

NSW Water Reform Action Plan progress

The NSW Government has acted quickly to implement the recommendations from the Matthews Report through the Water Reform Action Plan.

Since committing to the Water Reform Action Plan (WRAP) in December 2017, the NSW Government has delivered on 32 out of the 40 actions designed to establish strong water regulation and transparent water sharing. The remaining actions are due to be completed in 2019.

Completed actions include:

- **Establishing the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)**—an independent, transparent and effective regulator. The NRAR has already undertaken a number of regulatory functions since its establishment, including:
 - commencing six prosecutions
 - issuing 36 penalty infringement notices
 - Issuing 30 statutory notices, ranging from official cautions to directions for remedial works
 - Issuing 219 advisory and warning letters dealing with suspected and alleged breaches.
- **Implementing metering reforms**—on 1 December 2018 the NSW Government commenced a robust new metering framework to improve the standard and coverage of non-urban water meters. The framework was informed by broad community consultation, economic analysis and technical expertise.
- **Protecting environmental water**—investigations into enduring solutions for better protecting environmental water are underway. In December 2018, the NSW Government released a snapshot of our commitment to better manage environmental water in the NSW northern Murray–Darling Basin.
- **Releasing regular progress reports**—to improve transparency the NSW Government has published quarterly reports on progress against the WRAP commitments. These reports are available on the department’s website at industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/water-reform-action-plan-progress-reports.

A summary of the status of each action in the Water Reform Action Plan is provided in Table 1:

Table 1. Status of WRAP actions.

No.	Deliverable	Due	Status
1	Create a division solely focused on the management of land and water resources	Q4 2017	Complete
2	Legislate to establish an independent regulator—the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)	Q4 2017	Complete
3	Appoint an interim chief regulatory officer	Q4 2017	Complete
4	Appoint an independent board to oversee the NRAR	Q4 2017	Complete
5	Appoint a chief regulatory officer	Q2 2018	Complete
6	Develop and publish the Natural Resources Access Regulator Establishment Plan	Q2 2018	Complete

No.	Deliverable	Due	Status
7	Clarify the accountabilities of departments and agencies with water management responsibilities in NSW	Q2 2018	Complete
8	Create clear functional separation between those who provide and sell water to customers and those who oversee and regulate water as a public resource	Q2 2018	Complete
9	Make information on accountability and roles publicly available	Q2 2018	Complete
10	Increase compliance and enforcement resourcing by \$9.5 million per year	Q4 2017	Complete
11	Recruit additional compliance and enforcement officers	Q2 2018	Complete
12	Conduct additional training for all compliance and enforcement staff including investigation techniques	Q3 2018	Complete
13	Invest in case management technology, database and analytics to more effectively target compliance activity	Q3 2018	Complete
14	Report annually on compliance and enforcement activities and publish on the Department of Industry website	Q3 2019	Complete
15	Natural Resources Access Regulator to lead on compliance matters	Q2 2018	Complete
16	NRAR to take appropriate enforcement action, including penalty infringement notices and prosecutions	Q2 2018	Complete
17	WaterNSW to implement mandatory immediate reporting to the NRAR of suspected breaches	Q2 2018	Commenced
18	NRAR to produce and publish clear and effective policies and processes for compliance that also address the recommendations of the Matthews and NSW ombudsman reports and the MDBA's water compliance review	Q2 2018	Complete
19	NRAR to undertake proactive targeted compliance operations	Q4 2018	Complete
20	Consult on a metering and water discussion paper for public consultation incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an approach to implementing 'no meter, no pump' objectives identification of any necessary legislative reforms to support these changes how we monitor metering of water consumption policy on self-reporting and random checks 	Q2 2018	Complete

No.	Deliverable	Due	Status
21	Finalise a timetable for implementing new metering requirements following consultation	Q4 2018	Complete
22	Seek proposals to pilot the use of technology for water monitoring and compliance activities, which could include remote sensing of on-farm water storages and indicators such as crop growth and telemetry	Q2 2018	Complete
23	Develop a water monitoring technology plan	Q1 2019	Commenced
24	Release a discussion paper on creating a public register of water information that could cover water entitlements, water licences and water work approvals	Q2 2018	Complete
25	Publish compliance and enforcement activities	Q3 2018	Complete
26	Publish information on the Department of Industry's website about activities in protecting environmental water	Q4 2018	Complete
27	Regularly report on progress implementing water inquiry reforms	Q1 2018 onwards	Complete
28	Have NRAR establish mechanisms for the public to report alleged breaches, including a statewide hotline and email channel	Q3 2019	Complete
29	Commission an annual, independent review of progress on this plan and publish the results	Q1 2019	Commenced
30	Redesign the Department of Industry website to provide updated and more accessible information on water management	Q1 2019	Commenced
31	Implement a new stakeholder engagement framework	Q1 2018	Complete
32	Develop and publish a schedule of stakeholder engagement activities	Q1 2018	Complete
33	Establish an interagency working group to develop solutions to improve the management of environmental water	Q1 2018	Complete
34	Have the working group present interim solutions within 90 days of commencement	Q2 2018	Complete
34	Publish explanatory materials to inform the public on how environmental water is managed	Q1 2019	Complete
36	Have all NSW water resource plans accredited by the MDBA	Q3 2019	Delayed to Q4 2019

No.	Deliverable	Due	Status
37	Update staff induction processes to emphasise ethical and conduct obligations of staff	Q1 2018	Complete
38	Roll out department-wide ethics and professional standards training	Q1 2018	Complete
39	Commence a 'speak-up' service to enable anonymous reporting of suspected unsatisfactory conduct	Q1 2018	Complete
40	Develop the NSW Department of Industry ethical framework to connect all training, systems and activities to embed ethical behaviour into departmental culture	Q3 2018	Complete

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