

Water News

Department of Planning and Environment



May 2023 | ISSUE #45

Welcome to Minister Rose Jackson MLC

Hello,

I wanted to introduce myself. My name is Rose and I am the new Minister for Water. A little bit about me, I was elected to Parliament in 2019 and was the Shadow Minister for Water from 2021. I'm excited to take on this new role and I hope I can be a strong advocate for our precious water resources.

Access to clean, safe and reliable water is a human right and our Government will make this a core priority. Access to water should be fair and equitable across our community, delivering on this is a major priority of mine.

I value the dialogue with stakeholders and water users, we need a strong and collaborative relationship between the community, government, departmental officials and regulators.

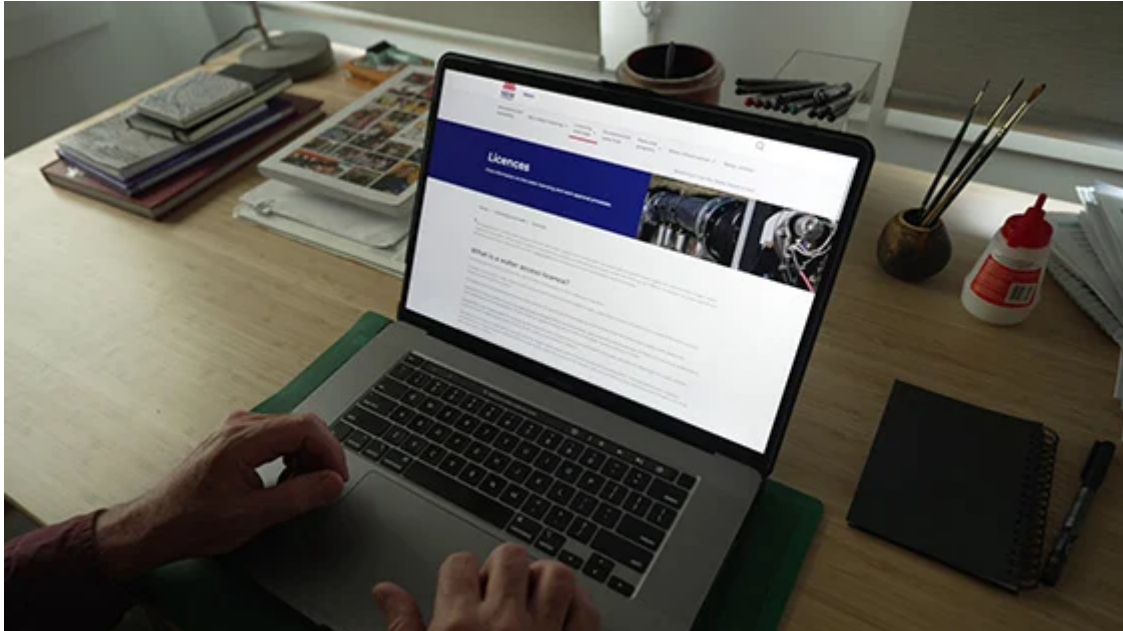
One of our first pieces of legislation will be to deliver on our election commitment to protect public ownership of Sydney Water and Hunter Water in the NSW Constitution. I visited Walgett this week to talk first hand to communities experiencing water quality issues and make sure they are supported by the NSW Government to have clean and safe drinking water.

I want to be a Minister that is responsive, transparent, and compassionate so if you see me around feel free to say hi - I'd love to hear from you and have a chat.

Thanks,

Rose Jackson
Minister for Water

Share your feedback to help us make information about licensing and approvals easier to find



We have heard that finding the information you need to apply for or amend an existing licence or approval on [the department's licensing webpages](#) and [WaterNSW's webpages](#) can be difficult and confusing.

We want to make it easier for you to find the right information online, including which agency is responsible for your application or approval. We are working with WaterNSW and NRAR through the [Water licensing improvement program](#) to improve the application process.

Improvements will include:

- Easier tracking of Integrated Development Applications requiring advice from the Water Group within the NSW Planning Portal so the status of your application is clear
- Managing Major Projects pre- and post-approvals documentation within the Major Projects Planning Portal so there is less need for email and phone call follow-up.

We are also investigating how a single point of entry that directs you to the right agency for your licence type might best meet your needs. We welcome your feedback to help us plan for a single point of online entry for water licensing.

Register your interest for a quick online interview or future customer testing at water.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au

NSW to take greater role in updated Hydrometric Network and Remote Sensing Program

The Hydrometric Network and Remote Sensing (HNRS) Program is a collaboration between the Australian, New South Wales and Queensland governments to deliver improved water monitoring and information transparency in the Northern Murray–Darling Basin.

The \$35 million program is funded by the Australian Government, with \$12.4 million allocated to NSW.

NSW's deliverables under the program include:

- Improved information portals for the public and compliance officers including enhanced compliance tools
- Providing state data to the Bureau of Meteorology's Murray - Darling Basin Water Information Portal
- Improved use of satellite imagery, remote sensing methods and modelling to understand changes to farming practice and manage floodplain harvesting
- Collection of new, highly accurate elevation data of floodplains and associated infrastructure through LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data
- An enhanced river gauge network.

NSW has recently taken on a larger delivery role, delivering remote sensing methods and modelling on behalf of the program.

Read more on the Murray-Darling Basin Authority website.

Replacing floodplain management plans in the southern Murray-Darling Basin : How you can help

Floodplain Management



The department is preparing to replace the existing local floodplain management plans in the Murray, Murrumbidgee, Billabong Creek and Lachlan valleys.

Rural floodplain management plans are the basis for coordinating flood work development in critical areas. They map floodways and set rules and assessment criteria for [flood work approvals](#).

With widespread flooding across the southern Murray-Darling Basin in 2022, we are seeking feedback and information about this flood event to help develop the new floodplain management plans.

We are seeking:

- digital photos from the 2022 floods
- historical flood imagery
- descriptions of local flood behaviour.

Please send your information, including exact locations, dates and times, to floodplain.planning@dpi.nsw.gov.au. You can also register your interest in upcoming community engagement events by sending us an email to this address.

For more information visit the department's [website](#).

Towamba water sharing plan ready for roll-out



Nestled between state forests and national parks on the south coast of NSW, the Towamba River stretches 86 kilometres. After a successful public exhibition of the draft replacement plan which saw over 560 unique visits to the website, the Water Sharing Plan for the Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources is ready to begin.

The plan establishes rules for water management including the total volume of water that can be extracted from the water sources in the Towamba River area. The Water Sharing Plan for the Towamba River Unregulated and Alluvial Water Sources 2023 will begin on 1 July 2023.

Further information on water sharing plans in NSW, including those currently under revision, can be found online at [Water sharing plans - Water in New South Wales \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/water-sharing-plans)

Snowy environmental releases protected for the first time



Water for the environment released from Tantangara Dam is being protected for the first time. The department used a temporary water restriction to protect 3 environmental flows in the upper Murrumbidgee between February and May.

The restriction raises pumping thresholds by the equivalent volume of environmental flow passing Mittagang and Billilunga gauges. Any water in the river above the raised thresholds is still available to unregulated licence holders, while domestic and stock water users are not affected by the restriction.

The Murrumbidgee unregulated water sharing plan does not currently protect environmental flows from extraction, limiting their intended environmental benefits. The restrictions are a short-term solution before changes are made to the water sharing plan.

The environmental flows will improve macroinvertebrate habitats, maintain riparian vegetation and support threatened and endangered species such as the Macquarie perch.

Read more about the [Temporary Water Restriction – Upper Murrumbidgee](#), and the [Upper Murrumbidgee Increased Flows](#).

Nyngan Cobar Water Security Project



The \$8.24 million Nyngan Cobar Water Security Project is nearly complete. The new 650 megalitre storage dam will provide greater water security and help drought proof water supplies for the regional towns.

The new storage dam is located next to another new storage reservoir, pump station and 1.8-kilometre pipeline on the Bogan River. Between them, the 2 storage dams will hold up to 1,300 megalitres of water.

Nyngan currently uses an average 600 megalitres of water every year. This means the new reservoirs can hold an extra 2 years water supply.

\$4 million has already been invested to build a new bore to the north-east of Nyngan, and provided \$2 million for emergency repairs to the 65 km Albert Priest Channel pipeline.

You can read more on the department's [website](#).

How we take care of your data



With so many data breaches occurring, many people are concerned about the security of their information.

The Water Group uses a stakeholder management system to send you timely information about water issues and engagement activities. The information in our system may include details such as your name, address, email, phone number and engagement activities.

The management system we use continuously monitors its 2 servers, uses the most secure data management processes and has ISO 27001 certification. It complies with the NSW Government's information security requirements.

We know you rely on us to keep your information safe, and we take those concerns seriously under the *Privacy and Protection of Personal Information Act 1998*. We will not disclose your personal information to anybody unless you have given your consent, or we are required to do so by law.

If you would like to update your details or opt-out of our database, please let us know by emailing water.enquiries@dpi.nsw.gov.au. If you opt out this means that you will no longer receive communication from us.

More information on [how the department ensures your privacy](#).

Field Days: an opportunity to have your questions answered



This year, the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) will be attending 7 field days throughout regional NSW. You will find us at Tocal and Primex Field Days in May, as well as Mudgee, AgQuip, Henty, Murrumbateman and Australian National Field Days.

Field days are a fantastic opportunity to ask questions about metering, water access licences, or the conditions of your work approval. Our friendly NRAR officers can provide helpful information about how to comply with NSW water rules.

To learn more about NRAR and your obligations as a water user, come and see us at one of this year's field days or [visit our website](#).

Non-urban metering rules commencing soon for Southern Inland water users



Water users in the NSW Southern Inland region must install approved non-urban metering by 1 June 2023. Anyone replacing old or damaged metering equipment must ensure their new meters comply with non-urban metering rules regardless of their compliance date.

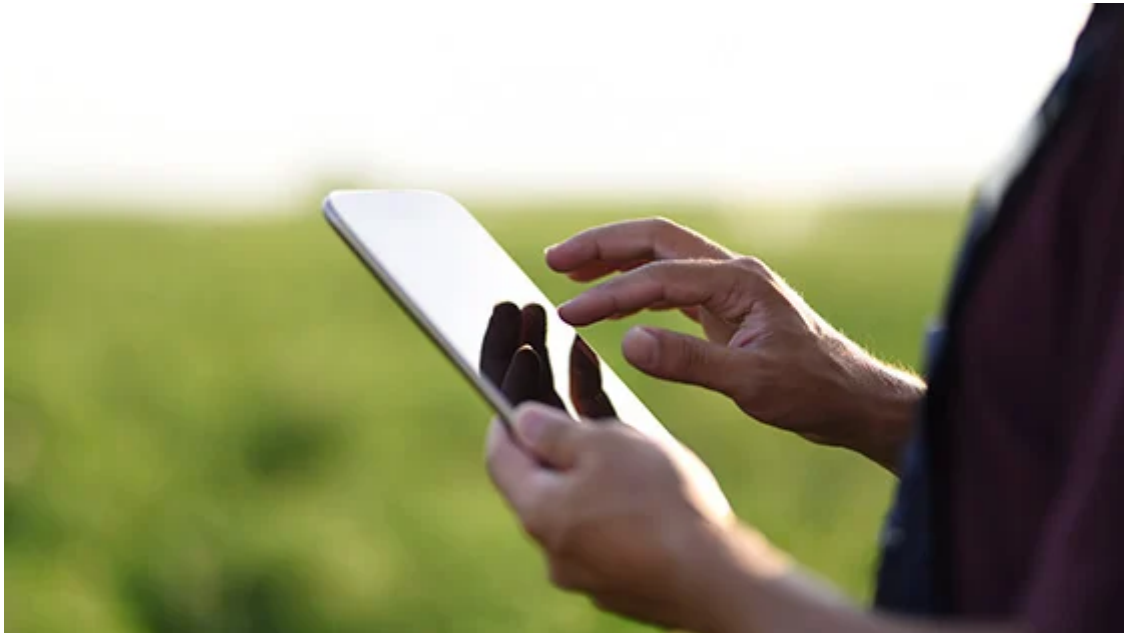
Water meters are the key tool for measurement and monitoring of water usage in NSW. Accurate metering is essential for fairness and equity of water sharing between users.

There are 3 easy steps to help you get meter ready:

1. Check your licence and approval details on the [NSW Water Register](#) to see what is listed and whether there are any existing metering conditions that you need to comply with now. WaterNSW can help [amend your approval](#) if you need to update any details including the size of your installed pump or make your work inactive.
2. Use the NSW Government's [online metering guidance tool](#) to see if, and how, the rules apply to you.
3. If the rules apply to you, contact a duly qualified person (DQP), such as a certified meter installer (CMI) to discuss your situation. The new [Metering and Measurement Virtual Marketplace](#) can help connect you with installers.

To register for information sessions, please visit our [website](#).

New Metering and Measurement Virtual Marketplace connecting water users and meter installers



The department has launched the [Metering and Measurement Virtual Marketplace](#) to help water users connect with installers and suppliers of non-urban metering and floodplain harvesting measurement equipment.

The Virtual Marketplace is a web-based tool that water users can use to search for specific services and/or suppliers of metering equipment in their local area, or any area 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 we are taking to support water users to comply with the non-urban metering and floodplain harvesting measurement rules. The continued rollout of these reforms across NSW will help ensure water take remains within licensed limits.

[Access the Virtual Marketplace here.](#)

Telemetry rebate supporting non-urban metering rollout



Water users are encouraged to take advantage of WaterNSW's telemetry rebate program that supports water users to install telemetry-enabled meters across NSW. For each local intelligence device installed and connected to the NSW government's data acquisition service, water users will receive a \$975 rebate on their water bill as a credit each year until the total rebate amount is reached.

Water users who install a meter in accordance with the NSW [non-urban metering](#) and [floodplain harvesting measurement](#) rules are eligible under the [\\$18 million telemetry rebate program](#) funded by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Over 1,200 water users have received the rebate. Water users who have already connected to telemetry are also eligible for the rebate, which can be backdated.

Read [WaterNSW's telemetry fact sheet](#) for more information.

Updates from NRAR



NRAR takes strong regulatory action

NRAR prioritises educating water users to help them comply with NSW water laws. However, it will take strong action against wilful acts of non-compliance. The regulator aims to deliver appropriate consequences for illegal activities and help change the attitudes and behaviours of offenders.

Some of NRAR's recent and ongoing enforcements include:

- A Riverina irrigator [convicted and fined a total of \\$156,250](#) for illegally taking water from the at-risk Murrumbidgee Deep Groundwater Source during a period of drought.
- A Griffith irrigator [convicted and fined \\$26,250](#) for breaching their bore extraction limit by over 97 ML.
- A prosecution has begun against a [Wentworth region irrigator and company](#) alleged to have illegally interfered with a Western Murray Irrigation pipeline and unlawfully taken water from it.
- An anonymous tip off to NRAR led to a prosecution against a Kempsey area irrigator after a series of alleged [offences near nationally significant wetlands](#).



NRAR checks metering compliance in Dubbo and Mudgee

Officers from the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) are visiting properties around Dubbo and Mudgee to check compliance with the non-urban metering rules. Starting on April 17, the compliance checks will continue until mid-May.

Water users with medium to large-sized pumps or bores in the Dubbo and Mudgee areas were required to comply with the new metering rules by 1 December 2021. These include installing accurate meters that have been independently validated by a certified meter installer or duly qualified person (DQP). Some pumps must also have telemetry to transmit data about water taken to a central database.

With more than a year passing since the deadline, the water regulator expects all licence holders to have made a reasonable effort to comply. At a minimum, this means having a formal agreement or contract with a DQP. There are [alternative](#)

[pathways to compliance](#) available, such as getting an existing accurate meter certified by a qualified professional.

Find out more about [how to comply with the metering rules](#) on NRAR's website.

Lostock Dam to Glennies Creek Dam Pipeline Project

The proposed Lostock Dam to Glennies Creek Dam Pipeline Project aims to enhance water security and reliability within the current system and support improved drought resilience and water connectivity in the Upper Hunter region.

Water Infrastructure NSW, in partnership with Hunter Water, is in the early stages of developing a final business case for the project, including the proposed Paterson River offtake, pipeline and water treatment plant.

Water Infrastructure NSW will be out in the community over the coming months to continue further discussions about the proposed works, including having a stand at the Tocal Field Days.

Date: 5 – 7 May 2023

Address: Tocal Agriculture Centre - 815 Tocal Road, Paterson NSW 2421

Stand: 394 (exhibition map)



Non-urban metering southern inland information sessions

The department is holding information sessions to help you understand if the new metering rules apply to you and how to comply. The sessions will include a formal presentation from a panel from the department, WaterNSW and the Natural Resources Access Regulator from 10 am–12 pm, followed by lunch and a drop-in session from 12–2 pm.

Follow the links below to register:

- [Cowra – Tuesday 9 May, 10 am – 2 pm](#)
- [Condobolin – Wednesday 10 May, 10 am – 2 pm](#)
- [Wagga Wagga – Thursday 11 May, 10 am – 2 pm](#)
- [Yanco – Tuesday 16 May, 10 am – 2 pm](#)
- [Deniliquin – Wednesday 17 May, 10 am – 2 pm](#)
- [Mildura – Thursday 18 May, 10 am – 2 pm](#)

An online session will be held on Tuesday 23 May from 11 am– 1 pm. For more information about non-urban metering, visit our [website](#).

Off-farm Efficiency Program funding proposals

The NSW Government is seeking community feedback on the expected socio-economic outcomes of 2 funding proposals from Murrumbidgee Irrigation and Griffith Golf Club under the [Off-farm Efficiency Program](#). The \$1.54 billion Australian Government Off-farm Efficiency Program provides funding to upgrade water infrastructure in the Murray-Darling Basin to reduce water losses and increase water available for the environment.

Murrumbidgee Irrigation is seeking \$62 million in funding to replace 47.4 km of aging concrete and earthen urban supply channels and 1.4 km of leaking pipeline.

Griffith Golf Club is seeking \$1.4 million in funding to upgrade the current golf course irrigation system. The project will deliver 64 ML of water entitlements to the environment.

Further information on the Off-farm Efficiency Program and both applications can be [found here](#).

Individuals and organisations can provide [feedback online](#). **Submissions close at 5pm on 5 May 2023 (AEST).**

For more information, contact Water Infrastructure NSW by:

- phoning 1300 081 047
- emailing winsw.programs@dpie.nsw.gov.au.

Latest water news from the department

- [Government taking action to help protect Menindee](#)
- [Improving Warrumbungle water and sewerage operations](#)
- [West Wyalong water security project update](#)
- [Healthier floodplains for Gwydir and the Northern Basin](#)

[View all](#)

Follow us on Twitter for more updates

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 Relations
Phone 1300 081 047
water.relations@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Subscribe to Water News

View previous newsletters



Department of Planning and Environment, Dharug Country, 4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street,
Parramatta, NSW 2150

[Unsubscribe](#) [Manage preferences](#)