

Natural Resources Access Regulator service charter



The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is responsible for ensuring compliance with water management legislation across NSW. We undertake this work on behalf of all NSW citizens and aim to secure and protect water and river environments as valuable resources.

Our commitment: transparency and accountability

NRAR aims to be a best practice regulator that is transparent in its operations and accountable to the people of NSW. We are committed to providing clear and specific advice about the service we provide and the expected timeframes for delivery. By honouring our commitments, we can maintain public confidence in the enforcement of water legislation.

We will do all that is reasonable and within our power to ensure matters brought to our attention receive a timely and efficient response.

NRAR delivers for all water users

We undertake our activities on behalf of all citizens of NSW. We are a risk-based regulator, which means we focus on the potential risks of non-compliance. **We take action to enforce compliance with water law when activities cause harm to water users, communities or the environment.** This approach allows us to focus on the good of the community, rather than on pursuing legal action at every turn. That is not to say that we won't act when harmful activities are taking place. We have commenced more than 25 prosecutions when harmful behaviours have occurred.

However, we are not an advocacy body. Private legal advice should be sought should you wish to pursue a personal outcome under water management legislation, which is your right.

All reports of suspicious water activity made to NRAR are assessed to:

- i) determine whether an investigation is required; or otherwise,
- ii) establish patterns of conduct that inform strategic, proactive compliance monitoring, education and audit activities.

Timeframes and actions

We aim to respond to your requests for our services in a timely and efficient manner. Please find our standard response times outlined in the table below. Please note that complex matters may take longer to finalise.

Correspondence and enquiries

All correspondence or enquiries will be responded to **within 20 working days** of receipt (unless complex, where you will be contacted with an estimated response time within five working days of receipt).

This includes emails received through the hotline, letters sent direct to us and correspondence received through the Minister's office.

Government Information (Public Access) requests

We will meet the statutory timeframes, but will always aim to deliver information earlier than these maximum limits and look to proactively release information when possible.

Controlled activity approvals (CAAs)

We commit to processing applications for controlled activities efficiently and ensure a rigorous assessment process. We will:



process **low-risk CAAs** within **20 working days** of receipt



process **medium-and high-risk* CAAs** within **45 working days** of receipt.

* A higher risk rating indicates higher complexity, which increases processing time.

Investigations

We assess suspicious activity reports against our triage criteria to determine the appropriate course of action – which may include investigation.

When you lodge a report with us, we commit to:



Acknowledge receipt of the report by email and provide a reference number at the time of lodgement



Review the report and conduct a preliminary assessment to determine if an investigation is required **within 5 working days**



Advise you of our intention to investigate your report, should the assessment indicate this is required, **within 10 working days of making that determination**



Commence work on any high priority investigations, as determined by the assessment, **within 15 working days**. We will normally commence work earlier than this for reports of serious breaches where urgent investigation is required



Advise you of the outcome of an investigation when it has been completed.

As a risk-based regulator we focus on the potential risks of non-compliance and tailor our actions accordingly. We are committed to progressing our compliance response to the information you report promptly. However, several factors can affect the timeliness of our response, including; case complexity, our overall volume of investigations, access to supporting information and access to the site.

Our policy is to not provide specific details of any case during the course of an investigation to avoid prejudicing or interfering with our work. As an informant however we may contact you to obtain further information, or provide an expected timeframe and advice if any significant delays occur.

Complaints handling

An essential component of transparent and accountable regulatory practice is a commitment to timely and effective complaints handling that adheres to best practice principles.

The 3 stage approach below is based on the NSW Ombudsman's recommended standard for NSW Government agencies. Our staff are aware of this process and are committed to resolving complaints in the first stage at every opportunity.

Stage 1

If you have a complaint about any aspect of your dealings with NRAR, please **contact our enquiries hotline on 1800 633 362 or email us at nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au**. Be sure to quote your reference number if you have one and leave your details so that we can contact you back with a response. Following receipt of your complaint you will be contacted **within 3 working days**.

Stage 2

If you are unsatisfied with how your complaint was resolved in this first stage, please lodge a complaint through the DPIE 'Feedback Assist' complaints portal, which can be found through the widget on the right-hand side of our website landing page: **www.industry.nsw.gov.au/natural-resources-access-regulator**. Following receipt of your complaint you will be contacted **within 5 working days**.

Stage 3

If you feel that your complaint remains unresolved then you can contact the NSW Ombudsman, who is charged with scrutinising NSW Government agency activities. A complaint can be lodged through their online portal here: **www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/making-a-complaint**