

Metering Virtual Roadshow: Frequently Asked Questions

This factsheet provides answers to questions asked during the non-urban metering virtual roadshow in October 2021.

Approvals and licences

Will a water licence be renewed automatically?

Water licences are not automatically renewed. You must apply for an extension every 10 years.

Information on water supply work approvals and how to apply for an extension is available on the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/approvals.

What do I need to measure on a pump to find out if I need to amend the authorised pump size on my conditions?

The diameter of the pump outlet is used to determine/confirm the pump size you have installed.

The pump size listed on your statement of approval is used to determine if the authority holder is required to install compliant metering and/or telemetry, and the compliance due date. If there is no size stated on the works approval, the work must be metered and will require telemetry.

If the pump size on your statement of approval is incorrect, or not stated, water users can amend the work approval to record the correct size by visiting the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/amendapproval.

Basic landholder rights

Where can I find more information on basic landholder rights?

You can read about basic landholder rights (BLR) at www.water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/licensing-and-trade/basic-landholder-rights. A basic landholder right is the right to take water without a licence for domestic and stock purposes only. It is different to licensed domestic and stock use. You can read more about water access licences for domestic and stock use on the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/licensing.

Cost

Can I claim the telemetry rebate if I connect my local intelligence device to the data acquisition service (DAS) voluntarily?

Yes. Authority holders who voluntarily connect to the DAS via telemetry are eligible to receive a \$975 rebate under the NSW- and Australian-Government-funded \$18 million telemetry rebate program. The rebate is automatically applied as a credit to the authority holder's water bill.

Other benefits of voluntary connection to telemetry include:

- avoiding monthly self-reporting requirements that apply to metered works without telemetry
- remote access to water take information.

Can I get financial assistance to help pay for my meter?

Water users can access a range of programs to offset the cost of purchasing metering equipment including:

Telemetry rebate

The NSW and Australian Government have committed \$18 million for a telemetry rebate program for water users who install compliant telemetry equipment. The rebate will be applied as a \$975 credit on a water user's bill when they connect to the NSW Government's telemetry system and will be backdated to include water users who have already connected.

Instant asset write off scheme

Under the Australian Government's instant asset write off scheme, farmers can deduct the full purchase price of assets up to \$150,000 – such as metering equipment – from their taxable income.

NSW Farm Innovation Fund

The NSW Farm Innovation Fund provides loans to meet the costs of capital works, including metering, that benefit businesses' long-term profitability.

What is the fee to make works inactive or to reactivate them?

Each application to make a work active or inactive will cost WaterNSW customers \$536.44. There is no ongoing fee to retain the inactive status, however, your regular water licence and approval costs will continue to be applied.

What is the average cost of a compliant meter?

The cost of a pattern-approved meter varies with the make, model and size of the meter. Duly qualified persons (DQPs) have the skill and experience required to identify the most appropriate metering solution for you, and many have existing relationships and/or partnerships with meter manufacturers.

We encourage you to contact a metering equipment supplier or a DQP to discuss your situation to find a solution that works for you.

A list of DQPs can be found on the Irrigation Australia website at www.irrigationaustralia.com.au via the Member Directory, searching on the Meter Installer and Validator tab.

What will be the ongoing cost of telemetry?

The annual fee for telemetry services is \$226.49 and is paid to WaterNSW.

IPART has reviewed prices for the 2021-2022 financial year and the water pricing schedule of rates, including telemetry, is available on the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/pricing.

Duly qualified person

Why is government outsourcing the installation of meters to private providers? What safeguards are in place?

The NSW Government is taking an open market approach to the goods and services supporting the non-urban metering rollout. This will give water users choice, create opportunities for product manufacturers and encourage innovation.

New South Wales and other Basin states require meters to be installed and signed off by a duly qualified person (DQP). Training and certification for DQPs is a national program, and water users and communities can be confident that meters are correctly installed, accurate, tamper-proof and auditable. Additionally, training certification ensures a code of conduct, a disciplinary process, and a complaints process are in place for customers to use.

Exemptions

Are there exemptions to the non-urban metering rules?

Yes, there are a number of exemptions available, including:

- works used solely to take water under a basic landholder right
- works that have been made inactive
- works that are not nominated against a water access licence
- small low-risk works used solely to take water under a Stock and Domestic Water Access Licence.

If you are not using your work, you can make your work inactive. Inactive works are exempt from the new metering rules. Once inactive, you will not be able to use your work to take any water including under basic landholder rights. If you choose to make a work active again, you will need to provide evidence that your work is metered in accordance with the regulatory requirements.

To amend an approval for inactive and active works visit the WaterNSW website at www.watarnsw.com.au/amendapproval.

How can I get an exemption? What is the role of DQPs in that process?

You must make an application to the Department of Planning and Environment to get an exemption. The application needs to demonstrate that it is not physically possible to install or use compliant metering equipment on the work. Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Site assessments and evidence from a DQP to support an application is strongly encouraged.

For an application form and guidance about seeking an exemption please email regulatory.implementation@dpie.nsw.gov.au

General

Can metering deadlines be deferred?

The non-urban metering rollout dates cannot be deferred. If you believe your circumstances warrant an extension write to your licencing authority, WaterNSW, at www.watarnsw.com.au/about/contact or the Department of Planning and Environment – Water using Water Assist at www.water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water-assist.

How many licence holders are required to install meters by 1 December 2021?

Available data suggests that there are approximately 8,000 groundwater and surface water works that required a meter by December 2021, affecting approximately 4,000 individual works approval holders.

These numbers are based on available data and may not reflect works that are later marked as inactive, where records do not match the size of the works, works that already had compliant metering equipment installed, or where existing non-pattern-approved metering can be kept.

The Industry Guide – Works Requiring a Meter factsheet provides a breakdown of the number of works requiring a meter by size and compliance date. The guide is available on the department's website at www.water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nsw-non-urban-water-metering/document-library.

What is 'tranche 1, 2, 3'?

The tranches refer to the staged rollout dates for the metering reform. These are:

- Tranche 1: 1 Dec 2020 for surface water pumps 500mm and above
- Tranche 2: 1 Dec 2021 for inland northern regions
- Tranche 3: 1 Dec 2022 for inland southern regions
- Tranche 4: 1 Dec 2023 for eastern and coastal regions.

Will all government-owned (WaterNSW) meters be checked and made compliant with the new rules?

Yes. WaterNSW is committed to ensuring all government-owned meters are compliant with the NSW non-urban metering framework. The required compliance work is already underway and is being undertaken in a staged approach. If you have questions about your government-owned meter contact WaterNSW on 1300 662 077 or email customer.helpdesk@watarnsw.com.au.

What is the breakdown and recycle process for the big plastic water tanks and metering equipment waste?

All DQPs are encouraged to consider the environmental impacts when installing meters and telemetry equipment. Every effort should be made to ensure a meter site is left in a tidy manner and waste and by-products are removed from site and disposed of responsibly, in line with relevant local and state legislation. Tanks are not required for a standard installation of a meter.

Do the floodplain harvesting rules apply to coastal consumers?

The *NSW Floodplain Harvesting Policy* (the policy) and *NSW Floodplain Harvesting Measurement Policy* are state-wide policies. However, implementation of the policy will occur initially in the five northern valleys where floodplain harvesting is most prevalent, including the Border Rivers, Gwydir, Namoi, Barwon–Darling and Macquarie valleys.

If water from NSW is traded interstate, does it have to be taken through a NSW compliant meter?

Interstate water tagging is subject to rules in the water sharing plans and the *Access Licence Dealing Principles Order 2004*, as well as interstate agreements.

If a water user has a water access licence (WAL) in NSW and they want to take the water interstate, they need to comply with NSW and interstate requirements. The WAL will need to nominate the interstate work. Whether the interstate work needs to be metered depends on the interstate rules and the agreement.

Meters

How do I get a meter, contact a DQP or a meter supplier?

A DQP can order and install metering equipment. Water users should contact a DQP to discuss their situation and appropriate metering solutions. You can find a DQP on the Irrigation Australia Limited website at www.irrigationaustralia.com.au via the Member Directory, searching on the Meter Installer and Validator tab.

Meter manufacturers can also be contacted directly, if you would like to discuss your specific requirements. The Australian Government has published a list of pattern-approved meters that can be found at www.awe.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/mdb-pattern-approved-non-urban-meters.pdf.

Are there meters in stock and ready to be distributed?

Lead times between ordering and receiving stock will vary due a number of factors, including the number of water users who need to comply with the non-urban metering rules.

At the time of writing, indicative lead times for pattern-approved meters are up to 2 weeks, and up to 12 weeks for local intelligence devices (LIDs). The department publishes current meter supply lead times here www.water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nsw-non-urban-water-metering/latest-information. You are encouraged to contact your local DQP or meter manufacturer for more specific information.

Can I use an existing or previously installed meter? What if there is no compatible local intelligence device?

Existing non-pattern-approved meters installed before 1 April 2019 can be kept until it reaches end of life. Meters will need to be fitted with a local intelligence device (LID), tamper-evident seals and water users will need to demonstrate that it is still accurate.

Accuracy can be demonstrated if:

- the meter's manufacturer confirms the meter was within +/- 2.5% accuracy in factory conditions and a DQP has certified that the meter has been correctly installed, or
- a DQP confirms the meter is within +/- 5% accuracy in the field.

Is it critical to the meter's accuracy to match the pump size to the size of pipe attached to the meter?

Matching pump size isn't the most important aspect however it is important to know the flow rate of a meter rather than the pipe connected to meter. It is good practice to match pipe size as close as possible, as it can reduce variation in water flow, and reduce possible damage to pipes, meter and surrounding infrastructure.

Is the EH Promag 53W considered to be a pattern-approved meter?

The EH Promag 53W is not a pattern-approved meter. It is an older device from the Endress & Hauser portfolio which hasn't gone through the pattern approval process.

The Endress & Hauser Promag W 400 is a pattern-approved option.

Do I need to meter every individual pump on my property? Can I meter the single inlet supply?

You are only required to meter the water inlet from the water source (such as groundwater, regulated water or unregulated water), not the movement of water on your property after it has passed through the meter.

More information is available on the department's website at www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/nsw-non-urban-water-metering.

Can 'multi-sensor' meters connect to the DAS?

There is currently no LID that meets the NSW Government's data logging and telemetry specifications with programmable data logging capability to separately record and transmit data from more than one meter.

The department is continuing to explore options to allow a single LID to connect to multiple meters or meters with multiple sensors.

Under the NSW Government's telemetry rebate program, eligible water users will receive a \$975 rebate for each LID purchased and connected to the DAS.

Network coverage

What is the best way to determine a signal strength for a LID?

Using the Mobile Coverage Tool.

This is a simple online tool that a water user or DQP can use to identify if a LID installation site is covered by the existing Telstra NB-loT network.

To use the Mobile Coverage Tool you will need:

- the latitude and longitude for the LID installation site
- the Extraction Site Identifier (ESID)
- works approval number.

The tool will generate a report that indicates whether the site is covered by the existing network. The tool is available on the department's website at www.water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nsw-non-urban-water-metering/what-water-users-need-to-know/telemetry-coverage-exemption.

Can I still claim the Telemetry Rebate if I do not have telemetry coverage?

No. The telemetry rebate is only for LIDs connected the NSW Government's DAS.

Who supplies the SIM cards for the LIDs?

Eagle.io supplies the sim cards. Only a DQP is able order the LID with a sim card for a water user.

Which online platform/s will be used to show and report metered data?

Meter reads/water take data can be found on the DAS and iWAS (Water Accounting System).

Reporting

How will usage be recorded if no telemetry device is installed?

After your rollout date, you will be required to manually report your water take if you:

- are not required to have a meter
- are required to have a meter but do not use telemetry
- use a single metered work to take water under a WAL and another right, such as a basic landholder right.

You will need to provide your manually recorded water take to WaterNSW. More information is available on the department's website at www.water.dpie.nsw.gov.au/nsw-non-urban-water-metering/what-water-users-need-to-know.

How do I self-report if I use my bore for both domestic use and irrigation?

WaterNSW will be launching new recording and reporting functionality through iWAS for registered customers by the end of 2021. This will enable customers to identify water taken under licenced use

or under basic landholder rights. There will also be reporting options for customers who are not registered in iWAS.

When can I access my metered data?

After installation, meter readings can be found on the DAS and iWAS.

After your DQP has completed the installation and has issued the final validation certificate, you will receive an email connecting you to the DAS. If you do not receive an email about how to access your data, follow up with your DQP.

Do I still need to keep a logbook if the metering guidance tool states that I do not need to install a meter?

Yes, water users do have to record and report water take via iWAS. Conditions are found on the Water Supply Works Approval.

Metering rules

How do I know if the rules apply to me?

To find out if the metering rules apply to you, and what you need to do comply:

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 assist you to amend your approval if you need to update any details including the size of your installed pump or make your work inactive. For more information visit www.waternsw.com.au/metering.
2. Use our interactive online metering guidance tool to see if, and how, the rules apply to you. You can find the tool on the department's website at www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/nsw-non-urban-water-metering.
3. Contact a DQP, such as a certified meter installer (CMI), to discuss your situation. They can advise you about what equipment you need, order, install and validate it. A list of DQPs can be found on Irrigation Australia's website at www.irrigationaustralia.com.au via the Member Directory, searching on the Meter Installer and Validator tab.

Metering rules apply to government-owned, government managed, and privately owned water supply works approvals.

What are at-risk groundwater sources?

There are 32 groundwater sources designated as at-risk. They were designated in 2018, when the non-urban metering rules were made into law, and they were designated as at-risk because they were either already allocated or at-risk of exceeding the long-term annual extraction limit for that water source.

If you're taking water, for example, under an access licence from an at-risk groundwater source, the metering rules do apply to you, there are options to de-link or make your work inactive.

A list of at-risk groundwater sources can be found in section 9 of the *Water Management Regulation*, and the At-Risk Groundwater Sources fact sheet found at www.waternsw.com.au/metering.

Why have some water users who are not in the north-western region been asked to install meters by 1 December 2021?

There are water users in five valleys who have existing works approval conditions that require them to have an AS4747 meter. These existing conditions have been in place on their work approvals since 2018. The five valleys are:

- Murrumbidgee Regulated system
- Lachlan Regulated system
- NSW Murray and Lower Darling Regulated system
- Hunter Regulated system
- Richmond regulated systems.

The NSW Government extended the timeframes for these water users to install compliant equipment to 1 December 2021. Water users who already had a meter installed at the time the extension was provided have until their regional rollout date to ensure their meter meets the standards under the new non-urban metering rules.

Have water users with small pumps been exempted from metering until 2024?

On 30 September 2021, the New South Wales Government announced an exemption to the non-urban metering rules for small, low-risk licensed domestic and stock water users. A water user is eligible for this exemption if their work meets the following criteria:

- a pump less than 100 mm in diameter or a bore less than 200 mm in diameter
- solely takes water under a domestic and stock water access licence (other than for town water supply) and a basic landholder right
- does not take water from an at-risk groundwater source
- is not listed under the same authority or linked to the same access licence as another work that requires a meter
- is not on the same landholding as another work that requires a meter and is held by the same person.

It is the responsibility of the approval holder to know the works installed and conditions of their approval. Often, works installed do not match what is indicated in the water licensing system, therefore it is important that water users are able to self-assess.

What's the point of truth of determining the size of works?

Your works approval is the source of truth. If your works approval says that you have a 200 mm pump, but you've only installed a 50 mm pump, you are encouraged to update your works approval at www.waternsw.com.au/amendapproval.

Do these rules only apply to privately owned meters?

No. The non-urban metering rules apply regardless of who owns the equipment and what the water is taken for.

Are farm dams considered surface water?

The metering requirements apply to works taking water from regulated rivers, unregulated rivers and groundwater systems under a licence, where the take can be measured with a meter. Farm storage is generally a point of storage for water that has been metered when taken (extracted) from the water source.

Other forms of farm dams can be captured by harvestable rights rules. For more information visit www.waternsw.com.au/blr.

Do the new regulations affect me if I have no infrastructure (e.g. pumps) connected to my water licence?

The metering rules do not apply in situations where infrastructure — such as a bore or pump — has not been installed. However, we do encourage you to contact your licensing authority (WaterNSW or the department) to advise that you don't have a work installed on your WAL.

Is there a limit for stock water take that will require a meter?

Currently there is no limit for stock water take however WaterNSW is looking into what is deemed to be reasonable. More information is available here www.waternsw.com.au/blr.

Why do wells and spearpoints require metering, when well water extraction is dependent on pump size and spearpoints are generally less than threshold sizes?

The metering rules apply a consistent standard to all water users to help ensure that we know how much water is being taken and whether it is being taken according to the rules. Groundwater works 200 mm and above must have compliant metering equipment. Additionally, there are rules for multiple works, and works that take water from an at-risk groundwater source must have a compliant meter installed regardless of size. More information is available on the department's website at www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/nsw-non-urban-water-metering.

Does a groundwater irrigation bore over 200 mm require telemetry with no condition MW2452-0001?

Groundwater does not require telemetry but does need an approved LID. The only LID currently approved is the YDOC.

Will I need to have all my internal pumps metered too?

Water only needs to be metered once when entering property. It must be metered at the inlet where it is extracted from the source, such as a regulated river, unregulated river, or groundwater source. The internal water management of a private business, irrigation corporations and water utilities is a matter for the water holder.