

What's happening at Toorale?

Update on Toorale Water Infrastructure Project – March 2021



What's planned for this year

The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) is preparing for the construction of new and upgraded water infrastructure at Homestead and Boera dams.

Following extensive studies and consultation, both Boera and Homestead dams will be retained and modified to provide improved flow management in the Warrego and Darling rivers, while protecting important cultural and environmental values on the Toorale National Park and State Conservation Area (Toorale).

At Boera Dam, we will replace the existing pipes with three gated culverts that will increase the amount of water that can be discharged through the dam. This will be changed from 600 megalitres per day to up to 1650 megalitres per day. A vertical slot fishway will be incorporated.

At Homestead Dam, we will construct a new spillway in the dam wall and incorporate an innovative fishway design developed for this site. The fishway design was developed in consultation with representatives of the Kurnu-Barkandji community and DPI Fisheries.



The new structures at Boera and Homestead dams will enable more water to flow to the Darling River when downstream needs are a priority and provide for ongoing watering of important habitats on Toorale when needed. Fishways will increase connectivity and support healthier fish populations in the Warrego and Darling rivers.

What's new?

The first loads of rock that will be used in the modification of the two dams were delivered to the site earlier this month. Much of the rock is being supplied by Byrock Quarry.

After a competitive tender process, we have awarded a contract for the supply of pre-cast units that will be used in the fishways at both dams. These components will be manufactured off-site and delivered over the coming months.

We are currently evaluating tenders for construction works. We plan to start construction in mid-2021. Public Works Advisory is managing the construction stages.

These works follow the removal of the largest storage, Peebles Dam, in October 2019.

Background

Toorale is located at the junction of the Warrego and Darling rivers about 65 km south-west of Bourke in north-western NSW.

Toorale was added to the NSW reserve system to protect its outstanding environmental and cultural values. The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder holds the Toorale water access licences for both the Warrego and Darling rivers. These licences are used to deliver environmental benefits on Toorale and in the Darling River.

Water from the Warrego River that NSW manages under water sharing plans also contributes to environmental outcomes on Toorale and in the Darling River.

Toorale has extensive infrastructure dating back to the nineteenth century that was initially built to regulate water across the property for agricultural purposes. This includes water storage dams along the Warrego River that constrain flow management options.

The Toorale Water Infrastructure Project aims to ensure that the important values of Toorale are maintained or enhanced, while achieving greater flexibility to pass more water to the Darling River. We have consulted with stakeholders over the duration of the project to ensure that social, environmental and cultural impacts have been appropriately assessed and managed.

This project is funded by the Australian Government in collaboration with the NSW Government.

Stay up to date

The Department will continue to keep stakeholders and communities informed of progress throughout the year. Find more information, including previous studies done for the project, on the Department's [Environment, Energy and Science Toorale Water Infrastructure Project webpage](#), or for specific enquiries, email the Project Team at toorale.project@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Cover photo: Western Floodplain Toorale National Park, April 2020, M. Hams/DPIE. Above left to right: rocks arriving at Homestead Dam, M McCorkle; existing gates and pipes at Boera Dam, S.Stroud; interested tenderers at site inspection, 28 January, S.Stroud.

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EES 2021/0088 March 2021