

Water

Department of Planning and Environment



July 2023 | ISSUE #47

Review to support non-urban metering compliance



The NSW Government will thoroughly review non-urban metering rules to make it easier for water users across the state to become compliant and ensure water use is being measured and managed fairly and sustainably.

The review, to be complete by late 2023, aims to accelerate progress on compliance and will give water users a chance to have their say on proposed changes.

Nearly 5 years have passed since these rules were put in place, and while many large commercial water users have jumped on board, thousands of smaller operators have not.

There are valid reasons for this, including difficulties in accessing the right people to install new meters, supply chain disruptions, the cost of equipment and of course, the recent flooding. These are barriers we can look at addressing.

While the review is underway, there will be no change to the regulations and compliance expectations already in place. The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) will continue to take a fair and measured approach to enforcing the rules.

[Read more...](#)

New water sharing plans launched



Photo credit – Brendan Cox

On 1 July, 6 water sharing plans (WSPs) were replaced across the state. New WSPs are now in effect for the Bega River, Towamba River, Richmond River, Tweed River and for the Greater Metropolitan Region for both groundwater sources and unregulated river sources.

The plans set out a clear pathway for fair and equitable water use for towns, irrigators, businesses and the environment.

Water sharing plans have a 10 year lifespan and the department is legally obliged to extend or replace the plan at the end of this period. We have streamlined the plan framework, removed red tape, added new water sources, maps and clearer language to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The plans are audited every 5 years to ensure they are working appropriately, and effectively achieving their objectives. Upon review, they are either extended, if no changes are required, or replaced.

For further information, please [check out our website](#).

North western water sharing plan now on public exhibition



The department is currently consulting the community for feedback on the proposed replacement of the North Western Unregulated and Fractured Rock Water Sources Water Sharing Plan. The plan will develop clear rules for the equitable and sustainable sharing of water among users and the environment for the next decade.

We are inviting members of the public to have their say on the replacement plan. There will be a live webinar on the replacement on 18 July.

Feedback and issues raised during the public exhibition will be considered when finalising the plans. You have until 10 August to submit feedback on the draft plan.

Please [check out our website to register for the webinar and for further information](#).

Regional water strategies



The final regional water strategies for both the [Namoi](#) and the [Far North Coast](#) have been recently published. The strategies have been developed in consultation with local communities, Aboriginal groups, water service providers, councils and industry groups. The strategies bring together the best and latest climate evidence to improve the security and certainty of our water resources for the next 20-40 years.

Safe and Secure Water supply for Nelligen



The Nelligen community will soon benefit from reticulated drinking water and sewerage services, thanks to \$3.5 million co-funding from the NSW Government's Safe and Secure Water Program.

Nelligen's fast growing community currently relies on rainwater and septic tanks. The new infrastructure will provide quality water transferred directly to each property from Eurobodalla's water supply at Batemans Bay. The new sewerage scheme will improve environmental impacts by collecting sewage from individual properties and pumping it to the Batemans Bay sewage treatment plant.

The project includes two 880KL service reservoirs and over 7 km of water mains for the water supply. The sewerage component will have over 8 km of rising main, a reticulation system and a transfer system.

The last stage of the project will install water and sewer reticulation throughout Nelligen village and should be completed in late 2024.

Inaugural Aboriginal women in water conference



We held an inaugural Aboriginal women's water conference from 10-11 May 2023 to highlight the deep connection between Aboriginal women and waterways.

The conference was the first of its kind, bringing together over 115 Aboriginal women from across the state to share their perspectives on water management in NSW. It was a platform to address the unique perspectives of Aboriginal women in water management.

It brought further awareness and recognition to Aboriginal people's way of life, rights, values, access and ownership of water for cultural and economic purposes. It highlighted the need for Aboriginal women to have a voice in decision making to ensure cultural and heritage issues are addressed and to improve water management practices for the benefit of all.

Major project customers to manage post-approval requirements more easily via the planning portal



In a much-needed improvement for Major Project customers, all communication with the department's Water Group about post-approval requirements can now be done via the [NSW Planning Portal](#).

This new feature is the first to be switched on for customers as part of the NSW Government's [Water Licensing Improvement Program](#).

Customers will benefit from quicker, clearer and easier communication with the Water Group via the Planning Portal, which ensures greater transparency, more timely status updates, and a central record of all communications.

This centralised approach will help ensure water resources are effectively managed when Major Projects are delivered. This can include management plans for groundwater and surface water monitoring and extraction, water licensing and approvals for certain project activities.

An updated 'how to' guide for customers on the new functions for post-approval requirements will soon be available online at [Major Projects Help](#).

Improving our website for water users' licence approvals

The water licensing and trade website has been updated to make it easier for water users to find the information they need and to apply for licences and approvals.

The Department of Planning and Environment assesses licence and approval applications for the state's largest water users and applications for controlled activity approvals. We also manage all integrated development referrals for works on waterfront land.

WaterNSW manages water licences and approvals for all other water users in NSW, while NRAR continues to oversee all water users' compliance with NSW water rules.

Use the [Water Assist tool](#) to find more information about how to apply for a water approval or licence.

Visit the new licensing and approvals web pages on the [department's website](#).

Latest round of geotechnical and geophysical studies for the Wilcannia Weir Replacement Project complete



Work is progressing on the Wilcannia Weir Replacement Project, with Water Infrastructure NSW recently completing a series of geotechnical and geophysical assessments at the new weir site.

The assessments included drilling boreholes on the northern and southern banks of the Darling-Baaka River to analyse ground conditions and on-water assessments to determine the riverbed and sedimentary profile in and around the new weir location. The on-water assessments were conducted by boat using non-intrusive acoustic and seismic technology. A local Wilcannia community member also attended the works to provide cultural monitoring.

The soil samples and data collected will now be assessed to help inform the detailed design of the project. Further site investigations were completed to support access during construction and to analyse materials that could potentially be used to help build the weir.

The project aims to improve water security for Wilcannia and its surrounds, enhance cultural connection to the river, and improve native fish migration along the river system through a new weir and fishway.

The project is jointly funded by the NSW and Australian Governments.

For more information, [visit the project webpage](#).

Do you comply? Use the Metering Guidance tool to find out

As the non-urban metering rules continue to roll out across NSW, water users are encouraged to use the interactive [Metering Guidance Tool](#) to find out if they need to comply.

Water users in the northern and southern inland regions must have compliant equipment installed now, and water users in the coastal regions must be compliant by 1 December 2024. However, any water user installing a new or replacement meter will need to comply regardless of their compliance deadline.

We encourage water users to follow the steps below to find out if the metering rules apply to them, and what to do to comply:

1. Check your licence and approval details on the [NSW Water Register](#). WaterNSW can assist you to amend your approval.
2. Use our interactive [online metering guidance tool](#) to see if and how the rules apply to you.

3. Contact a duly qualified person (DQP), such as a certified meter installer, to discuss your situation. You can [find a list of DQPs on Irrigation Australia's website](#), or use the new Metering and Measurement Virtual Marketplace to find DQPs in your area. For more information, [visit our website](#).

Metering and Measurement Virtual Marketplace connects water users and meter installers



Water users are encouraged to sign up to the [Metering and Measurement Virtual Marketplace](#) to help them find and connect with installers and suppliers of non-urban metering and floodplain harvesting measurement equipment.

The web-based tool can be used to search for specific services and/or suppliers of metering equipment in specific areas or anywhere in NSW.

Water users can also choose to share their profile information so that equipment suppliers and installers can search for water users who may be seeking their services.

This tool is another step the NSW Government is taking to better support water users to become compliant with the non-urban metering and floodplain harvesting measurement rules. The continued rollout of these reforms across NSW provides a greater ability to ensure water take remains within licensed limits.

Access the [Virtual Marketplace here](#).

\$975 NSW Government rebate for switching to telemetry



Farmers and irrigators are urged to take advantage of a \$975 NSW Government rebate that offsets the cost of switching to telemetry based-non-urban metering.

Water users captured under the non-urban metering rules must install accurate, tamper-proof meters and telemetry equipment to improve the way we measure and manage water being taken from rivers and aquifers.

The rebate will cover the telemetry service charge for four years and can be backdated for those who have already connected to the NSW Government's telemetry system. The incentive will kick in automatically once the device is installed, so there are no extra steps needed to sign up for the rebate.

Water users with pumps below 200 mm in size aren't required to connect to telemetry; however, choosing to telemeter your works may make your recording and reporting requirements easier. If you connect to telemetry voluntarily, you are eligible for the rebate.

For more information, head to the [department's metering website](#).

Floodplain management listening tour wraps up



We'd like to thank everyone who attended community consultation sessions as part of our updates to floodplain management plans in the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Billabong Creek and Lachlan valleys.

Floodplain management plans are a key tool for improving the environmental health and connectivity of floodplains, as well as increasing awareness of risk to life and property from the effects of flooding.

We collected photos, footage and historical data from both last year's record flooding and previous years, which will underpin new state of the art hydraulic modelling.

This important work will ensure the plans use the latest data and builds on our successful floodplain management reforms in the Northern Basin. It also helps improve the way we consider the impacts of floodplain structures on the environment, cultural values and other landholders.

This is a complex topic which is why we are streamlining from 10 plans to 4 and using clearer language, state-of-the-art modelling, improved imagery, and properly mapped out ecological assets and areas of Aboriginal cultural significance.

New residents in Namoi River



Thousands of native golden perch fingerlings have been released into the Namoi River thanks to an enforceable undertaking (EU) from the Natural Resources Access Regulatory (NRAR).

NRAR accepted the legally binding agreement after an irrigator from the region significantly over-extracted groundwater from the at-risk Lower Namoi Groundwater Source. As part of the agreement, the irrigator contributed \$15,000 towards fish stocking in the Namoi River.

The fingerlings were released at multiple sites along the river and created many potential benefits for the local environment, such as helping boost native fish populations and restoring river ecology.

When agreeing to an EU, NRAR considers whether it appropriately addresses the breach and if it will deliver positive environmental outcomes and benefits to the local community.

[Watch the full video to see the fish in action.](#)

Congratulations to Executive Director Amanda Chadwick



We would like to congratulate our own Amanda Chadwick, whose service to NSW was recently honoured with the Public Service Medal.

Amanda was recognised for her service to the water and local government sectors, including her previous role as Administrator of Parramatta Council, where she established governance for the newly merged council.

Within water, Amanda was recognised for her work on Sydney Water's large scale residential water efficiency program, the Greater Sydney drought response during the millennium drought, and the Town Water Risk Reduction Program. In this last program, she established a new partnership with the 89 local government owned water utilities in NSW in order to reduce key water risks and co-design a more modern regulatory framework.

Amanda is respected for her innovation, accountability, customer focus and capacity for genuine collaboration across institutional boundaries.



30 June – 10 August 2023

Public exhibition of the draft replacement Water Sharing Plan for the North Western Unregulated and Fractured Rock Water Sources

The water sharing plan establishes rules for water management, including the limit of the total volume of water that can be extracted from the water sources in the North Western Unregulated and Fractured Rock Water Sources areas.

The public exhibition period provides opportunities for water users, stakeholders and other interested parties to learn more about proposed changes in the draft plan and to make submissions and comment on the draft. Feedback and issues raised during the public exhibition phase will be considered when finalising the plan.

- To view the draft water sharing plan and supporting documentation, [please visit our project page](#)
- To register for the online public information webinar Tuesday, 18 July 6:00 pm [please register here](#)
- To book a phone interview with a water planner on selected dates, [please book here](#)

19 July 2023

Water engagement roundup webinar

The Water engagement roundup is a monthly update on current and upcoming consultations on important water policy and programs for NSW.

This month we will confirm starting water allocations for 2023/24 and include a seasonal outlook for the months ahead.

Speakers for this month's event are:

- Senior Hydrologist, Water Allocations, Department of Planning and Environment, Water
- Peter Hansen, Water Engagement Team, Department of Planning and Environment, Water - facilitator for this webinar.

To find out more about upcoming Water engagement roundup webinars and previous roundup webinars, [visit this webpage](#).

Latest water news from the department

- [Six inland water sharing plans extended](#)
- [Rising River Alert – Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam](#)
- [\\$61.7 Million Parkes-Peak Hill water project underway](#)
- [No-meter, no-pump. NSW Government announces a thorough review to crack down on non-urban metering compliance](#)
- [Temporary restriction on interstate water trade](#)

[Read more news](#)

Contact us

Water News is our monthly update on water planning, management and reform in NSW. If you have any questions or feedback, contact us at:

NSW Government – Water Enquiries

Phone 1300 081 047

water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au

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We pay respect to the Traditional Custodians and First Peoples of NSW and acknowledge their continued connection to their country and culture.

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