

Compliance outcomes

2018 compared with 2017

March 2019 Natural Resources Access Regulator



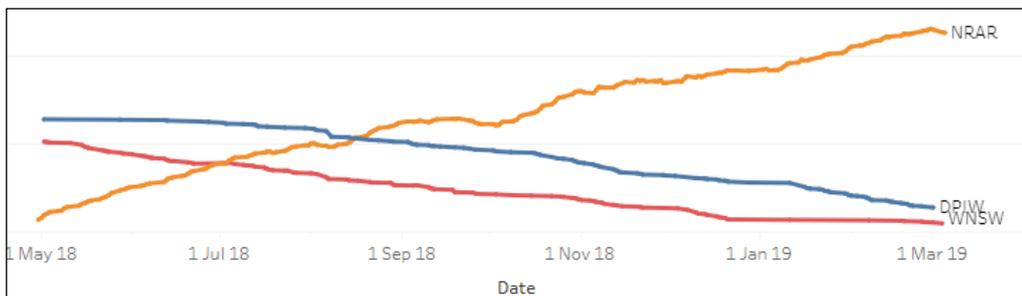
The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) started operating on 30 April 2018 as an independent regulator to enforce NSW's water laws.

The creation of the NRAR marked a renewed focus on water compliance in NSW and has resulted in a significant increase of compliance officers on the ground throughout the state. We started with 73 staff and are now in the final stages of recruiting to our full capacity of nearly 150. We have around 90 staff on the frontline, active in licensing, targeted investigations, monitoring and auditing.

Performance so far

When the NRAR began, we inherited from previous water regulation agencies (Department of Primary Industries—Water and WaterNSW) 483 cases of alleged breaches. At 15 March 2019, a total of 407 of these cases had been resolved. We expect the remaining 76 investigations will be completed by the end of March, with some proceeding to legal action.

Figure 1. Active cases over time



NRAR cases

Compared with 2017, in 2018 we received 70% more cases for investigation, and we finalised 80% more cases. As of 15 March 2019, there were 444 new NRAR cases on the books.

We expect the number of open cases to continue to increase in the short term due to our increased regulatory presence and strong action.

We take a risk-based approach in responding to concerns brought to our attention from members of the public, and direct our efforts and resources towards higher-risk allegations of non-compliance.





Monitoring and auditing

The NRAR is organised to deliver the best regulatory outcomes. We have a functional split between the proactive and reactive elements of our compliance activities. The new Monitoring and Audit teams proactively watch the regulated water environment, gathering information through audit campaigns, satellite and remote imagery, and intelligence received from the public. They use this information to identify patterns of conduct and areas of non-compliance.

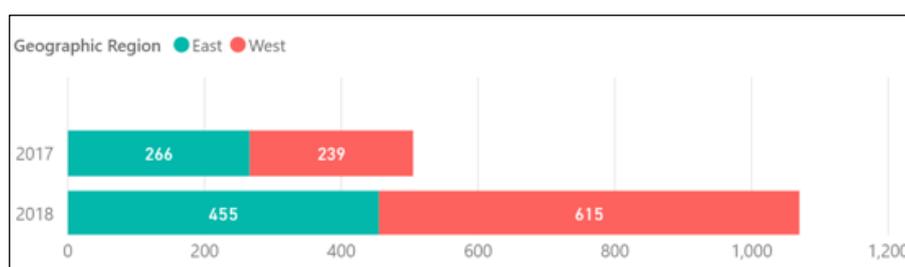
Their work informs the reactive work of the Investigations and Enforcement teams and the NRAR's education teams, who advise stakeholders on how to comply with the law. This combined approach lets us address compliance issues as they arise and strategically pursue our identified regulatory priorities.

Enforcement actions

In 2018, compared to the previous year, there were:

- five times as many allegations of unlawful water take received
- more than four times as many directions to remove unlawful water management works
- more than three times the number of penalty notices issued
- more than double the total number of enforcement actions determined.

Figure 2. Enforcement actions endorsed in 2017–18 by region



In the Murray–Darling Basin in 2018, compared with 2017, there were:

- approximately 110% more cases received for investigation, and over 10% more cases finalised
- over 150% more enforcement actions determined.

The Murray–Darling Basin is home to many of Australia's unique plants and animals, and supports Australia's largest agricultural sector. Communities across NSW depend on a healthy Basin.

In the Northern Rivers region in 2018, compared with 2017, there were:

- approximately 30% more cases received
- 25% more cases finalised.

The increased presence of the NRAR staff and the actions taken in the Northern Rivers sends a strong message of deterrence.

Anyone looking to circumvent the regulations and make unlawful, inequitable or non-compliant use of this precious natural resource is on notice that taking more water than they are licenced for is theft, and we will ensure all transgressions are appropriately punished.