

Non-urban metering review implementation

Quarterly report: July–September 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 (the review).

Additional outcome-based reporting on progress towards having 95% of licensed water entitlement in NSW accurately metered by December 2026, 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 regulation, 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. Table 1 outlines the key activities and timelines to being able to accurately track outcome-based progress.

Table 1. Key activities and timelines for implementing review recommendations

When	Activity
February 2025	• amend the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 (the regulation) to create categories of works that do and do not take water • implement water licence system upgrades to incorporate the new categories
March 2025	• begin pre-populating the categories for water supply works in the water licensing systems
April to May 2025	• water users provided the opportunity to review and correct the categorisation of their water supply works
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

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](#) (Recommendations report). It provides an overview of the status of key initiatives aimed at changing the rules to accelerate compliance.

These initiatives focus on drafting the 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 person (DQP) services to grow the market, staging compliance expectations to focus on larger water users in inland NSW first (includes changing the 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	Green – On track	In progress. Public exhibition of draft amendments to the metering framework in the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 is open from 11 November to 8 December 2024.
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 in the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Water Group) is on track to make the amending Regulation during February 2025 following public exhibition.
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 has commenced.

Support duly qualified persons

Table 3 summarises the progress against the ‘Support duly qualified persons’ (DQPs) priority set out in the 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 troubleshoot 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 troubleshoot installation issues and address the backlog of defects.	End 2024	Green – On track	In progress. WaterNSW have recruited team members to support the DQP Concierge Service and have started training and work on backlogs will commence by the end of November.
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	Green – On track	In progress. Two 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 on scoping the new training.

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 regulation, 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 regulation.	End 2024	Green – On track	In progress. Public exhibition of draft amendments to the metering framework in the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 is open from 11 November to 8 December 2024.
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. Scoping of this future project has commenced.
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. Scoping of this future engagement has commenced.

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. Scoping of this future project has commenced.
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 working on 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 review scope has been released for quotation, and the Water Group should be selecting the successful tenderer by early December 2024.

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, the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) and WaterNSW is underway to design and implement the processes required for the new ‘attestation’ or ‘reconciliation’ obligation to be placed on water access licence (WAL) holders. It is anticipated that details of this ‘trial’ will be announced in the first half of 2025.