

Yass Valley Water Source Strategy

Overview

Yass Valley is growing and seeing new development, particularly in the Murrumbateman and Yass areas.

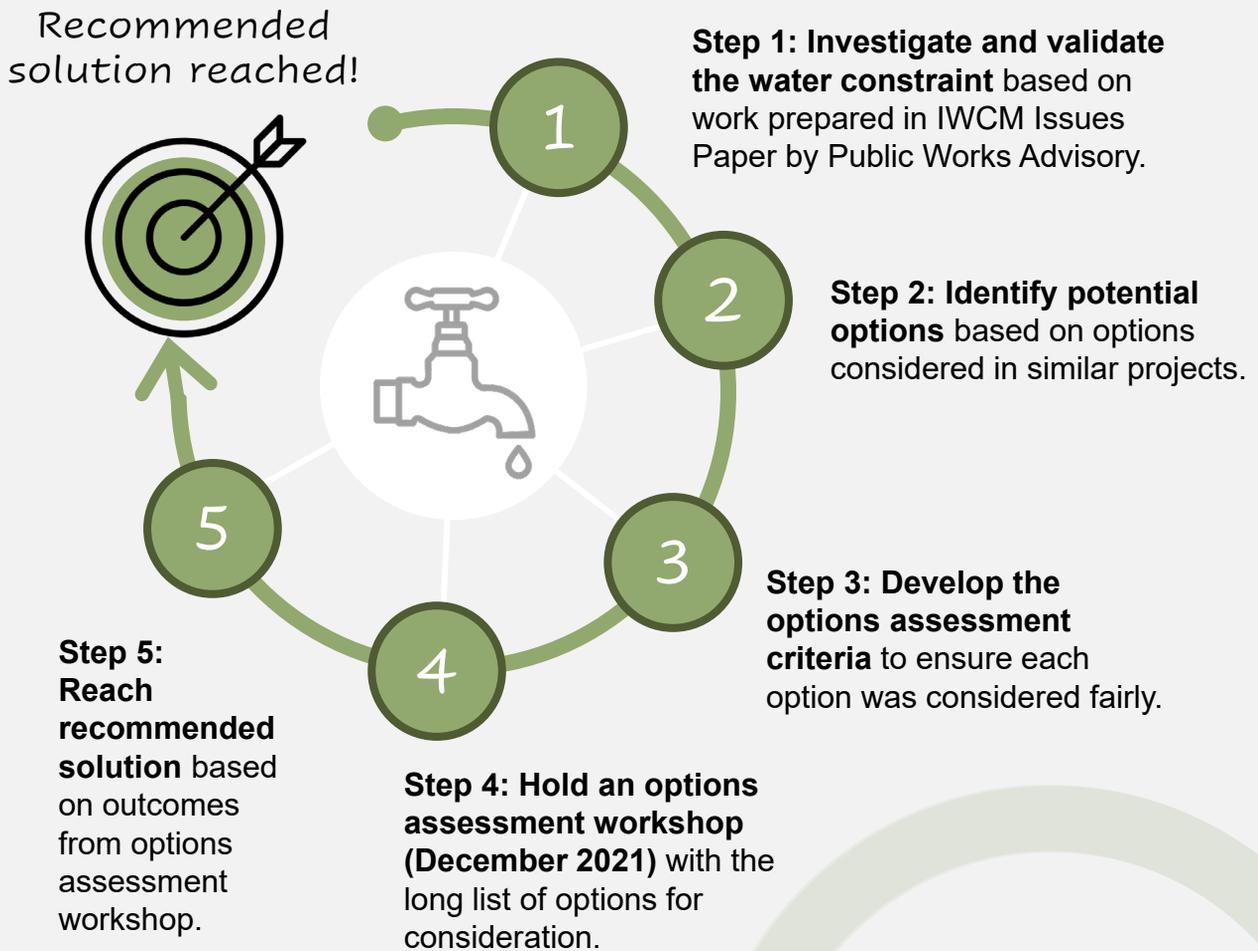
Public Works Advisory (PWA) are currently preparing the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) strategy for Yass Valley Council (YVC). This work has identified that water supply is a significant constraint to future development. It is based on forecast population growth in the Yass Valley Council area as well as added pressures from other neighbouring developments in the ACT, such as Parkwood.

Although the integrated water cycle management plan is underway there is a longer timeframe on this. Therefore, Council has decided to push forward and has begun exploring water supply options to support this growth and development into the future.

Previous studies and investigations, such as the 'Sub-Regional Water Strategy for Yass Valley and Queanbeyan-Palerang' (2018), were commissioned over recent years to consider regional water management issues. Building on this and the work that Public Works Advisory has undertaken, GHD was engaged in 2021 to identify a preferred water source option for Yass Valley, particularly in Murrumbateman and Yass areas.

How did we get here?

Before we could reach a solution, there were a number of steps we went through.



What options were considered?

Following the early investigations, illustrated in steps 1 to 3, a facilitated options assessment workshop was held in December 2021, where options were considered.

The workshop brought together key stakeholders from Yass Valley Council, NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and Public Works Advisory (PWA), to identify a preferred option for the future water supply of Yass Valley.

The following water solutions were assessed:

- Off river storage
- Supply from Lake Burrinjuck
- Supply from ACT (Icon Water)
- Groundwater
- Recycled non-potable
- Purified recycled water
- Rainwater tanks
- Stormwater Harvesting
- Managed Aquifer recharge

How were they assessed?

There were 11 different assessment criteria that each option was scored against.

WATER SOURCE OPTIONS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:



Environmental / Biodiversity / Impact



Energy use / greenhouse gas emission



Flexibility / adaptiveness



Circular economy principles



Ability to meet community expectations



Traditional owners



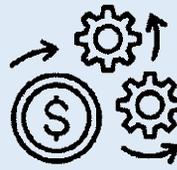
System resilience contribution



Minimisation complexity (construction and operations maintenance)



Minimisation of regulatory challenges



Indicative cost - CAPEX



Indicative cost - OPEX

Proposed solution

At the options assessment workshop, options were scored 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Scores were then tallied and agreed weightings applied.

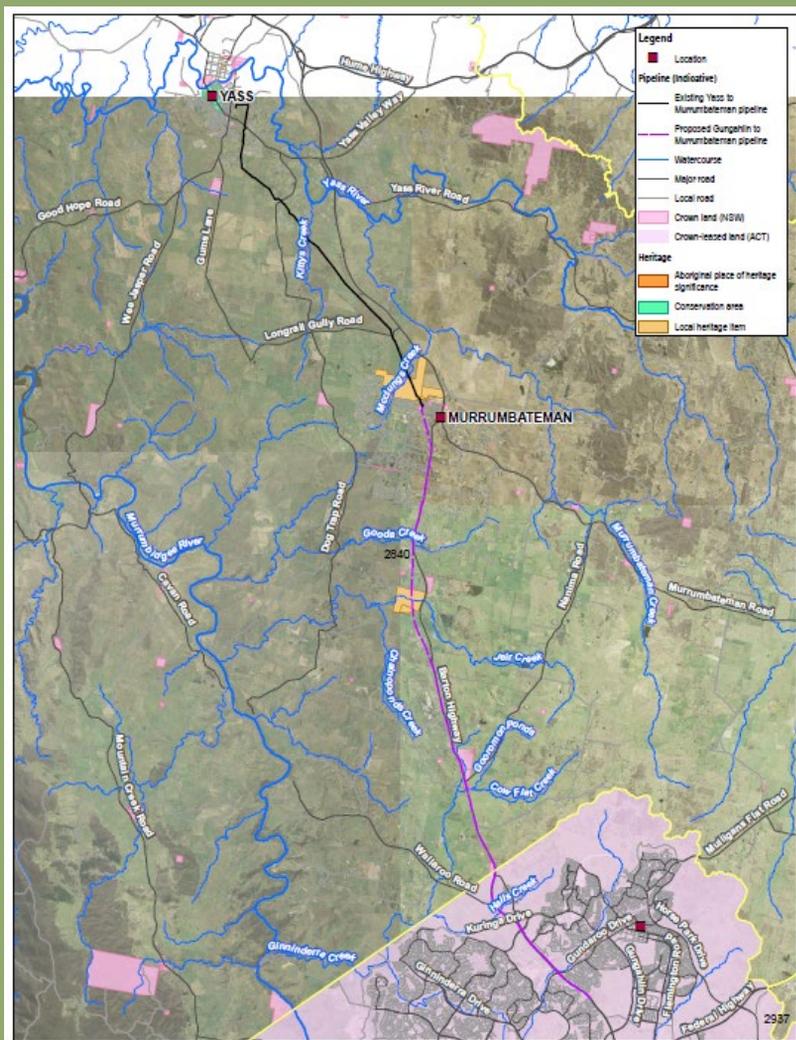
The highest scoring option to meet the preferred strategy was identified as supply from the ACT. Overall, it was ranked the most suitable option across all criteria.

The ACT supply option would be able to service the projected growth in the Yass Valley, and scored highest in terms of its ability to meet community expectations, having the least complex operation, and maintenance requirements. It also scored well in terms of its environmental impact and its alignment to circular economies.

How would it work?

The pipeline is proposed to connect to the existing Icon Water supply system east of Canberra in the vicinity of Hall/Nicholls. It would then follow the Electrical Transmission easement and Barton Highway through to the existing pipeline between Murrumbateman and Yass.

The indicative pipeline alignment has considered nearby Aboriginal and environmental constraints such as heritage areas and creek crossings both during construction and operations. Threatened flora and fauna will need to be examined at a finer scale as the project progresses.



Next steps

A number of key steps are necessary to help progress this strategy and reach formal agreement to move forward with the ACT supply option.

- Seeking confirmation that both NSW and ACT governments are in agreement that this is the best solution
- Seeking confirmation that sufficient water is available in the ACT system to support the additional supply to Yass Valley Council
- Investigating further to ensure the mechanisms required for the proposed water access are understood
- Developing policy to support the proposed water supply strategy
- Consulting the community and key stakeholders on the strategy.

For more information about the Yass Valley Water Source Strategy please contact us via phone: 02 6226 1477 or email: Council@yass.nsw.gov.au