

Water in the Lower Hunter



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Planning for the future

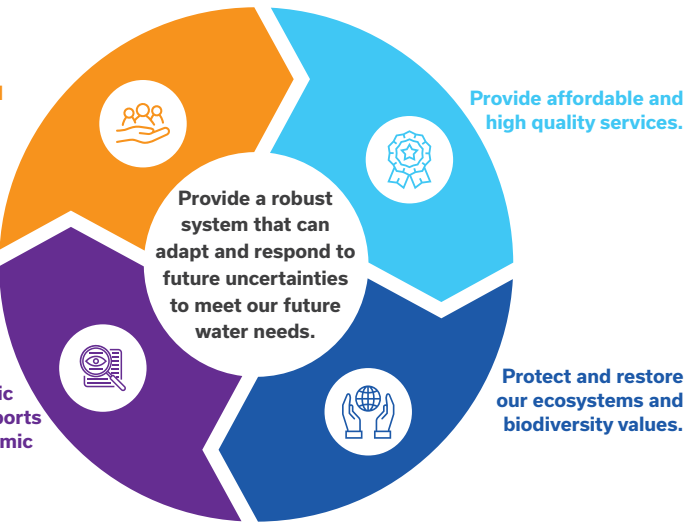
Water is an essential part of the Lower Hunter community, economy and environment.

Hunter Water is working with the NSW Government to plan for our future now, so we can ensure our region has a sustainable and resilient water system that can adapt and respond to change.

Our goal

Provide services that are supported by our community to promote everyone's health and wellbeing.

Provide transparent, collaborative and integrated strategic planning that supports the region's economic prosperity.



We supply water to more than half a million people in the Lower Hunter region of New South Wales, with more than 240,000 properties connected to our water supply network.

We can reliably provide around 76 billion litres of drinking water each year under average climate conditions. This is referred to as our yield.

A typical household uses around 200 litres of drinking water per person per day.

We have forecast that demand for water is expected to exceed our reliable yield by the year 2037.

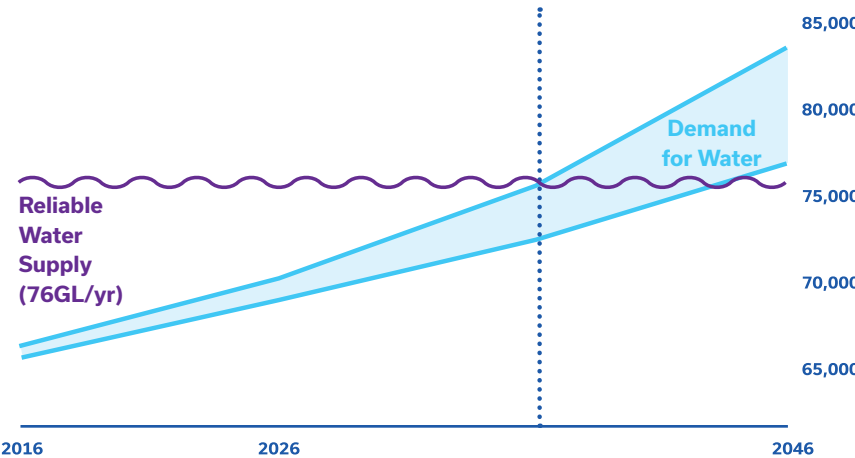
We're preparing for the future now, to ensure we can continue to meet the water needs of our community.

Future uncertainty presents challenges and also creates opportunities, such as technological advancements. We're committed to keeping our options open to allow us to benefit from new and innovative approaches as well as have a meaningful two-way conversation with our community.

We're already working hard to reduce water use through water conservation programs, to minimise leaks in our supply system, reduce water use by residential and non-residential customers and learn with our community to save water together.

And we're working with our research partners to understand longer term climate variability and help us prepare for events such as drought, and developing new and innovative ways to use water.

The water balance: supply versus demand



The Lower Hunter Water Plan

The Lower Hunter Water Plan (LHWP) is a whole-of-government approach to ensure we have a sustainable and resilient water supply for our region, now and for future generations.

The first LHWP was released in 2014 and includes actions to supply, save and substitute water that are already in place or underway; as well as additional measures to respond to droughts when they occur.

We're now reviewing the plan to ensure it reflects our changing community values and priorities, while being both robust and adaptable in the long term.

To develop the next plan, we need to consider new sources of water and find new ways to reduce the water we all use, so we can effectively balance water supply and demand in our region.

Working together

There are lots of people that need to be part of the water conversation - the community, business, industry and government - and us. After all, we want everyone to love water as much as we do.

That's why we've taken a collaborative approach to planning for our future. We are working with our government partners and key stakeholders to review the LHWP and we're providing opportunities for our community to participate in the decision-making process.

Understanding our community values and preferences is a key part of our long-term planning, so we're using forums, events and online engagement to find out what they value about water and what they think about the different supply and demand option types we're considering.

We'll use this feedback to inform our decision-making and plan for our water future.

Option types

We considered a long list of water supply and demand option types to supplement our existing water sources, reduce the amount of water we use and respond to drought.

We then shortlisted to narrow down the best option types for our region.

These are the option types we're looking at to decrease water demand and reduce our reliance on our drinking water sources:

- Conservation of water (reducing water losses in our system, water efficiency measures)
- Recycled water (for irrigation and industrial use)
- Stormwater harvesting.

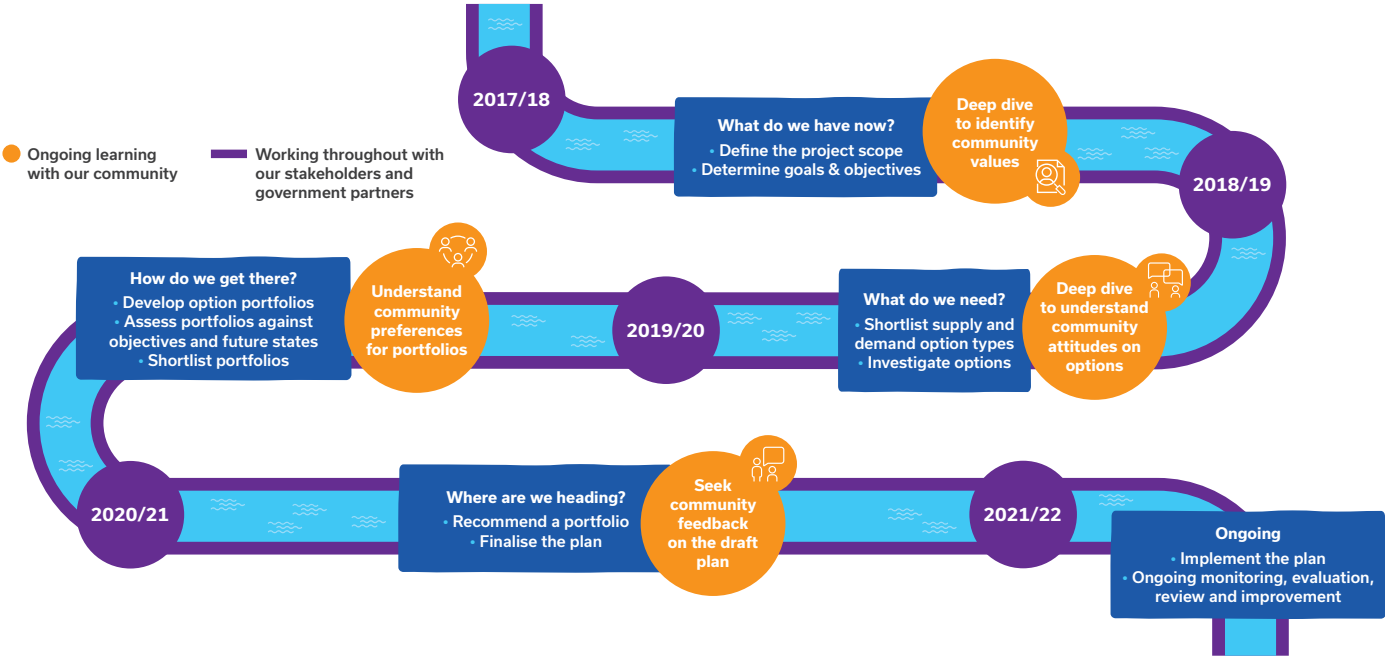
We are also exploring a range of water supply (source) option types to ensure we understand these options, so that we are ready should we need them in the future. These include:

- Dams
- Desalination
- Groundwater
- Water sharing (transferring water between regions).

We are assessing these option types across a range of key criteria based on current industry knowledge, so our stakeholders and community can compare them.

We are looking at cost to build and operate, environmental and social impact and the reliability of the option type.

How we're developing the Lower Hunter Water Plan





What's next?

We'll continue to speak with our community and stakeholders to make sure we understand their preferences for the water supply and demand option types we're considering as part of the Lower Hunter Water Plan.

We will also undertake complex investigations and analysis to ensure we understand the environmental and social aspects, technical feasibility and costs of the option types. This will enable us to compare the options and develop a number of 'portfolios' or groups of options to assess against future uncertainties.

We'll then come back to our stakeholders and community to talk about these portfolios and ask for their feedback before we finalise them.

The portfolios will become the main component of the revised Lower Hunter Water Plan, which we're aiming to release in 2021.

Want to know more?

Visit **hunterwater.com.au** to find out more about the Lower Hunter Water Plan or join the water conversation at **yourvoice.hunterwater.com.au**.