

WAL exemption FAQs

Excavation dewatering taking greater than 3 ML of groundwater per year

October 2020 Natural Resources Access Regulator



The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is an independent regulator established under the NSW *Natural Resources Access Regulator Act 2017*. The current regulatory focus of NRAR is water regulation, a key part of which is to prevent, detect and stop unlawful water activities.

This document answers some frequently asked questions regarding water access licence (WAL) exemptions for excavation dewatering taking greater than 3 megalitres of groundwater per year.

Where does the exemption apply?

The exemption only applies in the Botany Sands Groundwater Source (as at August 2020).

What activities does the exemption apply to?

The exemption only applies for groundwater taken through dewatering to conduct excavation for buildings, roads and infrastructure.

Is this a permanent exemption?

No, it will only apply until 1 July 2021 or until a controlled allocation of access licences occurs, whichever happens first. During this time, longer term arrangements for managing temporary take by infrastructure dewatering activities will be considered.

What if I take less than 3 ML?

You can rely on the water access licence exemption for take by [aquifer interference activities of 3ML](#) or less per year per groundwater source.

Is the exemption conditional?

Yes, you can rely on the exemption if:

- an extraction limit has been put on your approval
- your take is recorded using a datalogger and an approved meter
- a record of your take is made weekly and provided to the minister by 29 July each year.

What about the potential impacts of water taken under this exemption?

An assessment of the local impacts of the activity and an approval are still required unless an approval exemption applies. A major benefit of the exemption for water management is that proponents must meter and report the volume of groundwater taken.



Do the metering regulations apply?

Yes. Proponents are required to use a meter approved under the metering regulations to measure the water they take. They must also use a datalogger, but this does not need to meet approved specifications under the metering regulations.

Can I still report my take after 29 July for the 2019–20 water year?

Yes. Although the form for making this record was not available before 29 July 2020, you should use the current reporting form to report any take made under the exemption during the 2019–20 water year.

Do I need telemetry?

No. The regulations specify that the record of take must be given to the minister (or delegated representative) and the way to do this is set out on the recording form.

How do I report my take?

For the 2019–20 water year, proponents can use the paper form that can be downloaded from the NRAR or WaterNSW websites. For the 2020–21 year, the intention is for proponents to be able to make and submit their records electronically.

Why do I have to report water taken under this exemption?

Records of water taken under a licence exemption provide a greater understanding of the full volume of water being taken from a groundwater source under licences, basic landholder rights and exemptions each year. This will inform decision-making and enable better management of the groundwater source.

More information

This fact sheet is one in a series explaining water management, compliance and associated issues. You can find this series and more information about licensing, approvals and compliance on the NRAR website at

www.industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar

Copies of the Acts and associated Regulations are available on the NSW Government legislation site at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

For enquiries call NRAR on 1800 633 362 or email at nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au.

For more information on the Natural Resources Access Regulator visit industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar



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