



Department of
Primary Industries
Office of Water

NSW OFFICE OF WATER

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2015





Welcome

The NSW Office of Water, as a division of the NSW Department of Primary Industries within the Trade and Investment cluster, is the lead NSW agency for surface and groundwater management.

This Strategic Plan links to the NSW Government's 'NSW 2021 Plan' and outlines the Office of Water's role in delivering the outcomes identified by the Department of Primary Industries and the Trade and Investment cluster.

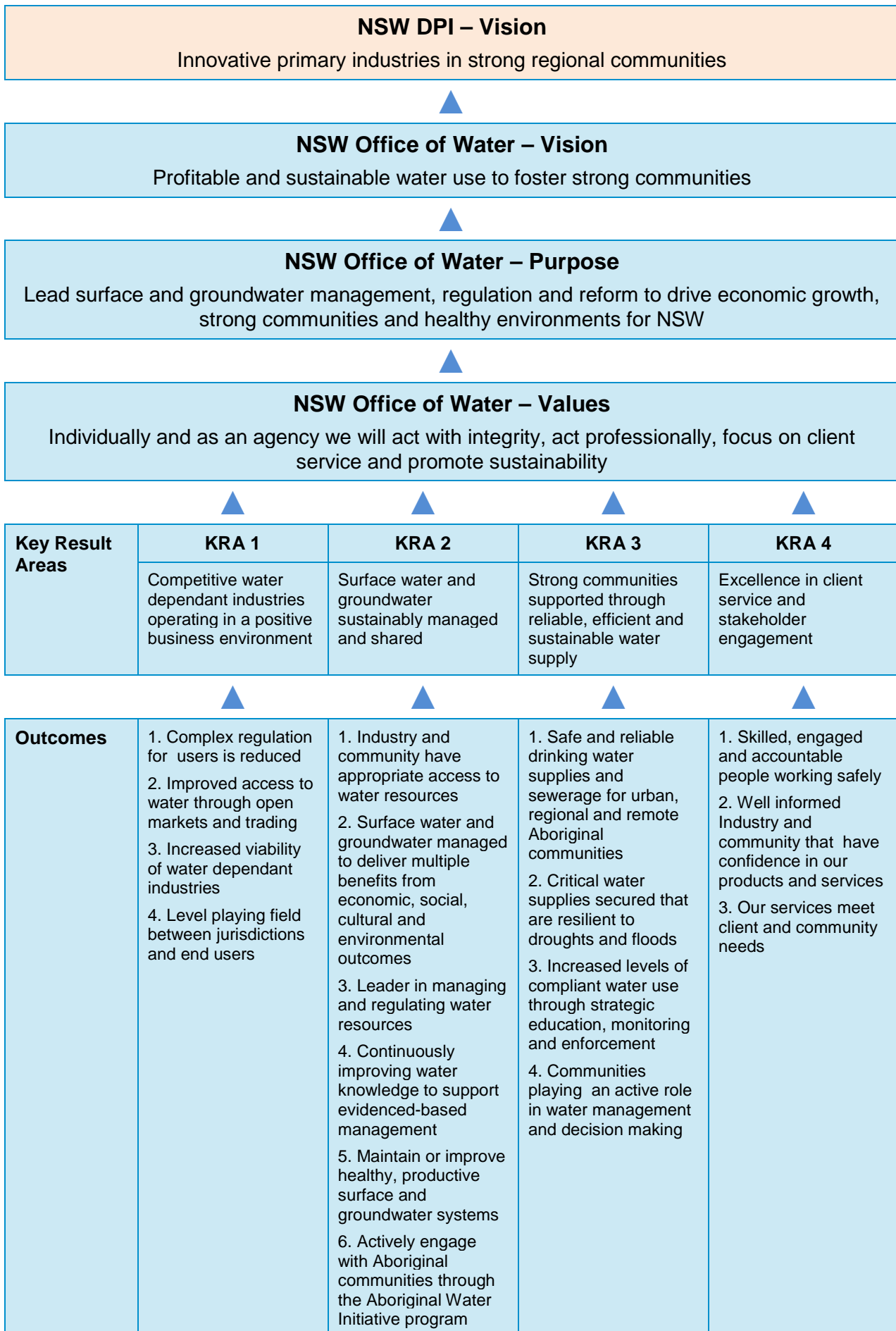
This plan sets out the Office of Water's priorities and actions to drive economic growth, create strong communities and provide social, cultural and environmental benefits across NSW through regulation and reform initiatives over the next three years.

The Office of Water's focus is on profitable and sustainable water access and use, improved client service and stakeholder engagement and a continuous improvement in knowledge for evidence-based water management decisions.

Our goal and challenge is to balance the water needs of farmers, towns, industries, the environment and Aboriginal communities in the face of increased competition for water, lower water availability as a result of climate variability, coupled with the management of prolonged droughts and significant flood events.

I look forward to working with staff and our stakeholder in delivering the goals outlined in this Strategic Plan.

David Harriss
Commissioner
NSW Office of Water



Key Result Area 1 – Competitive water dependant industries operating in a positive business environment

Aligned with NSW 2021:

- Goal 1: Improve the performance of the NSW economy
- Goal 3: Drive economic growth in regional NSW
- Goal 4: Increase the competitiveness of doing business in NSW
- Goal 22: Protect our natural environment

Aligned to NSW DPI Corporate Plan outcomes	Outcomes	Strategies
NSW DPI: 1.2	1. Complex regulation for users is reduced	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop clear, plain English policies and guidelines for water users. 2. Streamline legislation and regulation to decrease unnecessary regulatory costs for water users. 3. Develop responsive and adaptable regulatory framework.
NSW DPI: 1.3	2. Improved access to water through open markets and trading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly define water trading rules to enhance water users ability to trade and improve transaction times. 2. Define industry and community needs and impediments to current trading practices. 3. Develop appropriate communications material to improve customer understanding of water trading and how it works. 4. Facilitate efficient water trading opportunities through the timely release of available water determinations. 5. Ensure the protection of 'market sensitive' information to facilitate equitable trading. 6. Develop and implement metering protocols for information management.
NSW DPI: 1.1 and 1.3	3. Increased viability of water dependant industries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous review of regulatory environment and implement reforms to improve identified impediments. 2. Increased interaction with industry and stakeholder groups. 3. Develop and publish enhanced water modelling information to assist businesses with investment decisions. 4. Work with other water-related NSW government agencies to share information.
NSW DPI: 1.3	4. Level playing field between jurisdictions and end users	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead debate at interstate and national forums to ensure consistent implementation of national water reform agenda. 2. Develop and implement guidelines for consistent transactions.

Key measures of success (by 2015)

- Enhanced number of water modelling products publically available – including interpretations and implications of modelling outcomes.
- Reduce time taken to process permanent trades to one working week.
- Number of stakeholders meetings undertaken.
- Development and distribution of fact sheets on water trading rules and procedures.
- Publication of plain English water policy and guidelines documents.
- Guidelines for consistent transactions produced and implemented.

Key Result Area 2 – Surface water and groundwater sustainably managed and shared

Aligned with NSW 2021:

- Goal 3: Drive economic growth in regional NSW
- Goal 6: Strengthen the NSW skill base
- Goal 21: Secure potable water supplies
- Goal 22: Protect our natural environment
- Goal 28: Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters
- Goal 32: Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects

Aligned to NSW DPI Corporate Plan outcomes	Outcomes	Strategies
NSW DPI: 2.1	1. Industry and community have appropriate access to water resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparation and commencement of water sharing plans for all water sources in NSW. 2. Review existing water sharing plans within their 10 year life-span. 3. Ensure no negative impact on NSW industries and communities through the Basin Plan. 4. Licence all relevant extraction, including floodplain harvesting, under the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>. 5. Administer and regulate water use to ensure compliance with legislation. 6. Actively engage with communities and Aboriginal communities through the Aboriginal Water Initiative program. 7. Enhance community understanding of basic landholder rights. 8. Roll-out of healthy floodplains project.
NSW DPI: 2.1	2. Surface water and groundwater managed to deliver multiple benefits from economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake timely available water determinations in accordance with water sharing plans. 2. Manage extraction to agreed limits – MDB cap, water sharing plans and Basin Plan sustainable diversion limits. 3. Regulate environmental water use consistent with agreements. 4. Develop water sharing implementation tools, processes and policies. 5. Develop improved accounting processes. 6. Appropriately manage access to water during extreme events such as drought and floods. 7. Develop drought management plans. 8. Manage flood works to minimise risk to life and property. 9. Develop risk-based strategy to prioritise regulatory reforms. 10. Review cultural objectives for water sharing plans through the Aboriginal Water Initiative program.
NSW DPI: 1.1, 1.3 and 3.3	3. Leader in managing and regulating water resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate leadership in inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional discussions and negotiations. 2. Attract, develop and retain critical skills. 3. Develop and implement tailored marketing strategies to meet stakeholder needs. 4. Continue demonstrating performance against inter-government agreements. 5. Implement National Framework for Compliance and Enforcement System.

NSW DPI: 1.1, 1.3 and 3.3 (continued)		6. Manage river flows during flood events and recessions. 7. Enhanced interaction with NSW Office Of Environment and heritage floodplain programs. 8. Implement risk-based compliance and education programs to increase voluntary adoption of practices. 9. Appropriate algae monitoring programs and policies to enhance community awareness and safety.
NSW DPI: 1.1, 1.3,	4. Continuously improving water knowledge to support evidenced-based management	1. Develop and implement adaptive management programs utilising the outcomes of the water sharing plan evaluation program. 2. Enhance industry and academic partnerships. 3. Establish continuous improvement program for modelling platforms. 4. Develop and implement monitoring evaluation reporting and improvement program to enhance decision making. 5. Review and implement records management responsibilities. 6. Promote documentation of key knowledge products as building-blocks for staff development.
NSW DPI: 2.1 and 2.3	5. Maintain or improve healthy, productive surface and groundwater systems	1. Implement monitoring evaluation reporting and improvement program to report of resource condition. 2. Develop monitoring evaluation reporting and improvement program to report on social and economic status. 3. Maintain and/or enhance capabilities of hydrometric network for surface and groundwater. 4. Maintain and/or improve information management and delivery systems. 5. Deliver on water savings projects. 6. Mitigate impacts of environmental watering priorities on other NSW government agencies. 7. Develop and implement sustainable diversion limit adjustment process.

Key measures of success (by 2015)

- Greater than 90 per cent compliance with legislation.
- Adoption of National Framework for Compliance and Enforcement System.
- Skills audit completed.
- External Aboriginal networks understand what the objectives of the Aboriginal Water Initiative are.
- Timely available water determination and supplementary water announcements.
- All regulatory activity categorised according to risk.
- Increased percentage of data from major proponents incorporated in corporate databases – year-on-year.
- All decisions documented and recorder on registered files.
- Establishment of document register.
- Licensing of floodplain water users.
- Increase in the number of coal seam gas groundwater monitoring sites providing telemetered data.
- Increase in the percentage of real-time data published year-on-year and archived within two months of collection.
- Revision of regional algal contingency plans biannually and issuing of algal alerts.
- Water sharing plans protect water dependant cultural values and reflect cultural objectives.

Key Result Area 3 – Strong communities supported through reliable, efficient and sustainable water supply

Aligned to NSW Plan 2021:

- Goal 3: Drive economic growth in regional NSW
- Goal 21: Secure potable water supplies
- Goal 22: Protect our natural environment
- Goal 26: Fostering opportunities' and partnerships with Aboriginal people
- Goal 28: Ensure NSW is ready to deal with major emergencies and natural disasters
- Goal 32: Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects

Aligned to NSW DPI Corporate Plan outcomes	Outcomes	Strategies
NSW DPI: 2.1	1. Safe and reliable drinking water supplies and sewerage for urban, regional and remote Aboriginal communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program. 2. Administer and implement Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program. 3. Provide programs to meet performance standards for water reliability and quality in regional NSW. 4. Algal risks affecting potable water supplies effectively managed. 5. Deliver surface water quality monitoring program.
NSW DPI: 2.1 and 2.3	2. Critical water supplies secured that are resilient to droughts and floods	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement projects to improve reliable water supplies for critical needs. 2. Develop and implement adaptive drought management plans and strategies. 3. Develop programs for alternative water supply sources for critical needs. 4. Identify impacts of sustainable diversion limits on meeting critical supplies. 5. Delivery of water savings and efficiency programs such as Basin Pipe and Cap and Pipe the Bores.
NSW DPI: 2.1 and 2.4	3. Increased levels of compliant water use through strategic education, monitoring and enforcement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate and administer water use activities in NSW to ensure compliance with legislation. 2. Develop and deliver educational programs to promote the value and importance of voluntary compliance. 3. Implement enhanced metering capabilities for water users.
NSW DPI: 2.4	4. Communities playing an active role in water management and decision making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with all levels of government and local communities on water management issues and initiatives. 2. Undertake consultation with communities, including Aboriginal communities, to improve sustainable access to water. 3. Provide input to water related forums such as customer service committees and environmental water advisory groups. 4. Engage and inform communities on water management issues through communiqués, reports, fact sheets, social media and website. 5. Define Office of Water's role in environmental water management. 6. Deliver the Aboriginal Water Initiative program and meet the program performance indicators.

Key measures of success (by 2015)

- Additional Country Towns Water and Sewerage Program projects approved and funded.
- Increased number of remote Aboriginal communities upgraded under the Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program year-on-year.
- Implementation of awareness campaign promoting voluntary compliance.
- Number of forums and stakeholder meetings attended by Office of Water.
- Documentation of Office of Water's role in environmental water management.
- Increase in the number/\$ value/megalitres of water saving initiatives delivered on previous year.
- Management of water in recognition of the spiritual, social, customary and economic values of water to Aboriginal people through the Aboriginal Water Initiative program.
- Aboriginal community have increased capacity to engage in water management decisions.

Key Result Area 4 – Excellence in client service and stakeholder engagement

Aligned with NSW 2021

- Goal 6: Strengthen the NSW skill base
- Goal 31: Improve government transparency by increasing access to government information
- Goal 32: Involve the community in decision making on government policy, services and projects

Aligned to NSW DPI Corporate Plan outcomes	Outcomes	Strategies
NSW DPI: 4.1	1. Skilled, engaged and accountable people working safely	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train, develop and attract skills within Office of Water to drive excellence through mentoring, skills register and staff audits. 2. Implement the Trade and Investment wellbeing strategy across Office of Water. 3. Establish Office of Water work health and safety steering committee to address WH&S issues and adopt consistent protocols. 4. Establish clear employee responsibility through development and use of performance and development scheme. 5. Enhanced internal staff communications and knowledge sharing. 6. Implement Premier and Cabinet's Aboriginal Employment Strategy.
NSW DPI: 4.4	2. Well informed Industry and community that have confidence in our products and services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop information products that provide advice on water condition and availability. 2. Implement process to document and resolve regulatory gaps. 3. Develop and implement customer service standards and make these publically available. 4. Develop and implement a whole of Office of Water communications framework that guides Office of Water's engagement with clients. 5. Meet the community's expectations of the priority actions from the NSW Information and Communications Technology Strategy.
NSW DPI: 4.2	3. Our services meet client and community needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to engage with key stakeholders and act on feedback to improve our services and products. 2. Provide a variety of technologies to deliver services more efficiently. 3. Improve Office of Water internet accessibility and navigation for clients 4. Develop and implement multi-skilled team model to aid project delivery 5. Develop response protocols for the management of high priority/emergency issues in a coordinated and effective manner.

Key measures of success (by 2015)

- Development and implementation of 'Licence Tracking' app.
- Establishment of on-line application lodgement and payment system to reduce time taken to process licence applications.
- Development and availability of NSW 'Real-time water' app by December 2013.
- 'Tracer Trak' to be implemented across Office of Water as a safety measure for remote-working staff.
- Office of Water staff performance and development scheme to be 100 per cent completed by August 2013.
- Adoption of Trade and Investment project management framework by June 2014.

- WH&S Operational Plan developed and implemented in three Office of Water groups by August 2013.
- Ensure all field staff have appropriate WH&S training.
- Competency training delivered for all learning needs.
- Improved Office of Water intranet content relevancy and staff knowledge and access to information.
- Development of community engagement and communication strategies for significant water announcements.
- Production and dissemination of issue specific communiqués when required.
- Issue of flood bulletins when relevant.
- Issue of reports and updates on significant water-related activities and events.
- Aboriginal staff numbers within the Office of Water meet Premier and Cabinet's targets of at least 2.6 per cent Aboriginal employment in the public sector by 2015.

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