

Review of the non-urban metering framework

The NSW Government is reviewing the non-urban water metering rules to make it quicker and easier for water users to comply.

It's been nearly five years since the non-urban water metering framework was introduced and we're taking stock to see what is and isn't working with the rollout.

We want to hear from the public about the most significant barriers to implementing the rules and the potential options to address them to make it quicker and easier for water users to comply.

We have developed a consultation paper which outlines the implementation challenges and poses some options to address these obstacles. We want to hear what you think!

The non-urban water metering framework

In 2018, the NSW Government introduced the non-urban water metering framework to be rolled out in stages over several years. The purpose of the framework is to accurately measure and meter non-urban water take in NSW to enable effective water resource management.

Consistent and accurate measurement of water take plays a key role in maintaining a healthy environment, economy and communities.

Progress in implementing the non-urban metering reforms

While there is overwhelming support for non-urban metering, compliance rates are not where they should be. While the majority of larger water users have accurate, tamper-proof meters in place, thousands of smaller water users have not.

There are valid reasons why some water users have been slow to comply. These include difficulties accessing the right people to install new meters, confusion about the rules, disruptions to supply chains, the cost of equipment and severe flooding.

The NSW Government is committed to addressing the low compliance rates and looking at ways to make it quicker and easier for water users to comply.

Addressing the barriers to implementation

The review is focused on understanding the key issues impacting the implementation of the non-urban metering rules and possible options to address these issues.

Key barriers to implementation

- **There are not enough active duly qualified persons to meet demand:** Water users are experiencing significant challenges in contracting a duly qualified person to install and validate meters and local intelligence devices by the relevant compliance deadline.
- **Metering requirements for small water users are inconsistent and create confusion:** some small water users are unable to access the work-size metering exemption because it does not apply across all water sources. This may be imposing disproportionate costs on some small or infrequent water users.
- **Many works that do not take water are shown to require metering:** government data systems cannot identify some infrastructure on a water supply work approval that does not require metering. This may include unconstructed works, derelict works and internal reticulation works that do not take water from the water source.
- **Meters are generally installed correctly but data loggers and telemetry are more challenging:** More challenges are being encountered with the installation of data loggers and telemetry, due to system limitations, challenges with implementing emerging technologies and equipment failure in the field.
- **Limited reporting of water take information is compromising water management:** many water users are not reporting meter readings preventing effective water resource management.
- **It is not practical to measure overland flow take using non-urban metering equipment:** unregulated river licence holders have expressed concerns that measuring their overland flow take is not practical and is cost prohibitive using the standards specified.

Responses being considered to address these obstacles seek to:

- Ensure that metering requirements only apply to works taking water.
- Review metering requirements to target risk more effectively.
- Revisit installer requirements to accelerate progress.
- Make data systems and equipment standards better fit for purpose.
- Improve water use reporting.
- Ensure a measurement pathway for taking overland flow in unregulated water sources.
- Strengthen compliance and enforcement powers.

Have your say on the review of the non-urban metering framework

The issues and possible responses outlined in the consultation paper are the starting point for a discussion with water users and the broader community. Your feedback will inform us where to focus more detailed analysis to improve the rules and how they are implemented.

You can read the [consultation paper](#), register for a webinar, upload submissions and complete a [survey](#) on our [website](#). Submissions close at 11:59 pm, Sunday 26 November 2023.