

## **Response to water take measurement and metering consultation**

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Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the NSW Department of Industries Water take measurement and metering consultation paper.

Arguably the most important step in good water management is ensuring accurate data collection. Serious questions around the integrity of data available on water extractions in the Northern Basin - especially the unregulated Barwon-Darling River - abound following allegations of broken, faulty and inaccurate meters and a culture of non-compliance within state government departments.

The public value our rivers very highly, and expect a very high level of water take measurement and compliance to extraction volumes.

### **Consultation topic 1: When should a meter be required?**

*Should every water user be metered, or should thresholds apply?*

100% of water use in water quantity terms should be measured.

Anything less and a 'no meter, no pump' would be unacceptable to the public.

There must be consistency across all water sources.

### **Consultation topic 2: What type of metering equipment and reporting will be required?**

I support the implementation of reliable, accurate, tamper-proof meters which enable data to be digitised and stored in the cloud. The digitisation of data linked to blockchain technology is virtually incorruptible. This type of technology records data in chronological order and is not controlled by one single entity.

### **Consultation topic 3: How should the metering requirements be rolled out?**

I support the immediate roll out of compulsory metering on 100% of pumps across high risk catchments as a priority.

High risk catchments should include systems with high connectivity and high use of held environmental water.

### **Consultation topic 4: Who should own meters?**

*Should meters be owned by government, licence holders, or both?*

The meters should be purchased and maintained by the licence holder. The \$221,000,000 budget available through the MDBA to supply meters to extractors in the Northern Basin was reduced to \$30,000,000 as irrigators chose not to be supplied with working meters through the MDBP. As the balance of this budget, some \$191 million was spent on other projects as determined by the industry, the public would expect that more financial aid in this regard would be unwarranted.