

Biodiversity Offset Plan

Chaffey Dam to Dungowan pipeline



Frequently asked questions – March 2023

What is the Biodiversity Offset Plan for the Chaffey Dam to Dungowan Pipeline Drought Response?

The Biodiversity Offset Plan is a range of work aimed at protecting and improving habitats of threatened fish, in particular Murray Cod and Silver Perch and other species, following the Commonwealth approval of the short-term operation of the Chaffey Dam to Dungowan pipeline project in 2020.

What are the offsets and how were they identified?

Work will include the installation of about 50 snags in the Peel River. The hardwood trees of varying lengths will be installed along a 30-kilometre stretch of river downstream of Chaffey Dam towards Tamworth. Each location has been selected to provide maximum benefit to river species while protecting river banks and reduce potential erosion and avoid impact to Aboriginal heritage. The snags have been sourced from trees removed from the New England Solar project at Uralla. For more information on the snags, visit [What Are Snags – November 2022 \(PDF\)](#)

Self-cleaning pump screens will also be installed as part of the project. The screens will protect native fish and other aquatic species from the pumps and protect the pumps from debris damage. Pump owners with eligible pumps are being contacted via EOI and suitability of pumps is currently being considered.

When will work on the biodiversity offsets start?

The work will start in mid-2023 and be complete by late 2023, weather permitting.

Who will be carrying out the work?

A suitable contractor with experience in snag installation and background in erosion control is currently being sourced.

What is the Chaffey Dam to Dungowan Pipeline Drought Response?

In June 2019 the NSW Government announced emergency work to extend water supply to Tamworth, Moonbi, and Kootingal towns. This was required due to water shortages caused by drought. Work included the construction of a temporary weir on Peel River and the construction of a 19-kilometre underground pipeline from Chaffey Dam to Dungowan, to reduce evaporation and ground infiltration of water when moving via the Peel River to Tamworth. Work was completed in 2020.

The pipeline was only temporarily operated from June 2020 for about 6 weeks at the end of the severe 2017-2020 drought. The operation of the pipeline was permitted by both State and Commonwealth approvals during the prevailing drought at the time. Approvals to temporarily operate the pipeline have since expired however a Biodiversity Offset Plan was developed as part of this work to offset impacts as a result of temporarily operating the pipeline and implementation of the offsets is ongoing.

WaterNSW is also separately seeking permanent long-term approval to operate the pipeline during drought periods

and this will involve preparing an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). Click here for more information on the EIS <https://www.waternsw.com.au/projects/chaffey-dam-pipeline-eis>

What are the benefits of the Biodiversity Offset Plan?

The delivery of the Biodiversity Offset Plan, including the installation of snags in the Peel River and self-cleaning pump screens, will:

- improve the aquatic habitat for threatened fish and other species
- Improve biodiversity
- protect native fish and other aquatic species from pump infrastructure.

How will the community and stakeholders be kept informed?

The project team will continue to keep the local community informed of all upcoming work and continues to work closely with nearby landowners, Aboriginal community and other stakeholder groups.

For more information on the project, please contact the WaterNSW Communication team via the contact details on this document.

Is there a timeline for the work?

	Status	Activity
2019	Complete	Complete Stage 1 Peel River Critical Drought Response (temporary Peel River weir)
2020	Complete	Complete Stage 2 Peel River Critical Drought Response (pipeline from Chaffey Dam to Dungowan)
Mid-2023	In development	Start biodiversity offset work including installation of snags and self-cleaning pump screens
Late-2023	In development	Complete biodiversity offset work

How can I contact the project team?

For general enquiries on WaterNSW's work, email customer.helpdesk@waternsw.com.au or call the WaterNSW Helpdesk on call 1300 662 077.