

## **Response to transparency measures consultation**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the NSW Water Reform Action Plan "Transparency Measures" consultation paper.

### **Consultation topic 1: What information should be included in a public register and why?**

*Is the information already available on the NSW Water Register and Water Access Licence Register enough to provide greater transparency of water use? If not, what else is needed and why?*

Information that is currently available on NSW Government registers is not easy to locate or access, and restrictions in release of certain information significantly limits transparency. There is therefore a need for greater transparency. There is also a need for further information to be provided, including:

- information on the location of the license;
- clear transparency on the owner of the licence;
- site use approvals;
- real-time quantity of extraction under each licence;
- historic pumping times, dates and river level;
- trading of licences within and across valleys, and both zero-value and costed trades;
- storage capacity of all works; and
- a list of convictions against each water licence.

*Is the currently available information too complicated and difficult to access? How could it be simplified?*

As stated above, information currently available is difficult to access. We suggest that information should be publicly available in one location. There should not be a fee for accessing information on the Water Access License Register.

*What information should be prioritised for access?*

All information mentioned above needs to be accessible.

*Are there categories of information that should not be made public? What are they and why?*

It is clear that the social licence for a lack of transparency no longer exists, and the water market should operate on a fully transparent system. Any deviation from this significantly reduces transparency and will not be considered acceptable. There are a number of cases where there is full transparency of the market, including the stock market. There is no valid reason to restrict the public release of information of the water market.

*Are there ways that sensitive information can be managed and still made public? For example, by publishing account balances quarterly?*

As outlined above, it will not be perceived as acceptable that there is information not made publicly available. It is clear that there is a strong requirement for transparency of the water market, which can only be achieved through the full public release of information.

*How would you like to be able to search for details and/or data in a public register of water information?*

The key driver of access to information should be principle of transparency. Information should be provided in one location, with information easy to access and interpret. I favour a web mapping tool, however my key concern is the access to the information.

**Consultation topic 2: How to improve information about when water can be taken**

*What issues should be considered in developing a single source of authority on when take of water is permitted and how could those issues be managed? For example, how would this operate in areas with limited internet coverage?*

Water take announcements using the same methods that are used during supplementary water events – combination of web site information, e-mail and SMS notifications to appropriate licence holders.