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## \$23.6M to support water users switch to modern non-urban water meters in NSW



The NSW Government continues to lead the Murray-Darling Basin in water metering, implementing robust non-urban metering reforms. The reforms are improving the standard, coverage and transparency of how water use is measured and monitored with a new funding commitment of \$23.6 million. The funding will assist water users to switch to telemetry-based metering and help accelerate the uptake of telemetry.

Rebates, applied to water bills, will be available to water users who transmit their water take information via NSW's telemetry system.

Minister for Water, Property and Housing, Melinda Pavey announced the funding, acknowledging that for many water users there have been significant costs involved in ensuring compliance with new rules. \$9 million will fund a rebate for water users switching to telemetry and \$14.6 million will support the upgrading of government-owned meters.

The NSW Government funding will complement a further \$12.5 million being invested by the Commonwealth Government to boost metering and telemetry in

northern NSW. Together these programs will ensure water users, communities and the environment across the entire state will benefit.

For more information about the programs this funding will support, please [visit our website](#).

## Farm dam rules under review in coastal catchments



The NSW Government has been consulting on whether existing harvestable rights limits in coastal draining catchments are sufficient. We are reviewing how farm dams are managed along the coast and the differences in how we should manage these works between the coast and inland.

Currently, water laws allow landholders to capture and store 10% of average regional rainfall run-off in the coastal area. Following three months of consultation, we have completed a review that explores the potential benefits and effects of increasing that to 20%, 30% or even 50% to improve water security for landholders. Any changes need to ensure that enough water is available for downstream users and the environment.

The review has been downloaded over 2,500 times, and we've received more than 150 survey and submission responses. We'll review and consider these before making a recommendation on any changes to the Minister for Water, Property and Housing later this year.

For more information visit the [Coastal Harvestable Rights Review](#) webpage.

## Watch flows reach Lake Menindee



Storms across northern inland NSW and southern Queensland in March resulted in large inflows of water to the Menindee Lakes system. The substantial rains meant water returned to the two lower lakes of the system, Lakes Menindee and Cawndilla, for the first time in five years.

These satellite images show the progress of water arriving at the lakes and spreading across their vast expanse. These flows are helping to restore the unique and complex ecology of the lakes, with important social and cultural benefits for local communities.

*Images source - [Sentinel Hub](#).*

## New Murray-Darling Basin Water Information Portal

The Bureau of Meteorology is launching the first version of its new Murray-Darling Basin Water Information Portal this month. The portal will include information on water availability, allocation, volumes, water take, trade and prices, environmental water, weather and climate for the Murray-Darling Basin.

This information was available in the past, but in a range of different locations. The new portal will make it easier for communities, water users and other interested people to easily find all the information they need in one place.

The Bureau has worked with the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and the Basin states including NSW to create the portal. It seeks to provide water information that users want, in the way they want it.

You can visit the new portal, and provide information to develop future versions on the Bureau's website.

## New outback reserve to conserve important habitat

## and heritage

The NSW government has purchased the neighbouring Lanigdoon and Metford stations, 65km east of Broken Hill, to create a new outback reserve. It is the second largest land acquisition for national parks in the last ten years.

The reserve will help conserve a great range of wildlife, unique natural heritage and culturally important places. The properties contain a diverse range of ecosystems, including Acacia shrublands on sandplains and on stony desert. Over 30 percent of the land is made up of *Acacia loderi* shrublands, which is a Threatened Ecological Community.

The reserve also contains a floodplain woodland along watercourses and a lake system, and provides habitat for at least 14 threatened animal species. These include the Australian bustard, white fronted chat and the pink cockatoo. The site also contains important Aboriginal heritage items including grinding plates and stones.

In time, visitors will be able to explore the unique cultural and environmental heritage of the site.

[Read more.](#)

## New on the Water website

### **Water has a new look**

We're currently updating our website to have a new look and feel. From 1 July, you'll notice a more modern interface in line with our broader department. There will be no major changes to website structure or content.

### **Allocations for the new water year**

On 1 July, the new water year will commence, and opening water allocations will be made for ground and surface water sources across the state. Details of the new allocations will be available on our website from 1 July 2021.

### **Drought update**

Visit our website for the latest on drought and managing recovery in NSW.

## National Reconciliation Week is a time for change

The Natural Resources Access Regulator's (NRAR) first Aboriginal board member and proud Gomerioi man, Phil Duncan, penned an opinion editorial for National Reconciliation Week, published in the Koori Mail.

Mr Duncan said the national date is a painful reminder to Aboriginal communities across the nation and called for real, tangible change that requires [#MoreThanAWord](#).

“Water is central to our cultural way of life as Aboriginal Australians. Our involvement in managing water is rooted in history, embedded in our veins and passed down from generation to generation,” he said.

“In order to drive real, meaningful and lasting change, we need to bring everyone to the table. We need to leave our preconceived perceptions at the door and consider our next generations and the legacy we choose to leave for them.”

Mr Duncan said establishing safe environments for people to come together to have the courageous, bold and robust conversations is the only way we can move into a better future together.

[Read his full piece here.](#)

## NRAR clarifies position on floodplain harvesting following second disallowance



Grant Barnes, NRAR's Chief Regulatory Officer, has clarified the regulator's position after the second disallowance of the floodplain harvesting policy.

“Water taken in NSW must be done so in accordance with the conditions of an access licence, works/use approval, exemption, or basic landholder right,” Mr Barnes said.

“We expect water users to understand their obligations and to comply with the law. Any landholder considering floodplain harvesting may wish to seek their own legal advice.”

NRAR will continue to investigate alleged breaches of water law as we have always done. On a case-by-case basis in accordance with our regulatory principles, enforcement guidelines, and upon assessment of individual circumstances.

[Read the full statement.](#)

# Water, what are you really taking?

NRAR recently launched a campaign reminding people that if you take water in NSW without following the rules, it's not just water you're taking. If you take water outside the rules, you're taking something valuable from your neighbours, communities and the environment.

NRAR's water compliance tool can help you to understand what you need to do to ensure you're following the rules. Try it out today on our new [webpage](#).

Phil Duncan, NRAR's Aboriginal board member, says water has a significant cultural value to Aboriginal people and communities. Bruce Chapman, Bendemeer farmer, says water is the lifeblood of the agricultural sector. When water is taken outside of the rules, farmers lose out.

[Watch both videos.](#)

## Have your say

Current and upcoming consultations and information events:

### **Some sessions postponed**

We've postponed some of the planned Aboriginal and community engagement in the Far West due to the recent COVID-19 public health alert across NSW. The following session locations have been postponed:

- Bourke
- Wilcannia
- Menindee
- Wentworth/Dareton.

View more [details about upcoming events](#) on our website.

## Latest water news from the department

- [DPIE optimises best-practice management of the Snowy Water Licence](#)
- [Rising river alert – Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam](#)
- [Temporary water restriction for Upper Lachlan groundwater extended](#)
- [Three South Coast water sharing plans extended](#)
- [\\$23.6m to support modernisation of non-urban water meters in NSW](#)
- [\\$7.5 million up for grabs through NSW Fencing Northern Basin Riverbanks Program](#)
- [Rising river alert – Snowy River below Jindabyne Dam](#)
- [Moama landholder and company fined \\$38,000 after guilty pleas](#)
- [Supplementary allocation reductions for Gwydir and Border Rivers](#)
- [Groundwater dashboard delivers key advice to water users](#)

[View all](#)

## 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:

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