

Non-urban metering review implementation

Quarterly report: October–December 2024

Introduction

The NSW government has committed to developing robust reporting and monitoring mechanisms to track the effectiveness of the metering implementation.

This quarterly report provides a progress update against the specific commitments made in the initial implementation plan, as part of the NSW Government’s response to the [Review of non-urban metering framework](#).

Additional outcome-based reporting on progress towards the primary policy objective of having ‘the vast majority (95%) of water take being accurately and reliably metered using tamper-evident metering equipment’ will commence from the fourth progress report, which is due to be published in July 2025.

Improvement plan to accurately track outcome-based implementation progress

As revealed in the review, outcome-based reporting of the percentage of total entitlement that is being taken with compliant metering equipment, will not accurately reflect the on-ground reality until changes to the regulations, systems and individual water supply work approvals are made so that the metering obligations apply only to works being used to take water. Resolving this issue is one of the key initial priorities arising from the review.

The Review recommendations outline an improvement pathway to improve the accuracy of outcome-based reporting. The key activities and timelines to accurately track the outcome-based progress are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Key activities and timelines for implementing review recommendations

When	Activity
February 2025	• amend the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 to create categories of works that do and do not take water • commence water licence system upgrades to incorporate the new categories
March 2025	• refine the categorisation of water supply works in the water licensing systems
May to June 2025	• water users provided the opportunity to review and correct the categorisation of their water supply works

When	Activity
From May 2025	• update work categorisations in the water licensing system and reissue water supply work approvals – prioritising high risk and large water users first

Overview of the October to December 2024 report

For the October-December 2024 reporting period:

- 4 actions are now complete
- 1 action is at-risk, however, the Water Group in the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Water Group), WaterNSW and the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) are working together to ensure it is completed within the required timeframe
- 8 actions are on track for delivery within the required timeframes.

Change the rules

Table 2 summarises the progress against the ‘Change the rules’ implementation priority set out in the [Recommendations Report: Review of the NSW non-urban metering framework](#). It provides an overview of the status of key initiatives aimed at changing the rules to accelerate compliance.

These initiatives focus on the drafting of regulation amendments for consultation, prioritising those that will have the greatest impact on accelerating compliance rates, including expanding definitions of who can provide duly qualified persons (DQP) services to grow the market, staging compliance expectations to focus on larger water users in inland NSW first (includes change to coastal compliance date), and simplifying requirements for smaller volume and low-risk works.

Table 2. Progress against the 'Change the rules' priority

Commitment	Timing	Status	Comment
Draft regulation amendments for consultation prioritising the recommendations that will have the greatest impact on accelerating compliance rates.	End of 2024	Grey - Complete	Complete. Proposed amendments to the metering framework in the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 were publicly exhibited from 11 November to 8 December 2024. The Water Group is considering the feedback received during public exhibition before seeking to make the amending regulation in February 2025, subject to the Minister's approval.
Make and commence highest priority regulation amendments that give effect to the proposed rule changes and consider stakeholder feedback.	Mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. The Water Group is considering the feedback received during public exhibition before seeking to make the amending regulation in February 2025, subject to the Minister's approval.
Update the Non-urban water metering policy to reflect the new metering rules.	Mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. Scoping of this future work is continuing.

Support duly qualified persons

Table 3 summarises the progress against the ‘Support duly qualified persons’ (DQPs) priority set out in the Non-urban metering review Recommendations report. It provides an overview of the status of key initiatives aimed at supporting DQPs to increasing their capacity.

These initiatives include the establishment of up a new service to provide in-field support to DQPs to trouble shoot installation issues and address the backlog of defects, developing step by step guides for selecting, installing and configuring equipment meters and local intelligence devices (LIDs) to make it easier for DQPs and to reduce error rates, and developing a new meter installer course specific to NSW that can then be delivered by a range of providers in order to increase training capacity in the market.

Table 3. Progress against the ‘Support duly qualified persons’ priority

Commitment	Timing	Status	Comment
Stand up a new service to provide in-field support to DQPs to trouble shoot installation issues and address the backlog of defects.	End 2024	Grey - Complete	Complete. The DQP Concierge Program is operational, supplying in-field support to DQPs. DQPs can now book a conversation with WaterNSW directly through this service.
Develop step by step guides for selecting, installing and configuring equipment meters and LIDs to make it easier for DQPs and reduce error rates.	End 2024	Grey - Complete	Complete. Five step by step DQP Portal guides have been developed for use by all DQPs.
Develop a new meter installer course specific to NSW that can then be delivered by a range of providers to increase training capacity in the market.	Mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. The Water Group is working with Irrigation Australia for development of the new meter installer course. This work is on track for delivery by June 2025.

Support and educate water users

Table 4 summarises the progress against the ‘Support and educate water users’ priority set out in the Recommendations report. It provides an overview of the status of key initiatives aimed at increasing engagement with and education of water users.

These initiatives include providing water users with the opportunity to have their say on changes to the rules through public exhibition of the draft amended regulations, engaging with water users to help them update their work approvals to reflect which works are taking licensed water and require metering and which do not, and engaging specifically with coastal water users to ensure that they understand their obligations well ahead of the proposed compliance date.

Table 4. Progress against the ‘Support and educate water users’ priority

Commitment	Timing	Status	Comment
Provide water users with the opportunity to have their say on changes to the rules through public exhibition of the draft amended regulations.	End 2024	Grey - Complete	Complete. Proposed amendments to the metering framework in the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 were publicly exhibited from 11 November to 8 December 2024. The Water Group is considering feedback received during public exhibition before amending the regulation in February 2025, subject to the Minister’s approval.

Commitment	Timing	Status	Comment
Engage with water users to help them update their work approvals to reflect which works are taking licensed water and require metering and which do not.	End 2024–mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. This work has commenced with system changes currently being worked on. The Water Group will engage with water users to help them update their works approvals after changes to the metering rules have commenced through amendments to the regulation in February. The engagement with large and high-risk water users is scheduled to occur from May 2025.
Engage with coastal water users to ensure that they understand their obligations well ahead of the proposed compliance date.	End 2024–mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. The Water Group will engage with water users in coastal water sources after changes to the metering rules have commenced through regulation amendments in February.

Improve systems

Table 5 summarises the progress against the ‘Improve systems’ priority set out in the Recommendations report. It provides an overview of the status of key initiatives to facilitate increased metering compliance through system improvement.

These initiatives include enhancement of systems to reflect the new water supply work categories that make it clear which require metering and which do not, continued improvement of systems including the DQP Portal to improve functionality and usability, commissioning an independent expert review of data logging, telemetry requirements and associated data systems, and trialling of reporting arrangements that seek to establish a single time-bound source of truth for the volume of water taken against a licence.

Table 5. Progress against the ‘Improve systems’ priority

Commitment	Timing	Status	Comment
Enhance systems to reflect the new water supply work categories that make it clear which require metering and which do not.	Mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. The work to change the systems is currently underway.
Continue to improve systems including the DQP Portal to improve functionality and usability	End 2024–mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. WaterNSW are making enhancements to the DQP Portal and scoping further enhancements.
Commission an independent expert review of data logging and telemetry requirements and associated data systems.	Mid 2025	Green – On track	In progress. The Water Group has engaged a contractor to undertake this review. The contractor is meeting with key agency partners during January to identify key business requirements. On track for delivery by June 2025.

Commitment	Timing	Status	Comment
Trial reporting arrangements that seek to establish a single time-bound source of truth for the volume of water taken against a licence (attestation).	Mid 2025	Amber – At risk	In progress. Work by the Water Group, NRAR and WaterNSW is underway to design and implement the ‘trial’. Further details expected to be announced in the first half of 2025.