

Rose Jackson

Minister for Water, Minister for Housing,
Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth



Media Release

Water exemptions made to speed up new homes

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The Minns Labor Government is fast-tracking the delivery of new homes and infrastructure with temporary groundwater license exemptions now in place to speed up construction, slashing red tape and costs for developers.

The exemptions are estimated to support the delivery of 377,000 new homes by 2029, making it easier for eligible projects to access the water they need while maintaining essential environmental safeguards.

Previously, developers required a license to remove more than 3 megalitres of water during excavation and construction activities – a process known as infrastructure dewatering.

Short-term dewatering is common, especially in coastal areas where groundwater tables can be higher, causing water to funnel into work sites, tunnels and foundations. This water must be extracted so projects can proceed safely and efficiently.

The licence exemptions apply to:

- Coastal construction projects until June 2029
- Essential infrastructure projects including road, rail, utility and other works delivered by public authorities across NSW
- Water infrastructure projects delivered by private bodies with approved schemes under the *Water Industry Competition Act 2006*

Eligible works are automatically exempt from needing a water licence; however, developers will still need to comply with the relevant water management rules and regulatory requirements throughout the course of construction.

These requirements may include gaining a water supply work approval through WaterNSW and recording and reporting water take to the Natural Resources Access Regulator.

The reforms involve changes to the *Water Management (General) Regulation 2018* and are part of the commitments made in the Housing Approvals Reform Action Plan announced in February.

For more information, visit [Groundwater access licence exemptions | NSW Government Water](#)

Quotes Attributable to Minister Jackson:

“This is about removing pointless delays and getting homes built. We're making it easier to start building the homes and infrastructure our communities need, while keeping strong environmental protections in place. Tackling the housing crisis means backing practical solutions that get homes built across NSW.

“We're using every lever at our disposal to supercharge housing and infrastructure for New South Wales, by slashing unnecessary red tape and streamlining approvals to allow builders to get shovels in the ground sooner.

“We asked NSW Government agencies to work together to find smarter solutions to fast-track the housing and infrastructure we desperately need.

“Importantly, there are no changes to the existing approvals processes, which thoroughly assess all projects and can place appropriate caps on dewatering on a case-by-case basis.

“These exemptions are a great step forward, addressing industry concerns and getting homes and critical infrastructure built faster.”

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