



# Non-urban water metering in NSW 2019 snapshot

**Water users, communities and regulators working together**

- Metering requirements—what you need to know and do

# Non-urban water metering in NSW

## 2019 snapshot

The NSW Government is committed to implementing a robust metering framework to improve the standard and coverage of non-urban water meters across NSW. This is an important step in helping to build community confidence in how the state's water is managed.

The new non-urban water metering framework began in December 2018 with the goal of ensuring that the vast majority of licensed water take is measured by accurate, auditable and tamper-evident meters. The new metering rules are prescribed in the *Water Management Act 2000* and the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 and outlined in the NSW Non-urban Water Metering Policy.

### Meet the team

The Water Renewal Taskforce is a section within the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment created to deliver the Water Reform Action Plan, including the non-urban water metering framework.

The Taskforce, together with the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR, which enforces the water laws) is committed to engaging with water users, stakeholders, the community and other individuals and groups that could be affected by the new metering framework.

Details on how to contact the Taskforce are located at the back of this document.

## Five key things to know about the new non-urban water metering framework:

- 1** The NSW Government has introduced robust metering rules to build community confidence in water management. Metering ensures that we know whether water is being taken according to the rules. The vast majority of water users do the right thing and they, as well as the broader community, want those who don't to be held accountable.
- 2** The new metering rules became law in December 2018 and will take effect in a staged roll-out between 2019 and 2023.
- 3** The rules will ensure that all meters are accurate, tamper-evident and auditable, with larger surface water meters also requiring telemetry.
- 4** The new metering rules are designed to increase the standard and coverage of water meters while also avoiding undue costs for small, low-risk water users. When fully implemented, these rules will apply to about half of all works, but will capture the vast majority of licensed water infrastructure capacity.
- 5** The NSW Government will continue to engage with water users throughout the roll-out of the metering rules, to ensure they are aware of the requirements and understand what they need to do to comply.

# What government is doing to help water users implement the new metering rules:

- **Making it easier for water users to understand the metering rules:** the NSW Government has released an interactive metering guidance [tool](#) to help water users understand if the metering rules apply to them, and what they mean.
- **Providing regulatory certainty for water users:** the NSW Government recognises that, in some cases and despite the best efforts of water users, it may not be possible for users to comply with the metering rules because of external factors (such as the availability of water, or the supply of pattern-approved meters). NRAR has released a document setting out its compliance approach in these circumstances [industry.nsw.gov.au/metering-regulations](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/metering-regulations)
- **Providing guidance about in-situ testing of existing meters:** the NSW Government recognises that many water users have already installed a meter. Under the new metering rules, a way water users can keep non-pattern approved meters that were installed before 1 April 2019, is if they are shown to be accurate in the field. The Government has commissioned expert advice about suitable, cost-effective methods for in-situ accuracy testing of existing meters, and will provide guidance for duly qualified persons. More information will be provided soon.
- **Developing a secure telemetry system that supports an open market:** the NSW Government is developing an online system to collect water data from users with telemetry, which is scheduled to go live in mid-2019. The system will be designed to be secure while supporting an open market as much as possible, creating opportunities for product vendors and encouraging innovation. The department's telemetry webpage contains more information [industry.nsw.gov.au/telemetry](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/telemetry)
- **Streamlining regulatory requirements:** some proposed minor updates to the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 will streamline some of the metering rules—for example, by allowing any person to install a meter provided it is validated by a duly qualified person, exempting inactive groundwater works from the rules, and aligning new reporting requirements with the roll-out dates. See the following pages for more information.
- **Ramping up engagement with water users:** the department, NRAR and WaterNSW will continue to engage with water users throughout the roll-out of the metering rules. Throughout July and August 2019, we will be conducting a metering roadshow, stopping at 13 locations across regional NSW, as well as conducting an online webinar. We will also have stalls at a number of agricultural expos and field days across regional NSW throughout the year.

# New metering rules in NSW

## How will they affect me?

### Water users

There are a number of different thresholds for the metering rules—if a water user meets any of these thresholds, they will need to comply with the new rules.

A guide to the new metering rules is provided on page 6. Water users can also use the department's new [online metering guidance tool](#)

The new water metering framework will benefit water users by:

- **Ensuring that all water users are taking water according to the rules:** the vast majority of water users do the right thing, and they want those that don't to be held accountable
- **Providing clear rules:** the new framework replaces a patchwork of metering requirements that were applied inconsistently across different water sharing plan areas
- **Giving water users choice:** under the new rules, metering equipment will be privately owned, allowing water users to invest in the metering infrastructure that best suits their needs.

### People and communities

The new water metering framework will help people and communities by:

- **Giving communities confidence that the NSW Government is taking the issue of water security seriously,** which is critical for town water supply and downstream communities in times of drought.

- **Helping to bring additional employment to regional and rural communities:** the NSW Government is working with several industry bodies to increase the number of duly qualified persons and technicians required to help implement the new framework, including traineeships
- **Providing opportunities for Aboriginal people:** Aboriginal people have shown significant interest in using their knowledge of water management to play a greater role in the metering industry. The NSW Government has funded traineeships for Aboriginal people to work in the industry
- **Contributing to improving the health of priority waterways and their catchments** to support environmental, social, cultural and economic needs.

### The environment

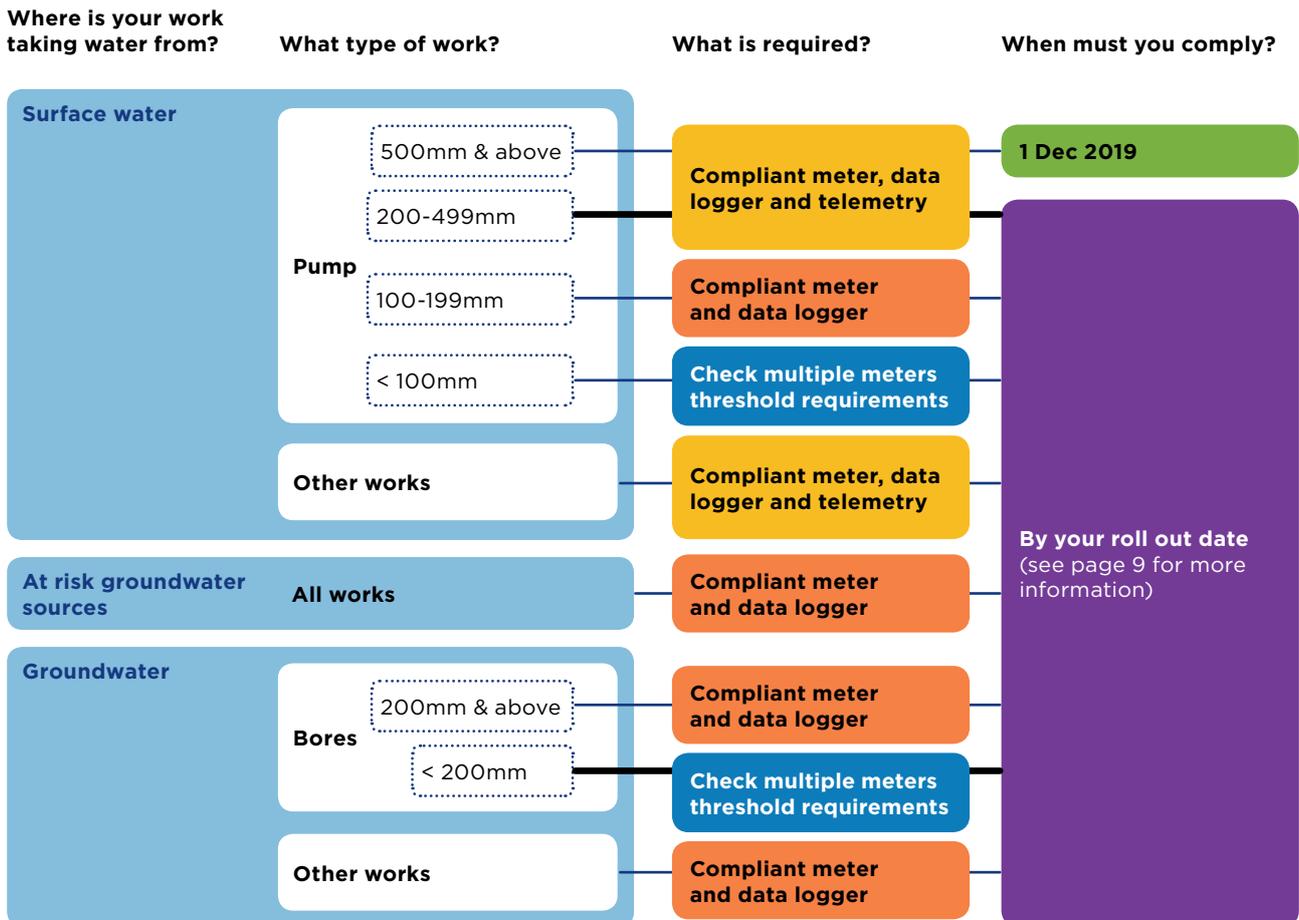
The new water metering framework will benefit the environment by:

- **Protecting our most valuable natural resource** by ensuring that water is taken accurately and fairly according to the rules and by enabling more effective compliance
- **Helping to improve water management** by requiring water users to accurately measure their usage, and providing government with information about that usage to better inform water management decisions and planning.

# Preparing for the roll-out date

## A guide

To help water users prepare for the roll-out date, the department has created an easy-to-use online tool for pattern-approved meters as a guide. (For more information about whether you can keep your existing, non-pattern approved meter, refer to the Q&A section on following pages).



**Note:** a compliant meter = a pattern-approved meter or a non pattern-approved meter, installed before 1 April 2019, that meets accuracy requirements and is shown to be accurate (refer to FAQs on Page 6 for more information about keeping non pattern-approved meters)

# Water metering rules in NSW

## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### What is the non-urban water metering framework designed to achieve?

Water is a precious resource that needs to be managed. The government has listened to water users, who said they want clear rules.

The new framework aims to provide real and positive change for water management in NSW, providing clear rules around who needs a meter and the standards that must be met.

These standards will ensure meters are accurate, tamper-evident and auditable. The metering thresholds have been designed to ensure that the vast majority of licensed infrastructure capacity will be metered.

### Why are the metering regulations being implemented when there is a drought?

In times of drought, it is even more important to manage water fairly and according to the rules. The metering framework will ensure better water management in NSW over the long term. The vast majority of water users do the right thing and want those that don't to be held accountable—it's only fair.

### Who will the new metering rules apply to?

The rules will apply to anyone taking licensed water. (Refer to the guide on page 11)

### Are there exemptions to the metering rules?

The following works will not require a meter, although water users may still voluntarily install a meter to help manage their water use:

- Works solely used to take water under basic landholder rights
- Water take that is exempt from the requirement for a water access licence or water taken under a floodplain harvesting access licence
- Works marked as inactive on the water supply work approval
- Works where the take of water cannot be measured using a meter and the Minister has granted an exemption.

### Shouldn't all water users be metered?

Based on current market considerations, the benefits of metering do not outweigh the costs for small users that only represent a very small proportion of water take. However, the metering thresholds will be subject to a statutory review in five years, and adjustments may be made.

### I already have meters, but they're not pattern-approved: can I keep those?

There are two pathways for water users to keep their existing non-pattern approved meters, but only if they were installed before 1 April 2019:

- the meter's manufacturer confirms the meter is within 2.5% accuracy in laboratory conditions and a duly qualified person confirms the meter was validated (that is, installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications) within five years before the rollout date, or
- a duly qualified person undertakes in-situ accuracy testing and confirms the meter is within 5% accuracy in the field.

These meters will also need to be fitted with data loggers and tamper-evident seals. Unless the work is a surface water pump authorised to be less than 200mm or a groundwater work, these meters will also need telemetry.

### How can I prepare for the roll-out date?

The department has prepared a roll-out guide. (Refer to the guide on page 5)

### **Who will pay for my meter?**

Private ownership of meters allows water users to invest in the metering infrastructure that best meets their needs. Water users will be responsible for buying, installing and maintaining meters.

The NSW Government recognises that the current drought conditions are making things tough for users. The Farm Innovation Fund [dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub](https://dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub) is an initiative to help NSW farmers by providing loans to meet the costs of carrying out capital works that benefit the long-term profitability of a business, including metering.

### **What should I do if I detect that my meter is faulty?**

There are certain steps water users must take, including notifying WaterNSW within 24 hours of becoming aware that their metering equipment is not working properly or has stopped working, even if they are not taking water. For a guide and the required form, go to: [waternsw.com.au/customer-service](https://waternsw.com.au/customer-service)

### **How do these metering requirements link to water resource plans and water sharing plans?**

The new metering requirements will replace the metering requirements in individual water sharing plans. This means there will be a consistent and streamlined metering framework across NSW, rather than separate requirements for separate water sharing plan areas. Once the new requirements are in place, the current metering provisions and associated record-keeping and reporting requirements in water sharing plans will be removed.

### **Who will conduct compliance for the metering requirements?**

The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is responsible for compliance and enforcement of water laws in NSW. Any suspected breaches can be reported to the compliance hotline on 1800 633 362 or by email to [water.compliance@nrar.nsw.gov.au](mailto:water.compliance@nrar.nsw.gov.au)

### **What if I am not able to comply with the new metering requirements by my roll-out date because of issues beyond my control (such as availability of water, duly qualified persons or suitable metering equipment)?**

In these situations, NRAR will exercise its regulatory discretion. NRAR expects water users to demonstrate they have made every effort to comply with the new regulations, where and when these apply. NRAR has released a document setting out its compliance approach for the new metering regulations, see the compliance fact sheet at [industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar](https://industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar)

### **Where can I find more information about pattern-approved meters?**

The Murray-Darling Basin Authority has published a list of meters that are pattern-approved or are undergoing testing for pattern-approval: [mdba.gov.au](https://mdba.gov.au)

### **Where can I go for more information?**

The department's website contains all of the relevant information about the new metering rules, including how to find duly qualified persons to install and validate meters: [industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework](https://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework)

# About the new non-urban water metering framework in NSW

The new metering framework for non-urban water take was developed throughout 2018 and was made law in December 2018. The key objectives of the new framework are to ensure the vast majority of licensed water take in NSW is accurately metered, and that licensed water users have accurate, tamper-evident, auditable meters. The new framework was informed by broad community consultation, economic analysis and technical expertise and followed two rounds of public consultation in 2018.

The new framework includes the NSW Non-urban Water Metering Policy, the metering-related provisions of the Water Management (General) Regulation 2018 and the metering-related provisions of the *Water Management Act 2000*.

Implementing a robust new metering framework was a key commitment under the NSW Government's Water Reform Action Plan (WRAP).

The core goals of the WRAP are to:

- Introduce best practice for water management
- Ensure transparency in how we share, allocate and manage water
- Build a compliance and enforcement regime that ensures strong and certain regulation
- Build capability to support implementation of water reforms.

## Proposed amendments to water metering regulations in NSW

The NSW Government remains committed to rolling out robust new rules for non-urban water metering to improve the standard and coverage of water meters across NSW. The government is proposing some minor amendments to the water regulations to make the roll-out easier for water users.

The proposed changes include:

- Removing the requirement for metering equipment to be installed by a duly qualified person, so it can be installed by water users or others. Meters will still need to be validated or accuracy checked by a duly qualified person
- Extending the 'inactive work' provisions to groundwater works, so that users with inactive groundwater works will not be subject to the metering requirements if their work is tabbed as 'inactive'
- Requiring seals installed on metering equipment to be issued by an approved entity, to ensure integrity of the seals
- Streamlining the recording & reporting requirements for all users, including a new requirement for users with a data logger but no telemetry to report their water take.

The proposed changes to the regulation will be outlined in a draft Water Management (General) Amendment Regulation 2019 which will be available online and in print form at the public information sessions held during the public exhibition period.

# Water metering regulations in NSW

## The timeline for change

The design of water metering rules has been informed by broad public consultation and several key milestones have been achieved already, including:

- **December 2017**—release of the Water Reform Action Plan
- **March 2018**—consultation roadshow for the Water Reform Action Plan, including seeking feedback on metering options
- **June 2018**—amendments to the *Water Management Act 2000* to enable new metering rules
- **August–September 2018**—public consultation on draft metering rules
- **December 2018**—metering rules become law
- **April 2019**—new and replacement meters installed after this date must meet new metering requirements, new process for reporting faulty meters

The department and NRAR will continue to engage with water users and industry during the roll out of the new rules. Work underway includes:

- **July–August 2019**—public exhibition period of proposed regulation amendments; metering roadshow with sessions in 13 locations across NSW plus an online webinar
- **July 2019**—the department’s telemetry system is intended to go live
- **August 2019**—workshops for duly qualified people in three locations in regional NSW

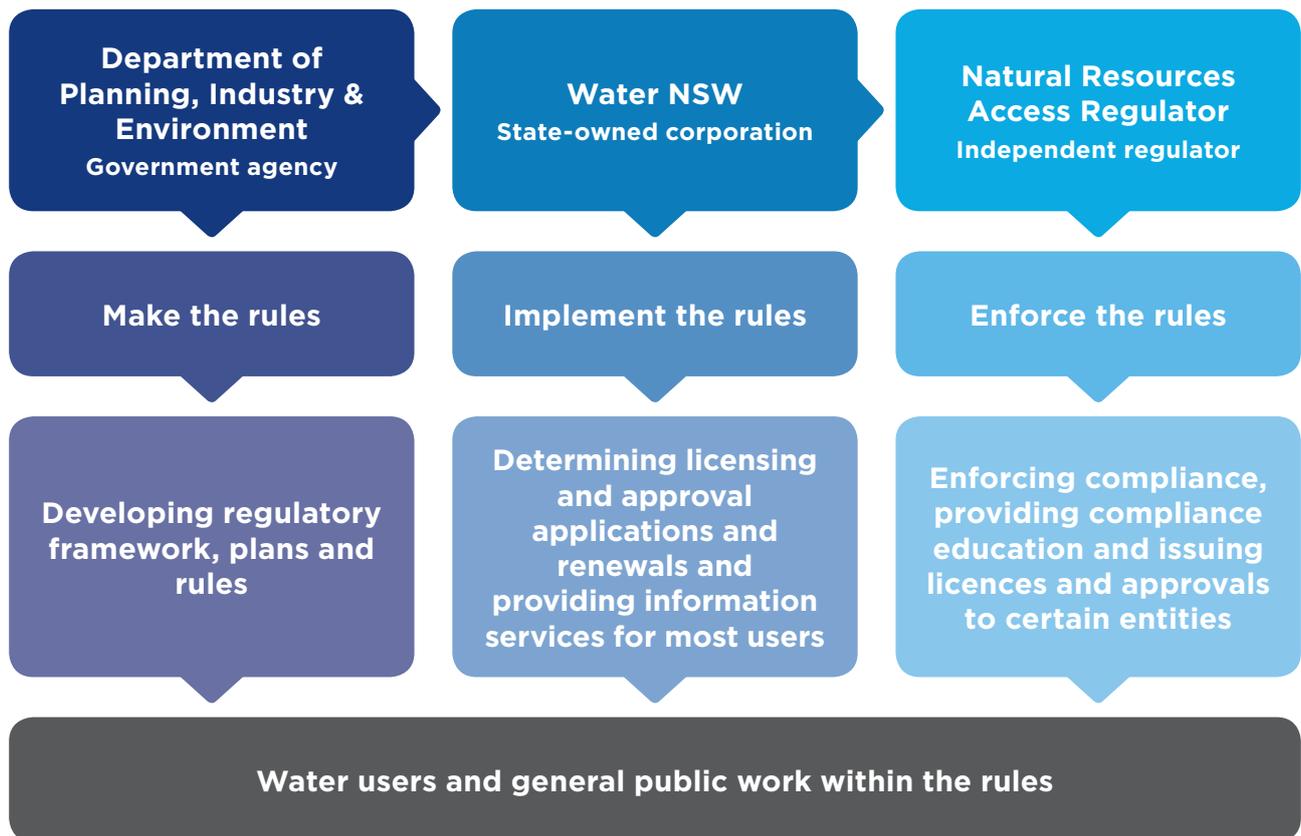
### Next steps:

- **12 August 2019**—final date for submissions, public exhibition period closes
- **Q4, 2019**—submissions reviewed and review report published
- **Q4, 2019**—amendments made to the regulation
- Implementation of the new requirements will continue:
  - 1 December 2019—for all surface water pumps 500 mm or larger
  - 1 December 2020—for all remaining works in the inland northern region
  - 1 December 2021—for all remaining works in the inland southern region
  - 1 December 2023—for all remaining works in the coastal regions.

More detailed information is available here: [industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework](https://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework)

# Agencies responsible for water management in NSW

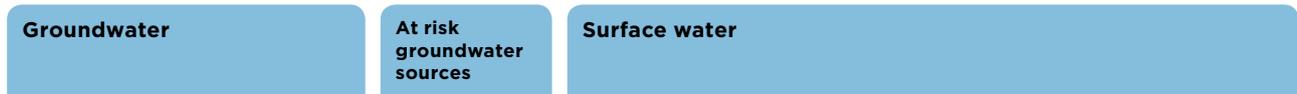
The Water Renewal Taskforce sits within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. The department is one of three key agencies responsible for water management in NSW. The department works together with WaterNSW and the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR).



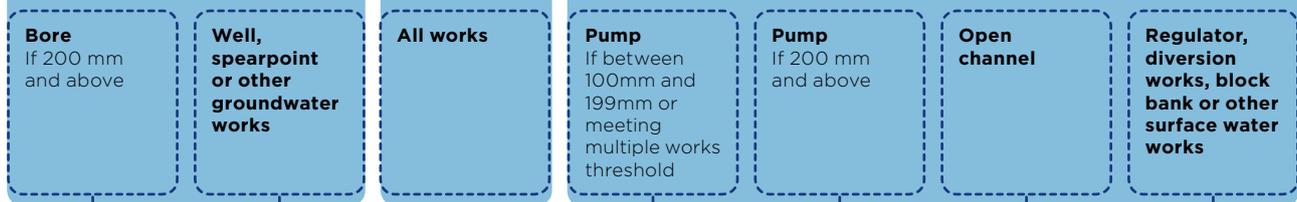
# Do the new rules apply to me?

## A guide

### Where is your work taking water from?



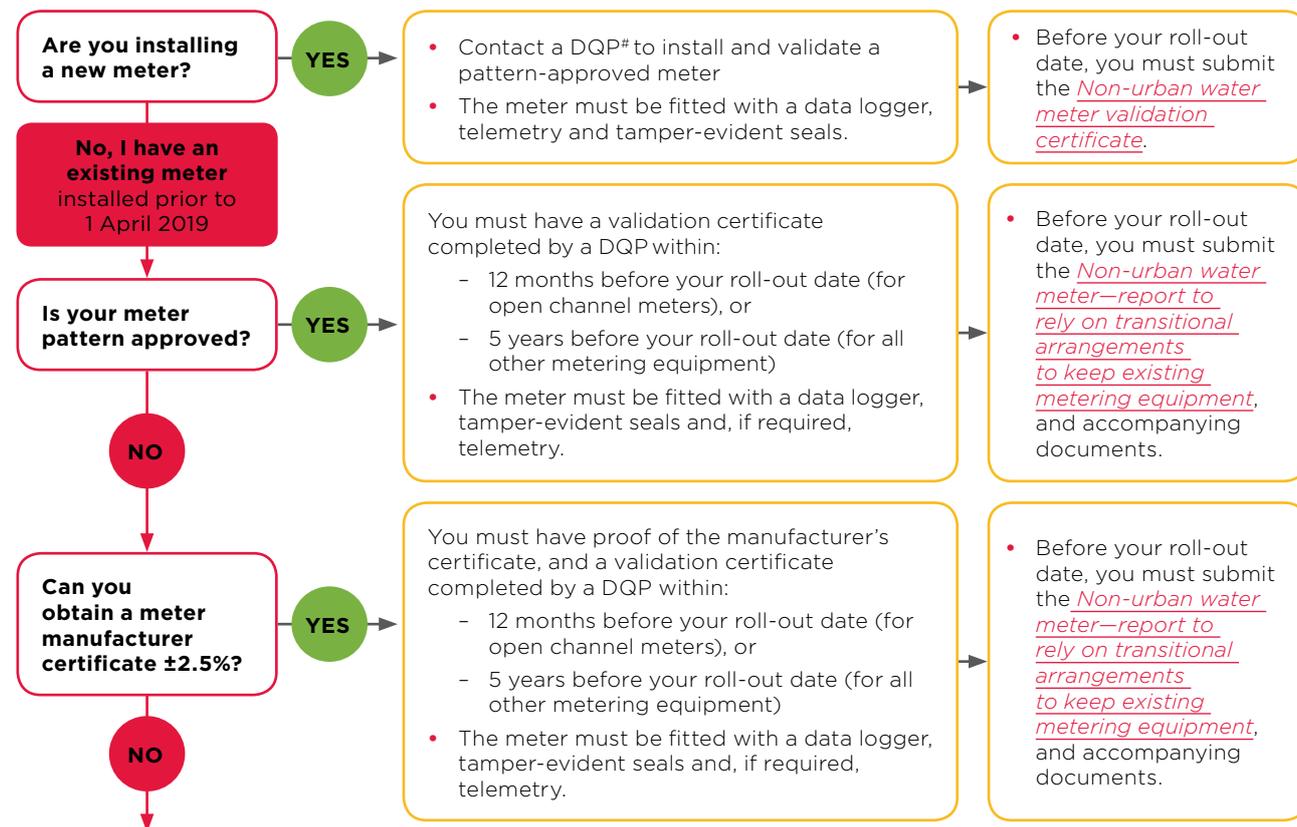
### What type of work?



### You are required to comply with the new metering requirements by your roll-out date



### How do I comply with the rules?



Your meter must be tested in the field for accuracy by a DQP and, the maximum error must not exceed  $\pm 5\%$

- The meter must be fitted with a data logger, tamper-evident seals and if required, telemetry.

- Before your roll-out date, you must submit:
  - [Non-urban water meter—certificate of accuracy for existing meter \(not pattern-approved\)](#), and
  - [Non-urban water meter—report to rely on transitional arrangements to keep existing metering equipment](#), and any accompanying documents.

Note: if you cannot meet the requirements for existing meters you will need to install a new meter

For more information, go to the [Metering Guidance Tool](#)

#DQP: Duly Qualified Person

\* i.e. within the state government's telemetry system

## Links to more information:

- [NSW Metering Guidance Tool](#)
- Background: water reform in NSW: [industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform)
- Background: the NSW non-urban water metering framework: [industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework)
- NRAR's compliance approach [industry.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/205790/NRAR-compliance-approach-metering-regulations-fact-sheet.pdf](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/205790/NRAR-compliance-approach-metering-regulations-fact-sheet.pdf)
- The Farm Innovation Fund: [dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub](http://dpi.nsw.gov.au/climate-and-emergencies/droughthub)

## Contact us

Water Renewal Taskforce – Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

- By email: [\*\*water.reform@industry.nsw.gov.au\*\*](mailto:water.reform@industry.nsw.gov.au)
- Website: [\*\*industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework\*\*](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework)

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