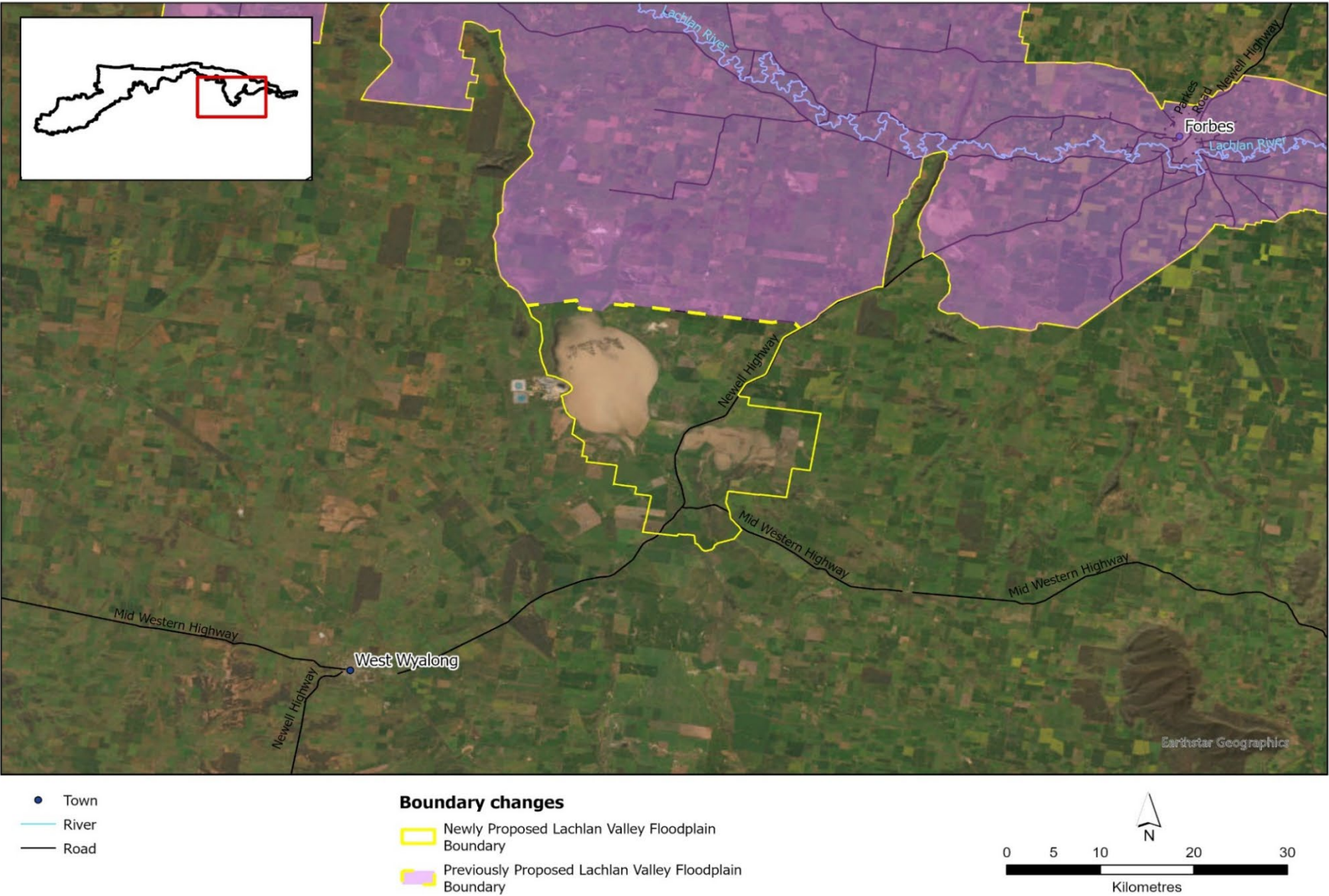


Figure 3: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Canowindra

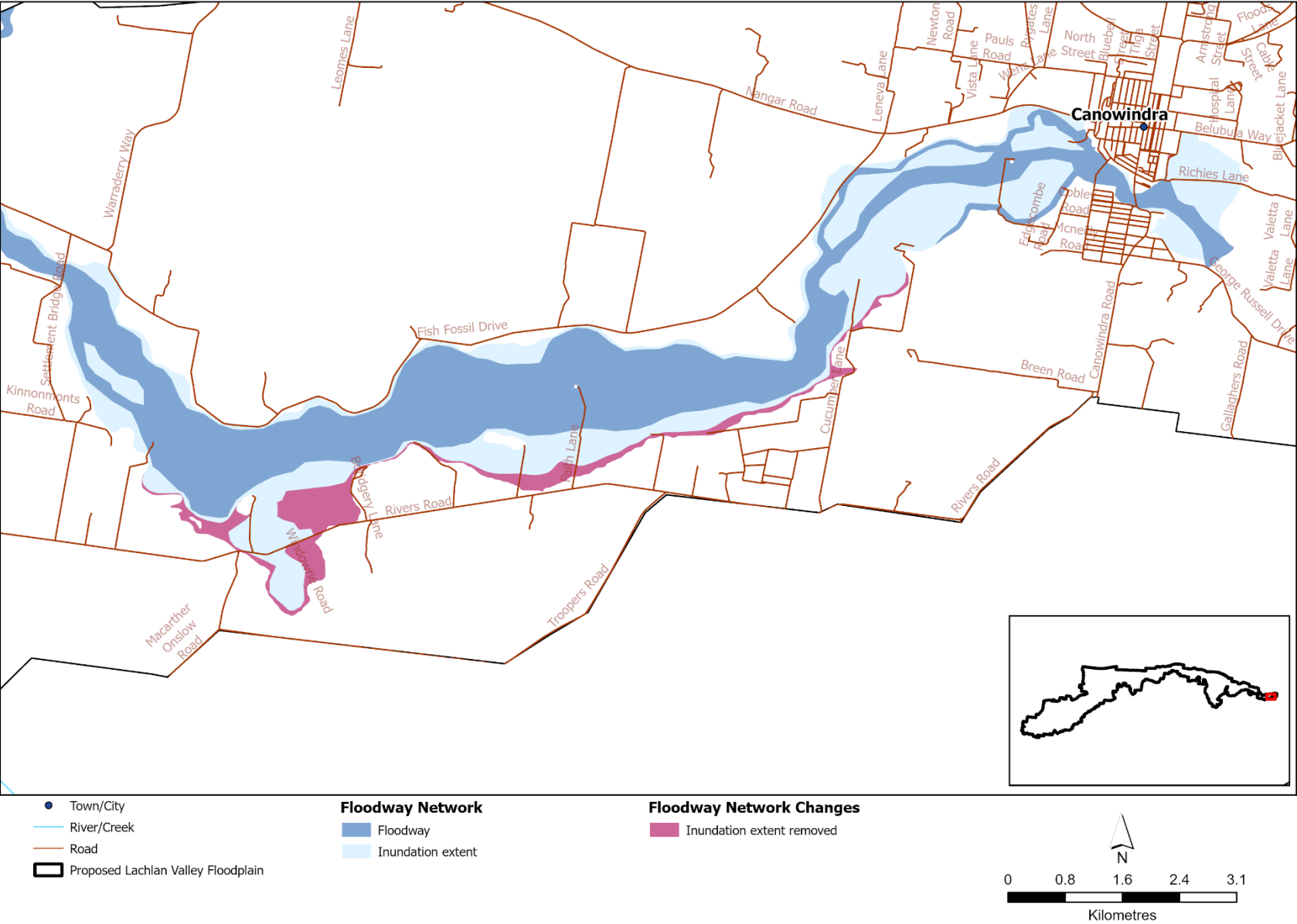


Figure 4: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network east of Forbes

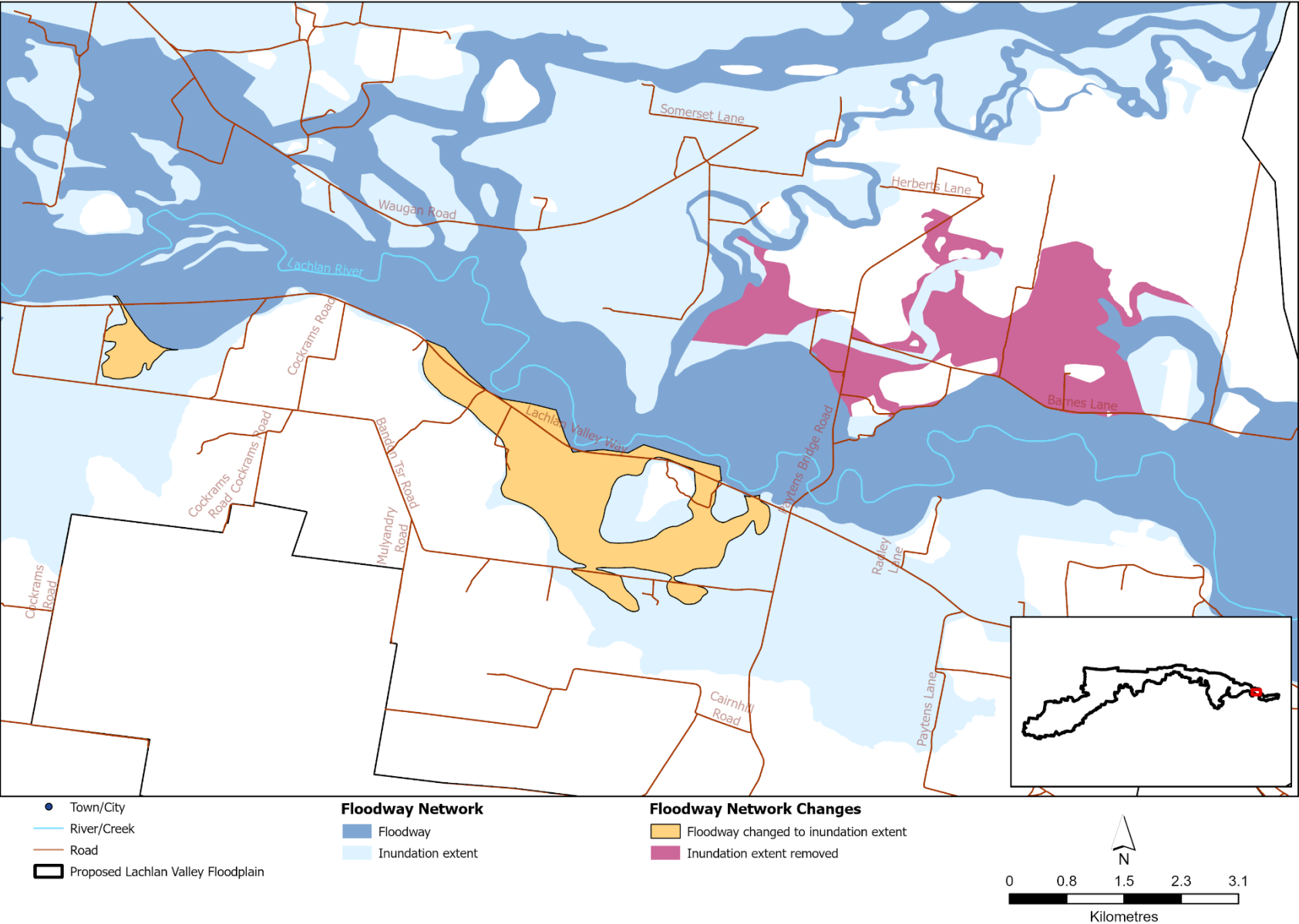


Figure 5: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Forbes

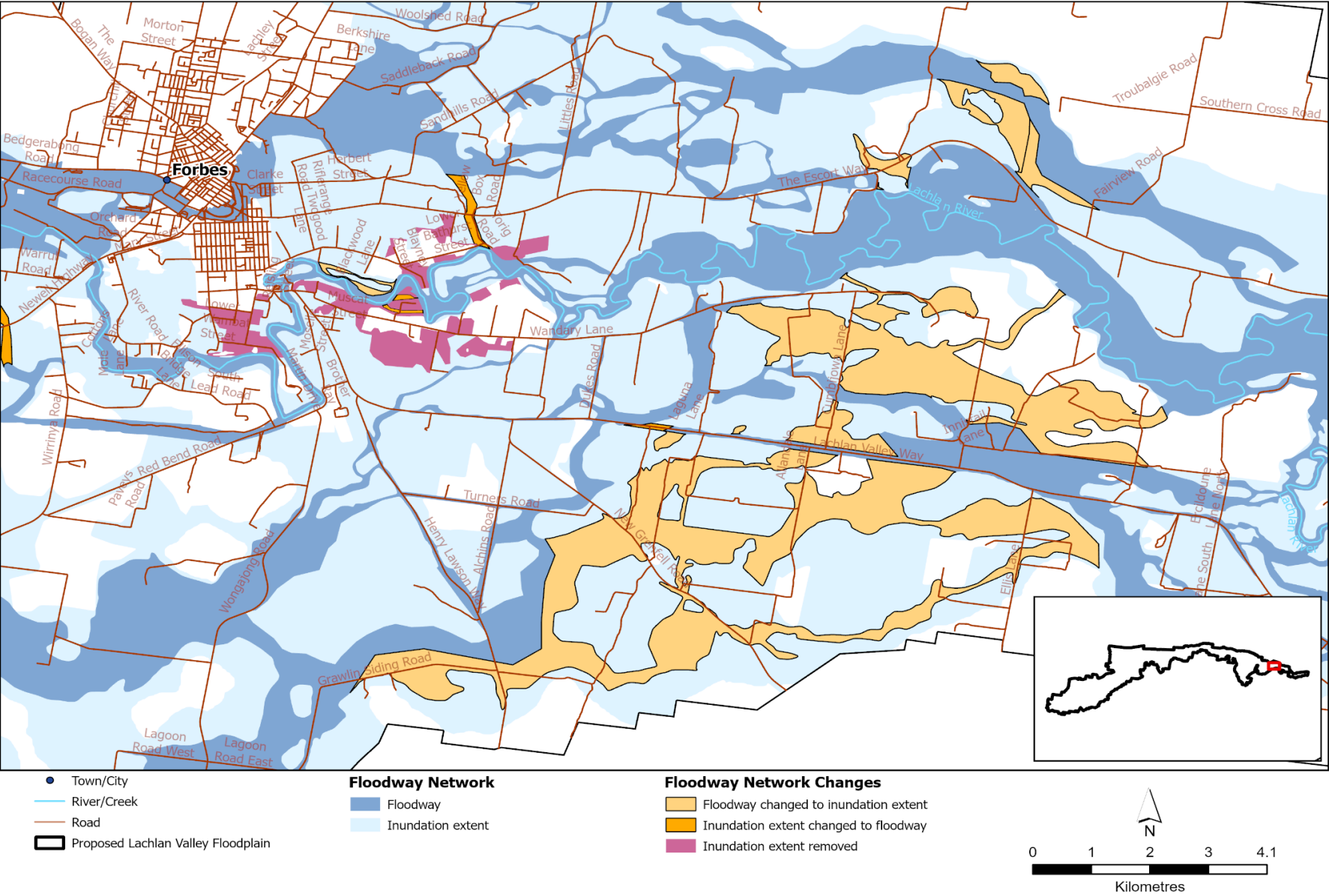


Figure 6: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network west of Forbes

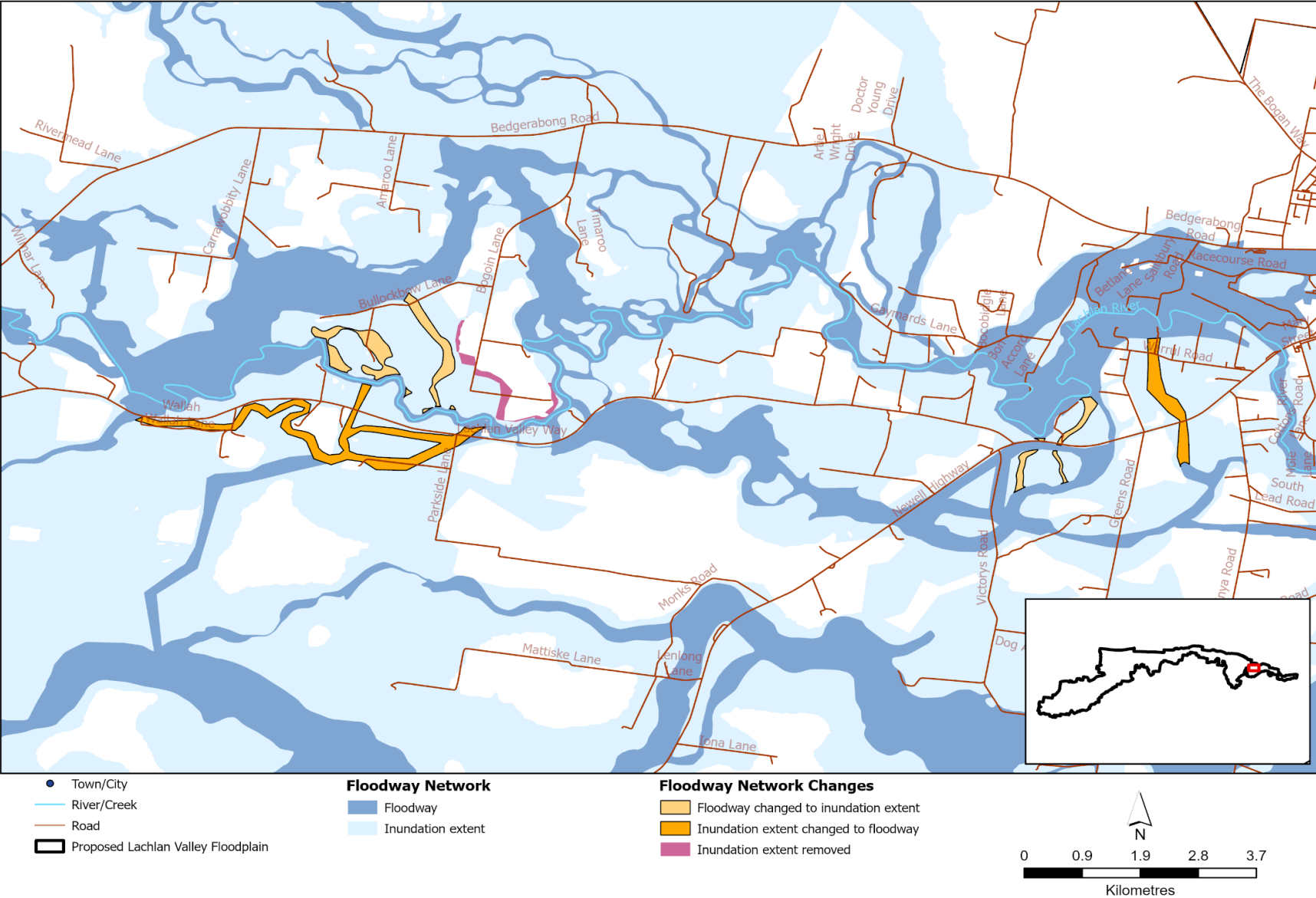


Figure 7: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Lake Cowal

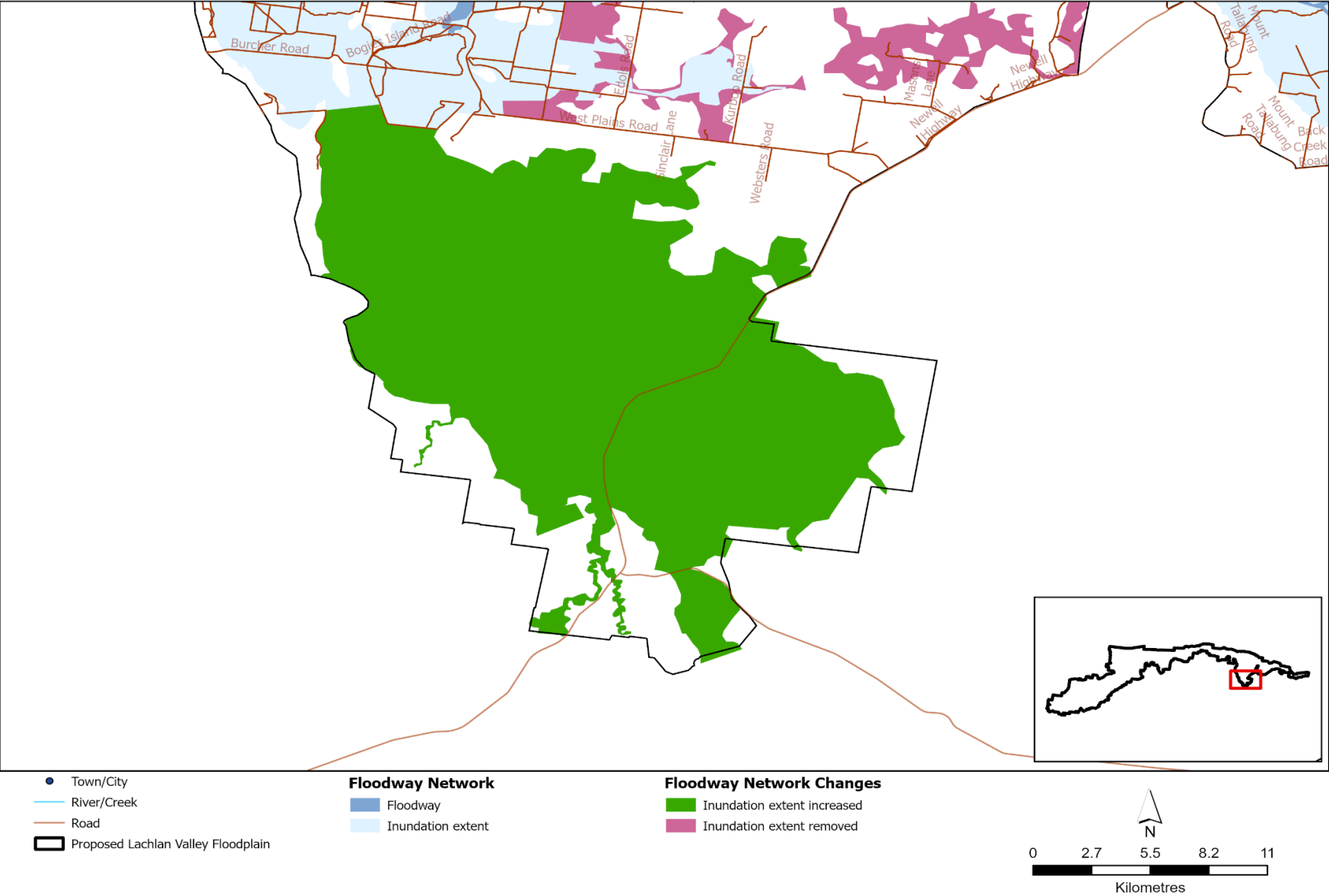


Figure 8: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network north of Lake Cowal

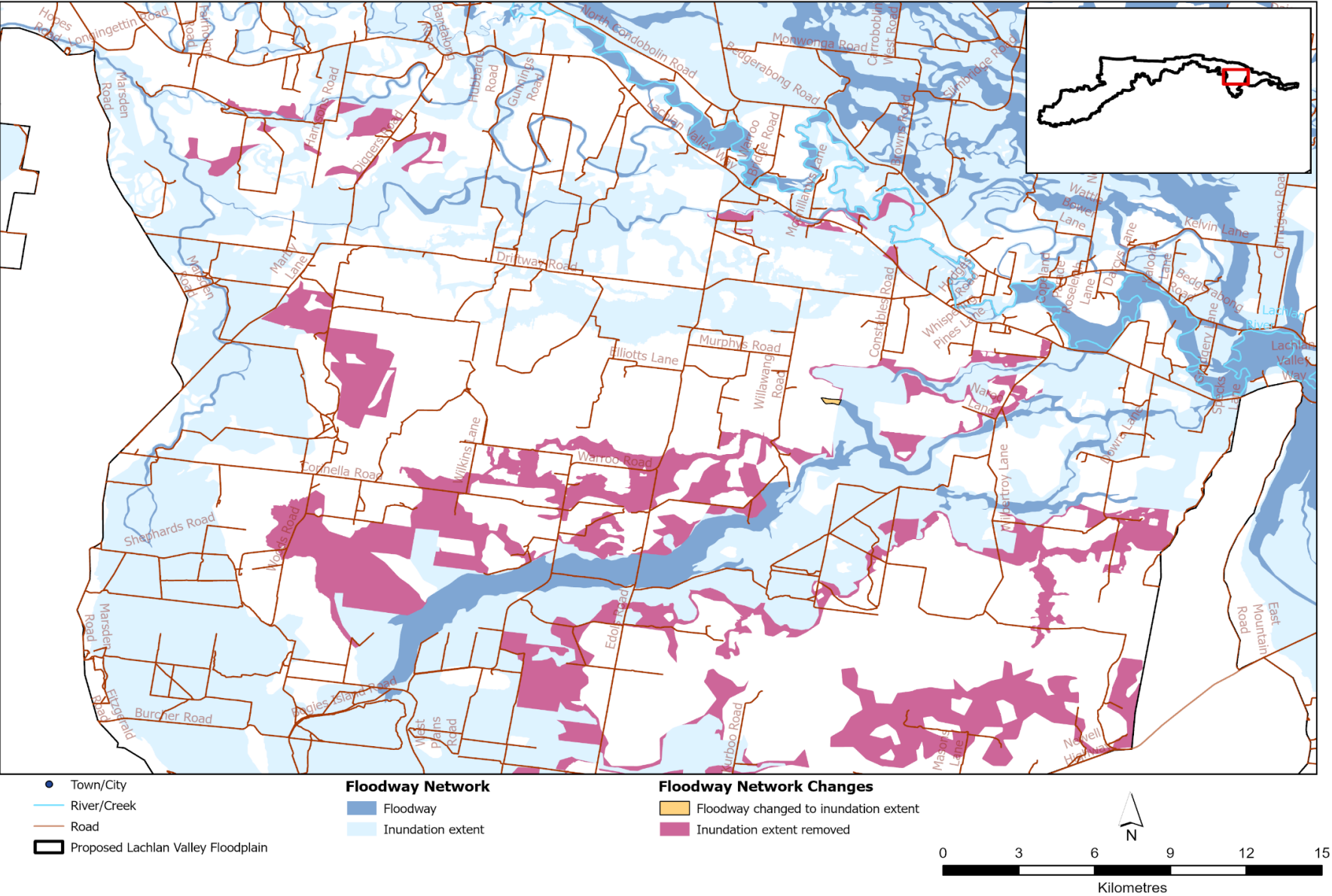


Figure 9: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Hillston

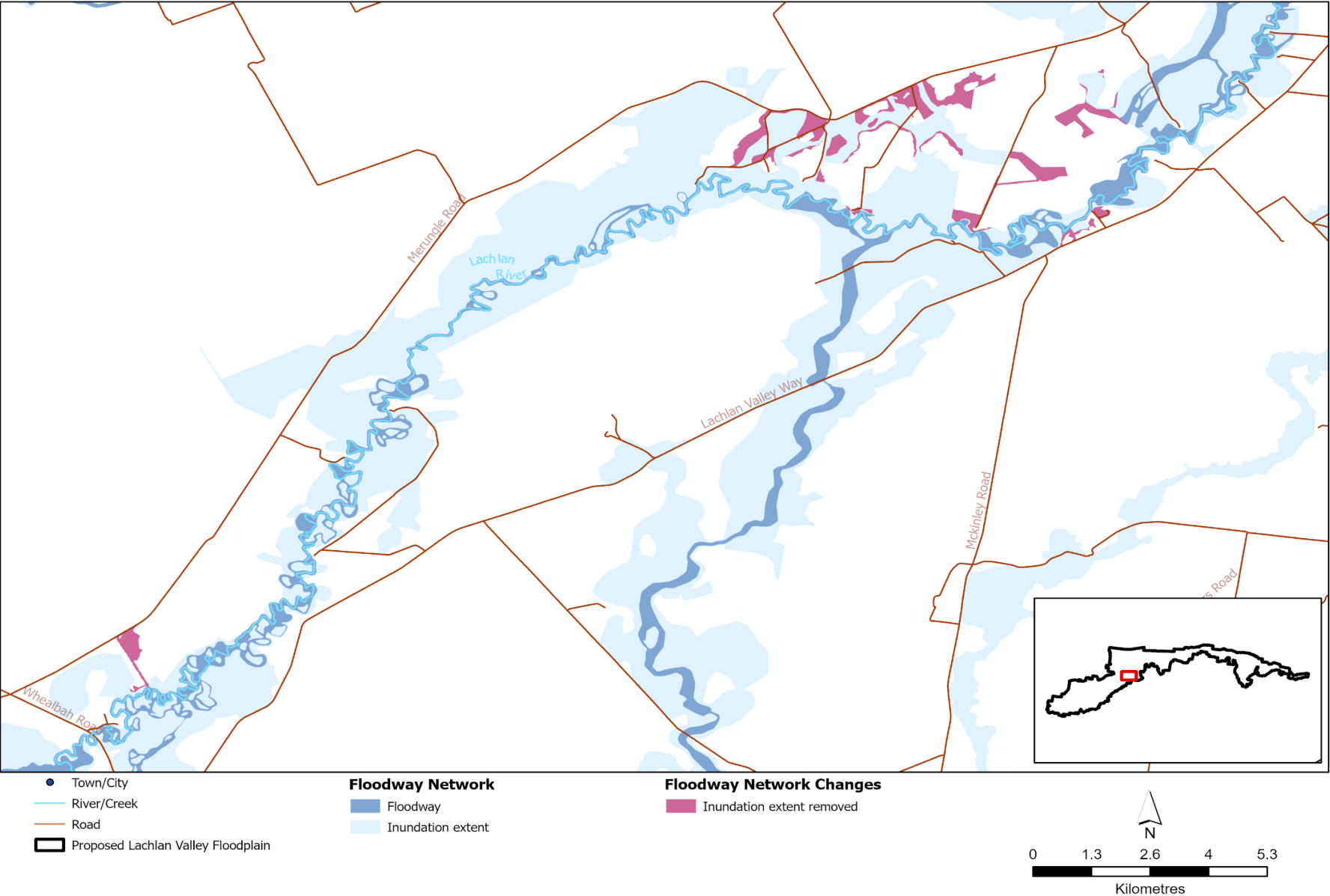


Figure 10: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network south-west of Condobolin

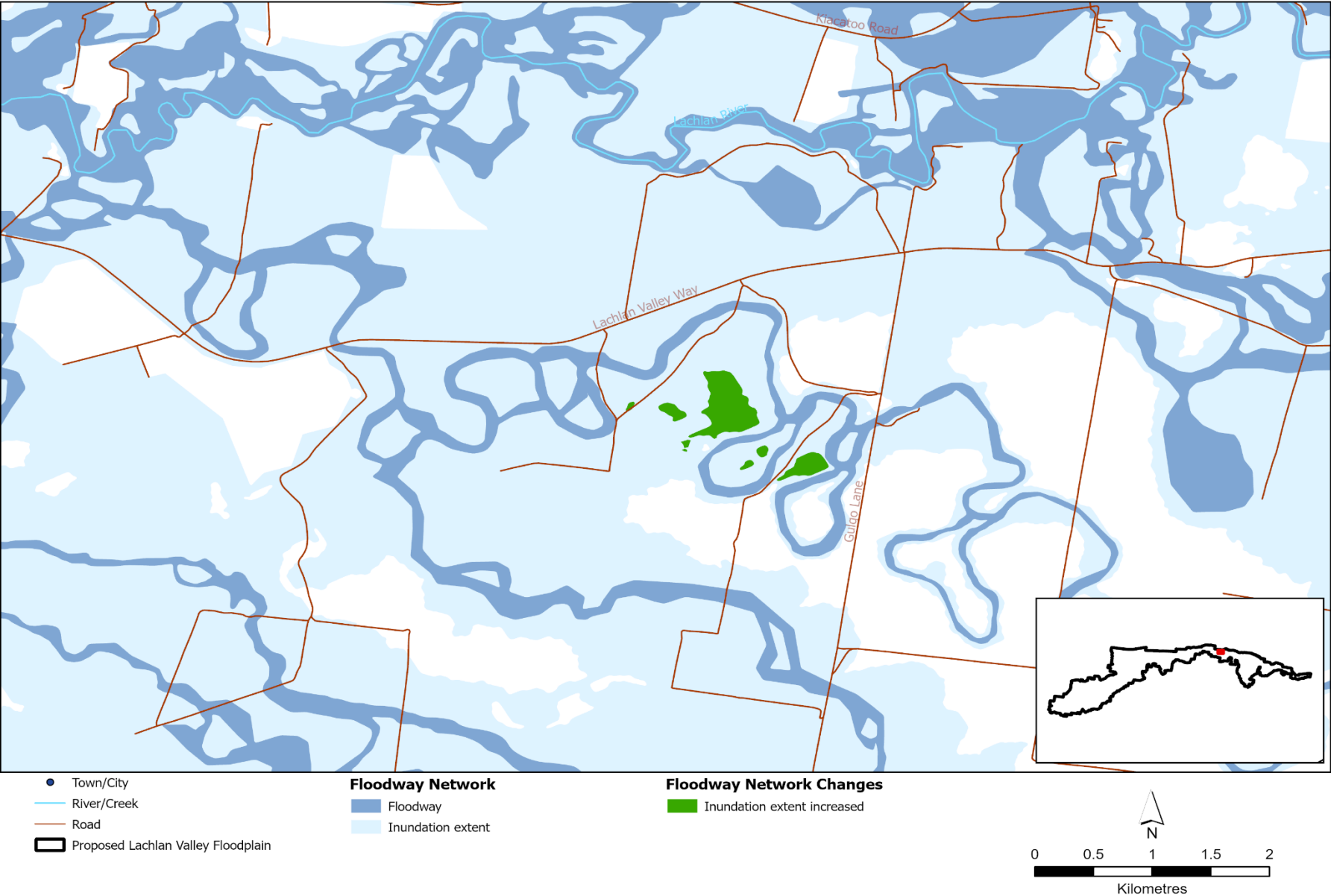


Figure 11: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Condobolin

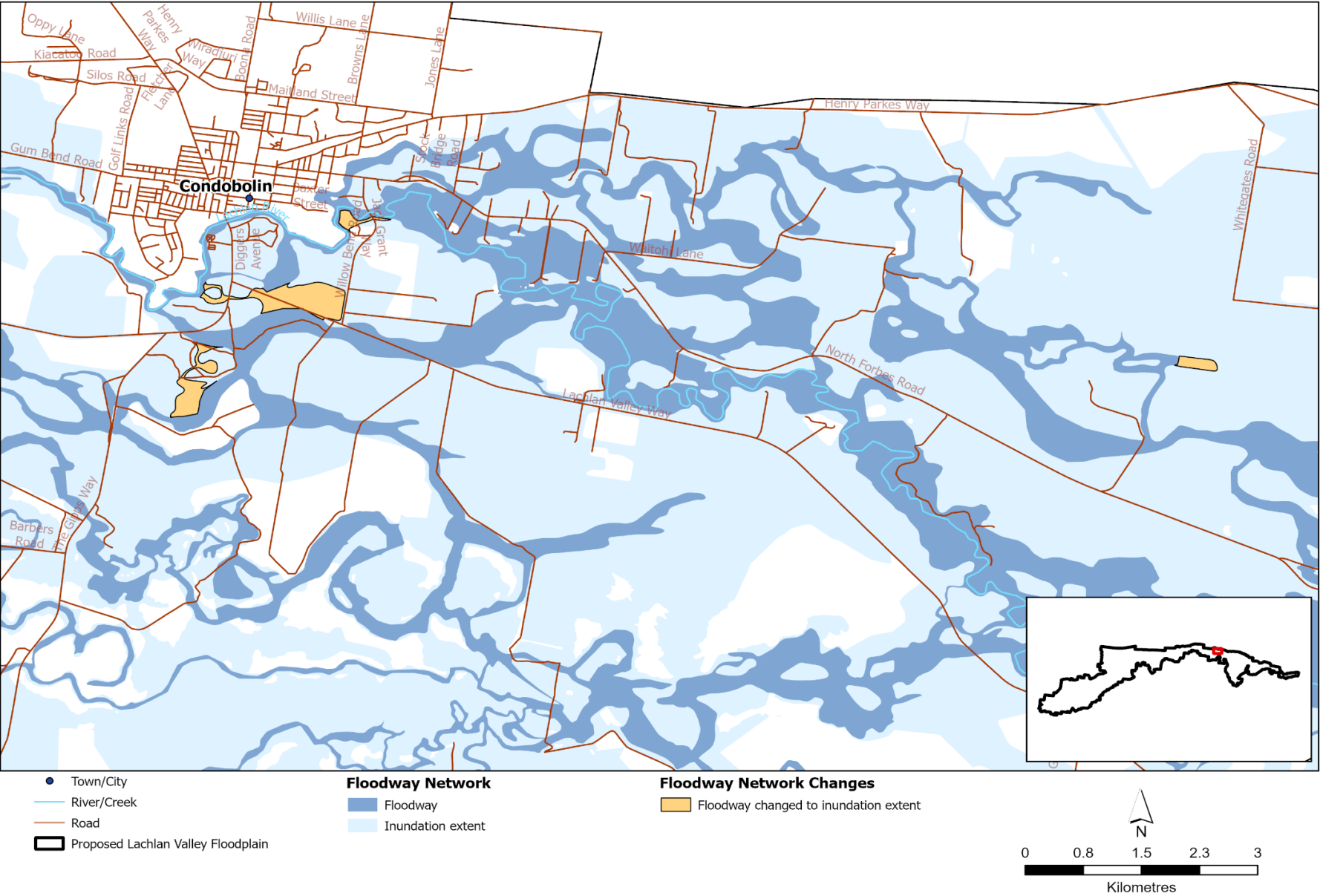


Figure 12: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Kiacatoo

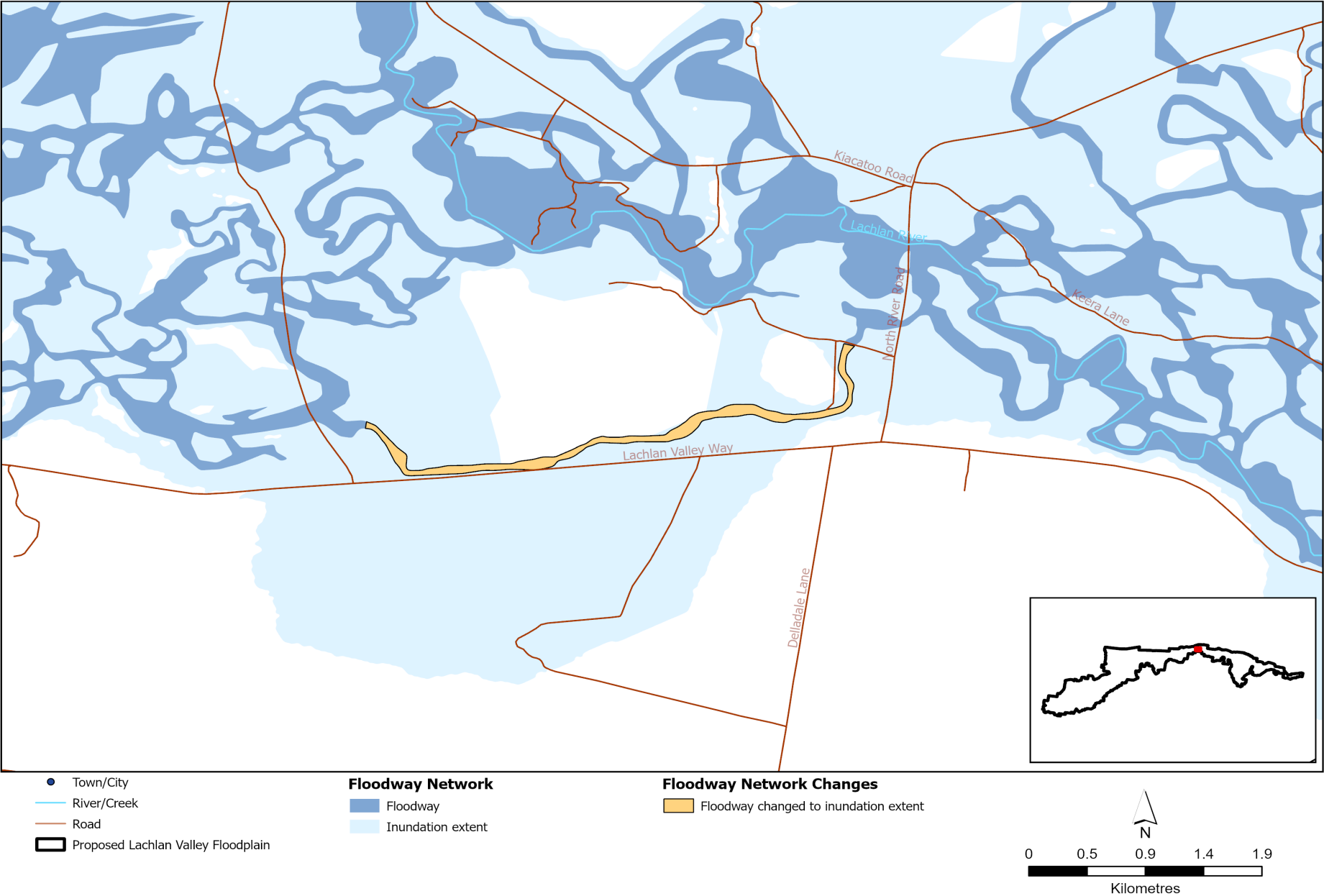


Figure 13: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network near Hillston

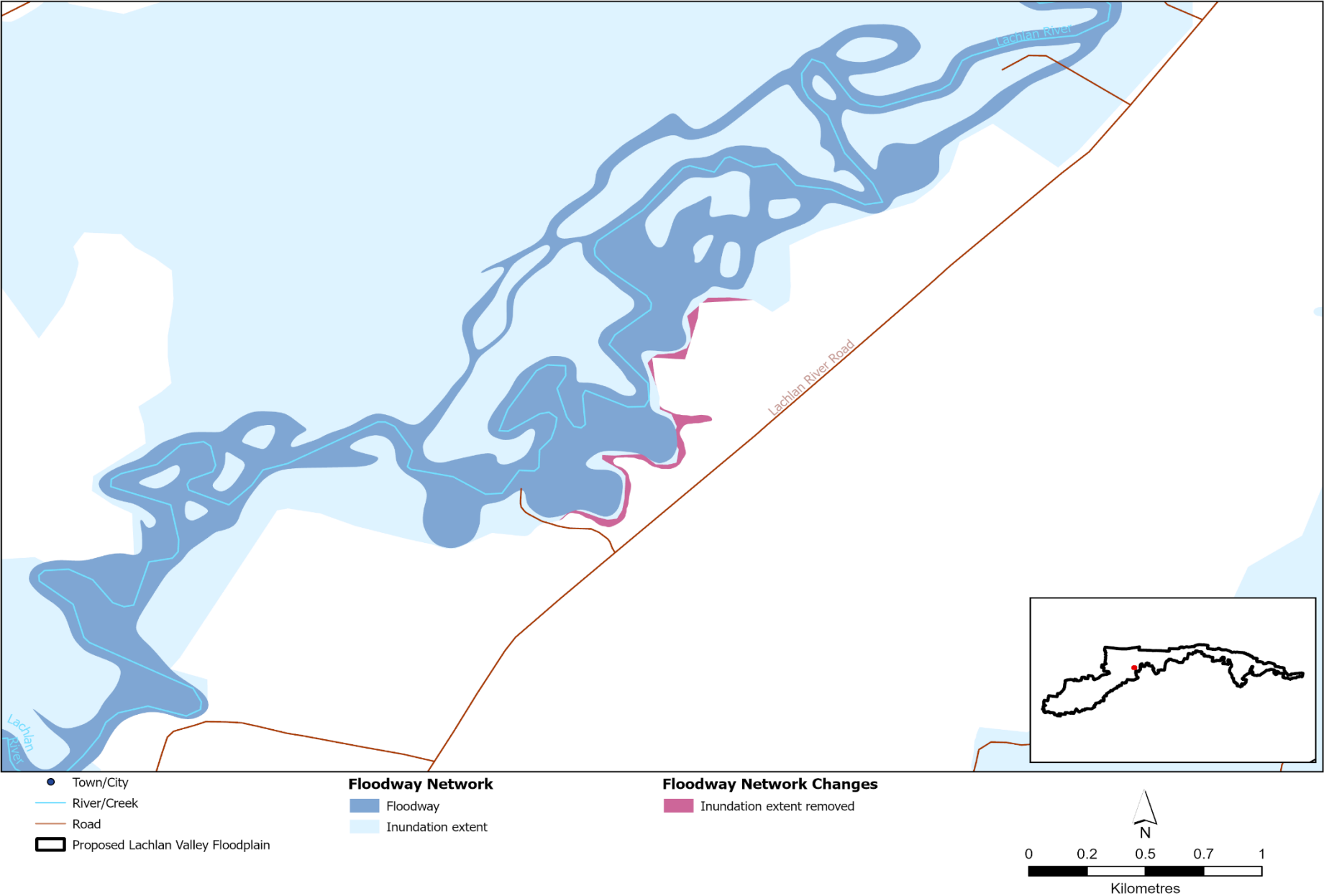


Figure 14: Refinements made to the proposed floodway network north of Hillston

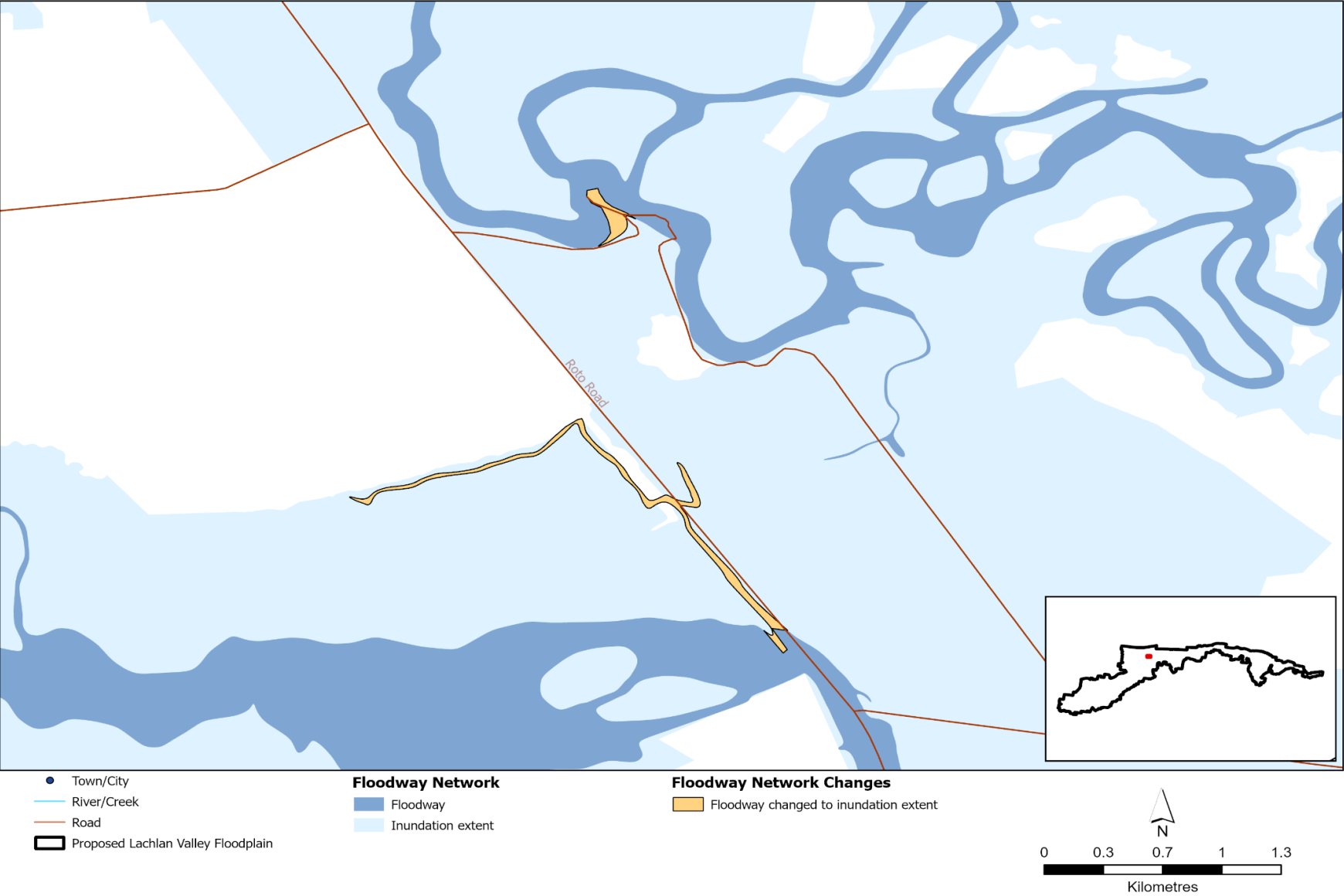


Figure 15: Refinements made to the identified ecological assets map north of Hillston

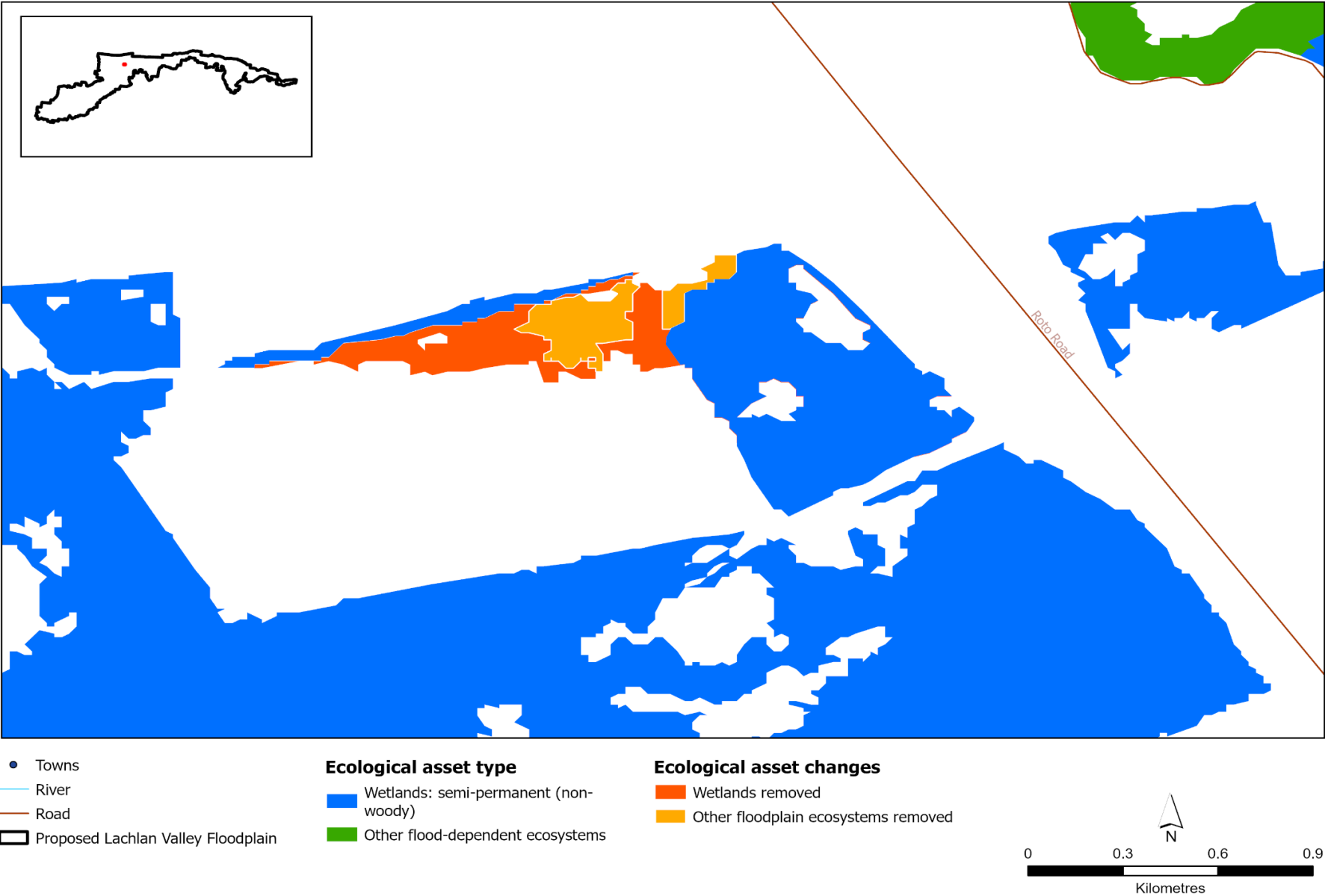


Figure 16: Refinements made to the identified ecological assets map near Hillston

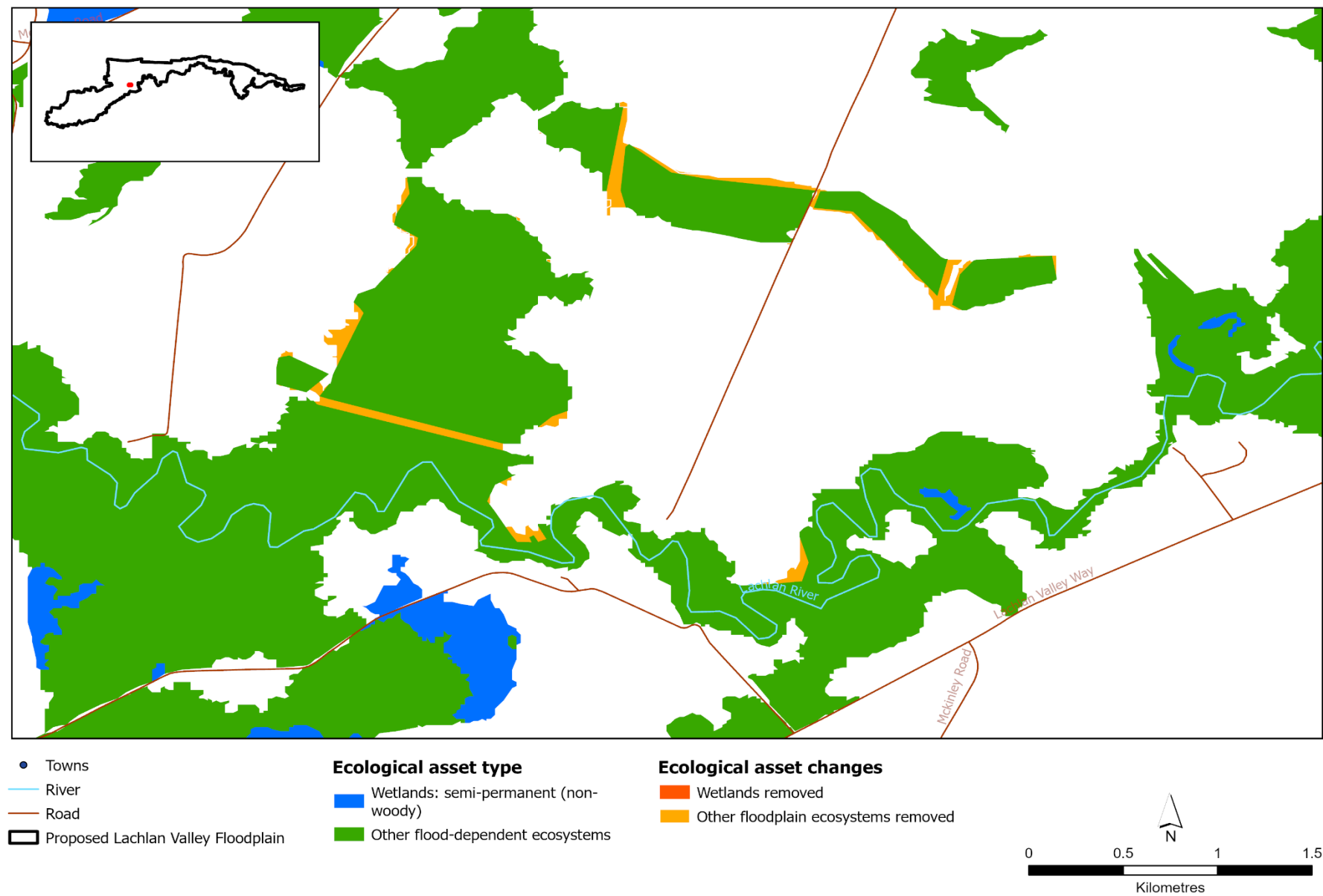


Figure 17: Refinements made to the identified ecological assets map near Condobolin

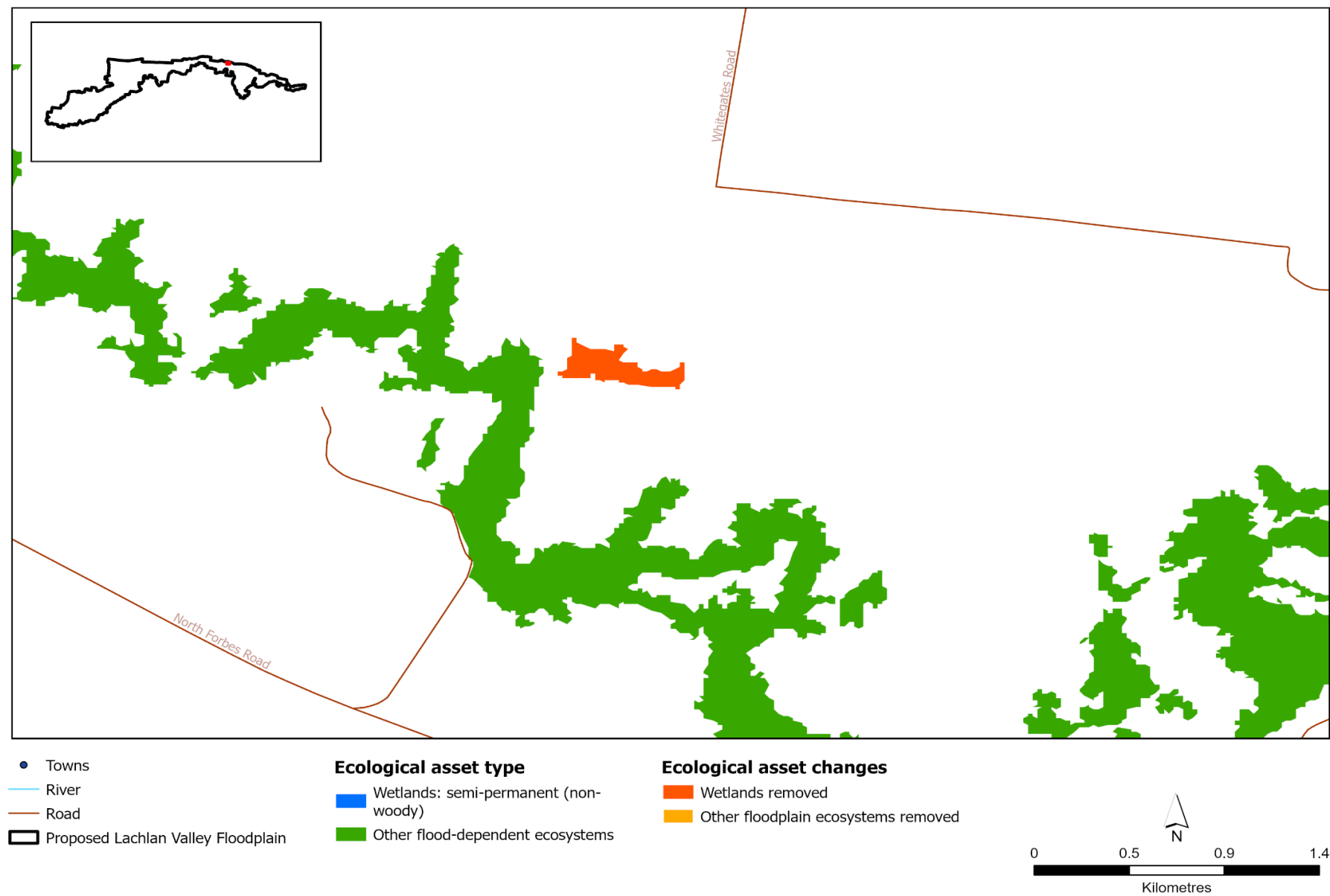


Figure 18: Refinements made to the identified ecological assets map south-east of Condobolin

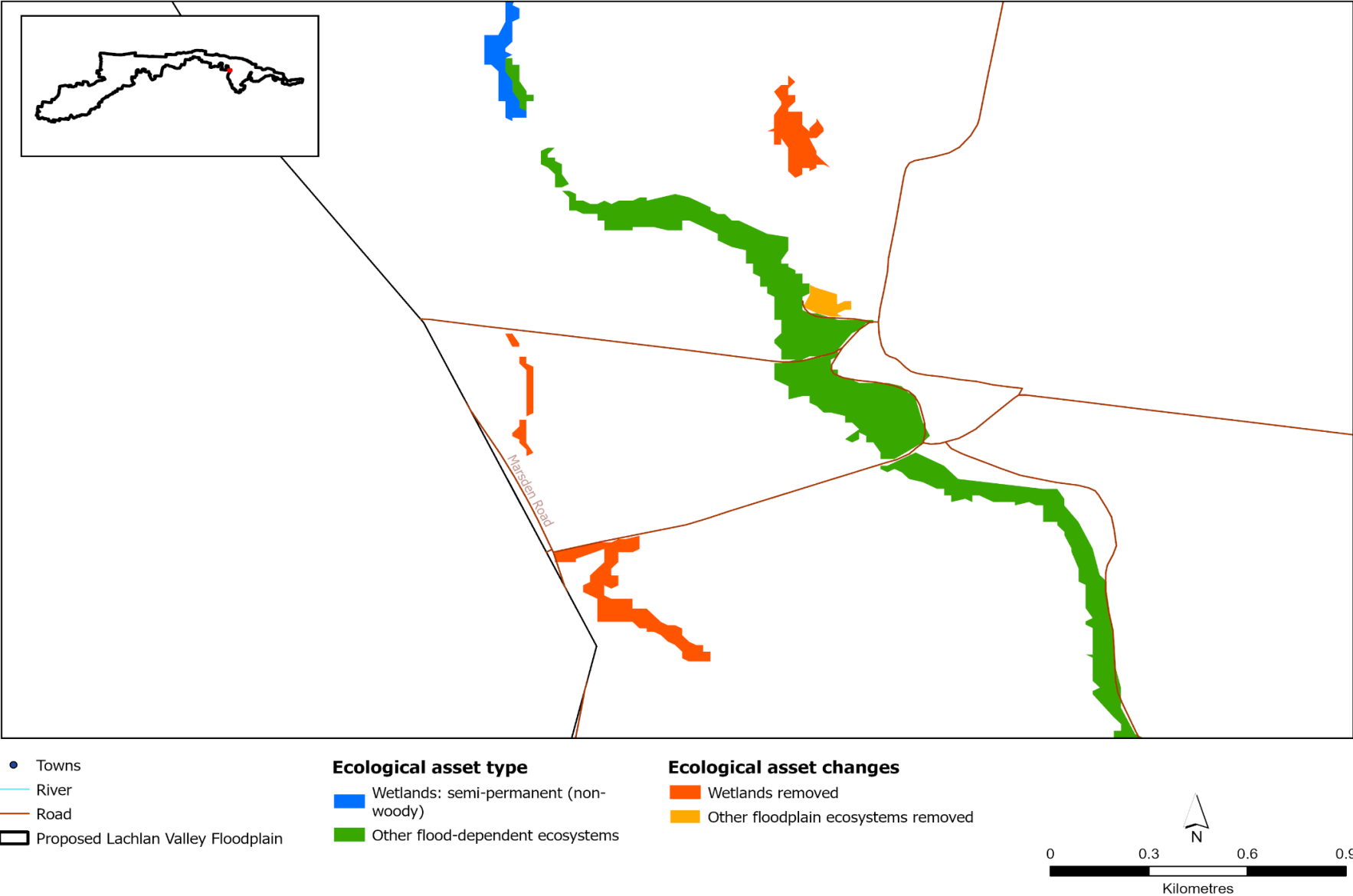


Figure 19: Refinements made to the identified ecological assets map near Forbes

