



Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water



Customer Advisory Group (CAG) afternoon sessions Peel

Water Group

Peter Hansen
Engagement, Water Group

March-April 2026



Acknowledgement of Country



The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and water, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging.

We do this through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

Artist and designer Nikita Ridgeway from Aboriginal design agency – Boss Lady Creative Designs, created the People and Community symbol.



Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water



Acknowledgement of local community

I would also like to acknowledge our farmers, graziers, councils and local communities and the support they provide to their communities and the country.

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Peel CAG Presentation

Peter Hyde
Director Inland Planning

16 March 2026



Northern Basin Connectivity

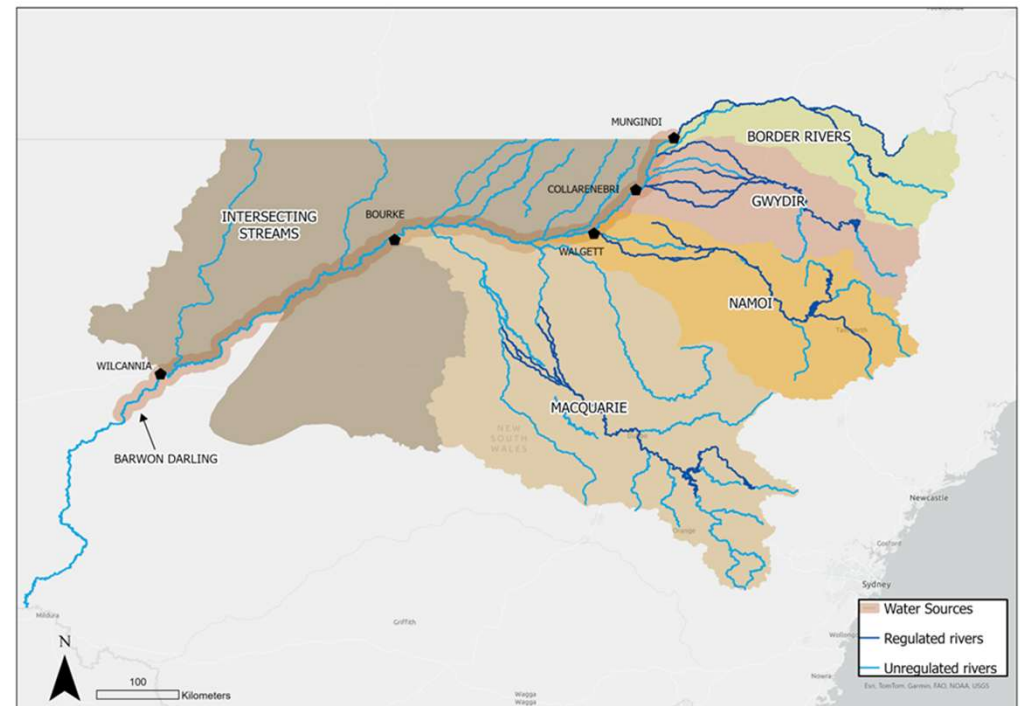
Northern Basin Connectivity Program

Project objective

- Improve river connectivity between the Barwon-Darling and its tributary systems and then downstream to provide for human and environmental needs

Expected project outcomes

- Northern Basin water sharing plans include provisions that aim to improve water flowing across connected catchments and manage resumption of flows. This will
 - increase transparency on how system operates under a range of conditions
 - reduce reliance on temporary water restrictions (s.324)
 - protect environmental water flows from northern to southern basin
- May result in changes to all regulated and unregulated water sharing plans in the northern Basin

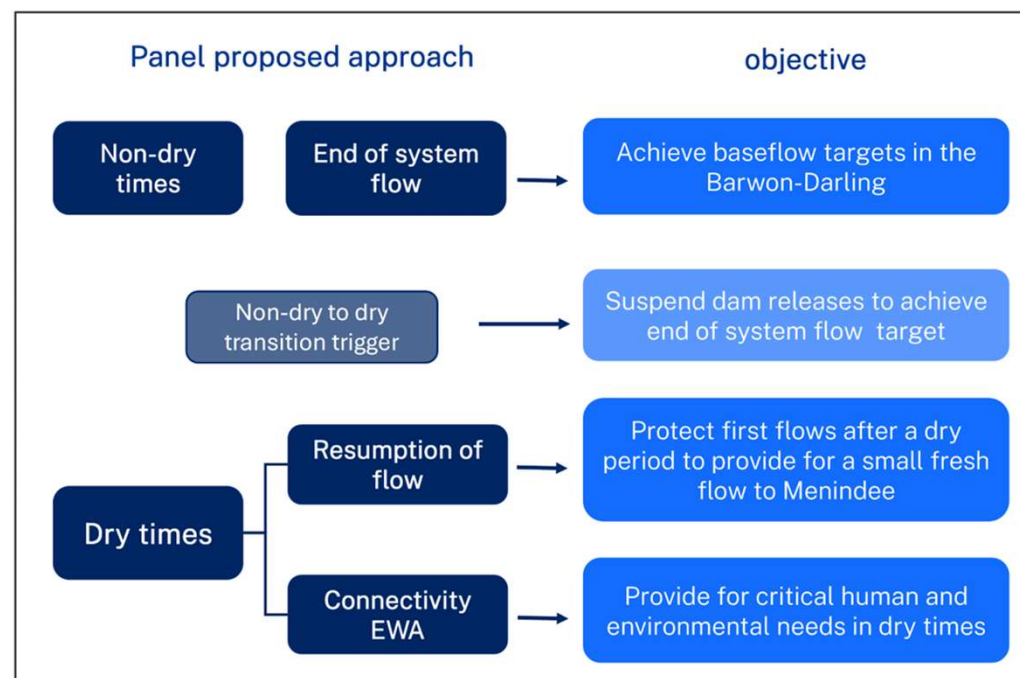


Map of northern NSW Murray-Darling Basin

Panel recommendations

Panel proposed management options and rules for 3 climatic conditions

- **Non-dry times rules** are intended to maintain adequate downstream flows and ‘wetness’ of the system during these times to help the ecosystem to be more resilient and able to withstand drought
- **Transition from non-dry to dry times rules** are intended to provide for when the system begins to enter a “dry” stage and suspend dam releases to meet end of system targets
- **Dry times rules** are intended to allow the ecosystem to recover from drought as quickly as possible and provide for critical needs during extended droughts



Overview of Panel's objectives and proposed approach for improving connectivity

Panel recommended that water protected through these rules should be protected through to Menindee Lakes

End of System flow

Aims to achieve baseflows in the Barwon-Darling in non-dry times

Panel's recommendation:

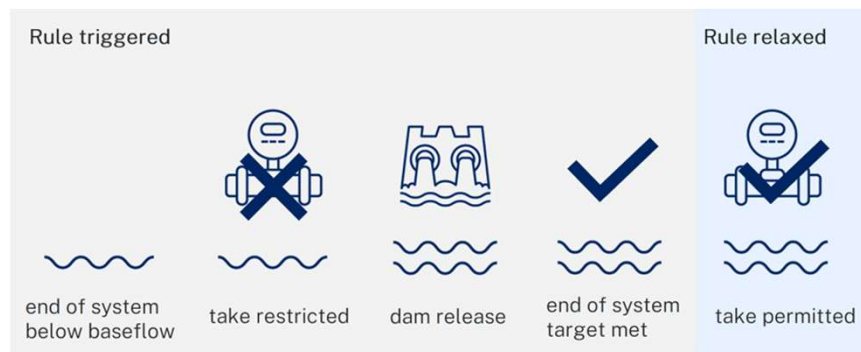
- water sharing plans should have an end of system (EoS) flow rule to enable Barwon-Darling base flow requirements in non-dry times
- achieved through limitations on supplementary and floodplain harvesting access in the first instance, with releases from storages if these flows are not adequate
- dam releases are suspended when system enters dry phase (dam inflows fall below the 75th percentile on average over 30 days)

What was modelled:

Two approaches for making dam releases to meet EoS targets:

- high security account: releases from a new high security account
- translucency: a proportion of the daily dam inflow is released

How the rule would work



Where the rule was applied

- Border Rivers, Gwydir and Namoi regulated valleys

Extended resumption of flow

Aims to provide for a small fresh flushing flow to Menindee following an extended dry period

Panel's recommendation:

- resumption of flow rules should be applied in northern tributaries as well as the Barwon-Darling
- After a dry period, supplementary and floodplain harvesting access in the tributary valleys should be restricted until there has been a small fresh flow along the Barwon-Darling

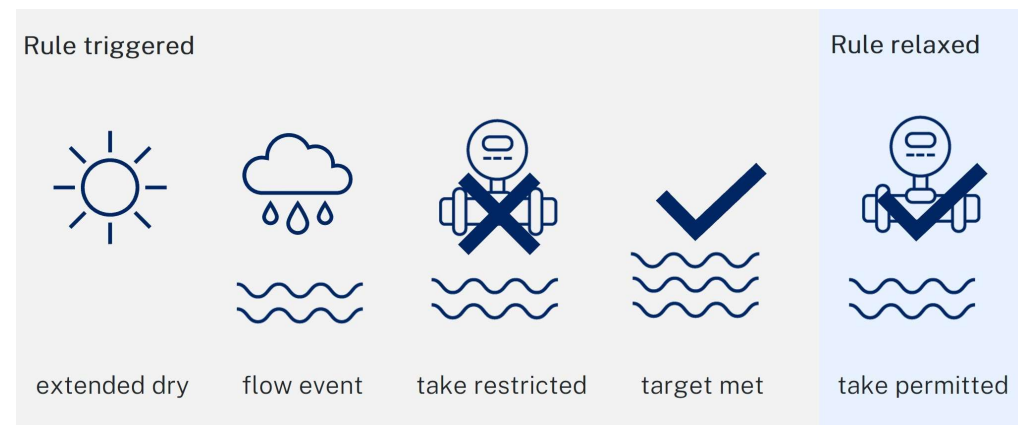
What was modelled

Panel's proposed flow targets and trigger locations to restrict access in tributary valleys until all downstream targets met

- access restricted after non-achievement of base flow for 90 days
- restrictions lifted when 14-day small fresh forecast to be met

Trigger locations: Wilcannia, Louth, Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett, Collarenebri and Mungindi

How the rule would work



Where the rule was applied

- Border Rivers, Gwydir, Namoi and Macquarie regulated valleys (restrictions to supplementary and floodplain harvesting)
- Barwon-Darling –restrictions to A/B/C class licences and floodplain harvesting

Connectivity Environmental Water Allowance

Aims to use storage releases to reconnect pools to provide for critical needs during dry times

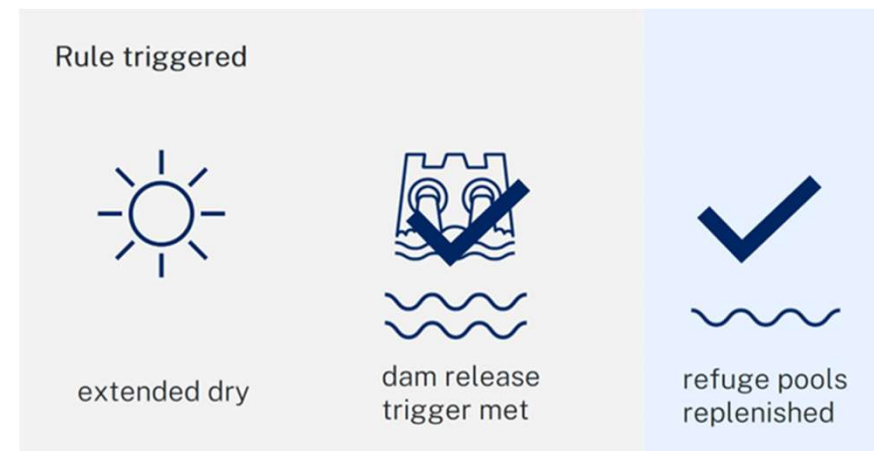
Panel's recommendation:

- Gwydir, Namoi and Border Rivers regulated water sharing plans should include a connectivity environmental water allowance (EWA) to provide pulses releases as needed for water quality and other environmental outcomes during dry times
- At minimum provide for reconnecting pools for critical human needs, environmental and water quality needs in dry times

We modelled 2 approaches:

- Connectivity EWA-dam inflow trigger
 - releases triggered 31 October and 28 February if dam inflows are below the dry inflow trigger (below 75th percentile for 30 days).
 - EWA provided for up to 2 large releases (20GL) from each valley
- Connectivity EWA -Bourke flow trigger
 - releases triggered when flow at Bourke are below baseflow (450ML/day for 120 days)
 - EWA provided for up to 1 smaller release (10 GL) from each valley

How the rule would work



Where the rule applies:

- Border Rivers, Gwydir and Namoi regulated valleys

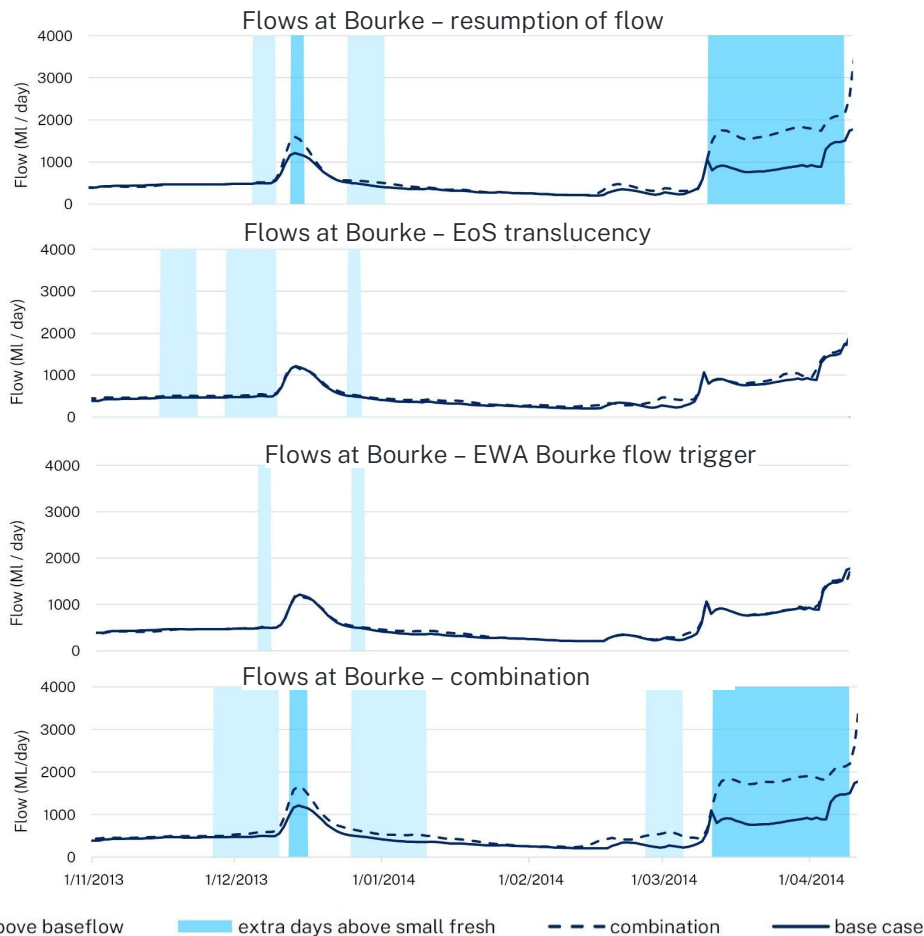
Combination–flow and diversion changes



Aims to provide an example of how Panel’s recommendations might work together

Flow changes

Example of change in flows at Bourke when Panel’s recommendations are applied individually and in combination. Nov 2013-April 2014



Diversion changes

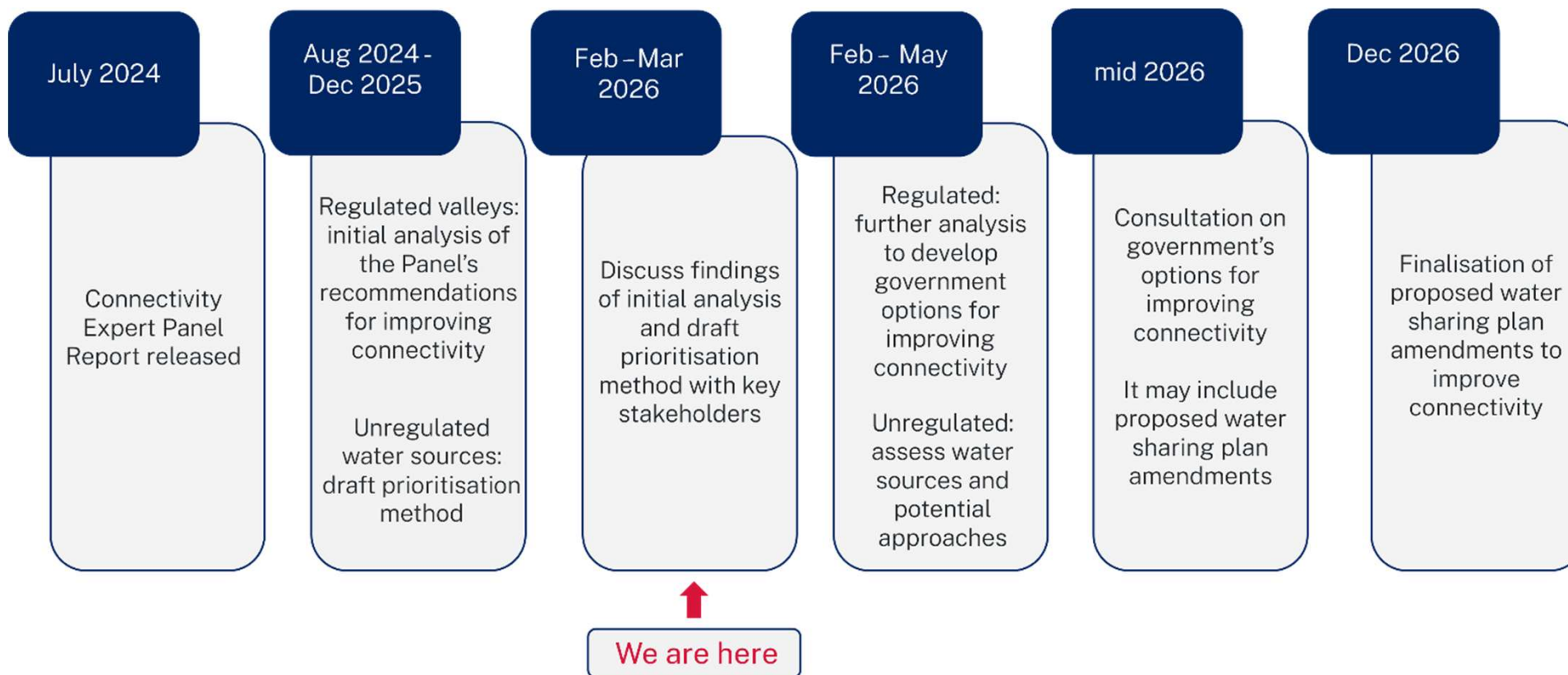
The combination of rules modelled changed average diversion by

- 8-9% in Border Rivers, Gwydir and Namoi
- 0.8 % in Macquarie
- 2.1% in Barwon-Darling

Long-term average change in diversions (1895-2023) for combination (EoS – translucency, extended RoF, connectivity EWA - Bourke flow trigger). Includes absolute (GL/y) and relative change (%) from the base case.

Valley	Base case	Combination	
	GL/y	GL/y	%
Border Rivers	214.2	-18.3	-8.5
Gwydir	446.2	-37.4	-8.4
Namoi	252.6	-22.9	-9.1
Macquarie	330.2	-2.6	-0.8
Barwon-Darling	171.3	-3.6	-2.1

Next steps – Northern Basin Connectivity



Minimum Inflows

Minimum Inflows project



Incorporating risk of climate change and variability into water allocations

The Minimum inflows project will:

- review the water that will flow into dams during drought
- adjust the storage reserve to ensure high priority requirements can be met under future climate scenarios

Key outcomes and objectives



Improved capacity to manage water availability under a more variable climate → *more certainty for water users and environment*

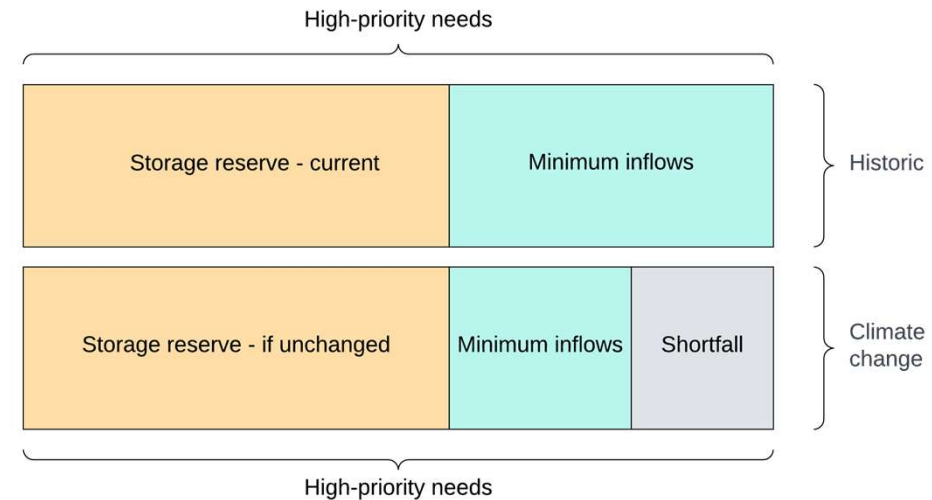


Establishing an agreed likelihood of the Extreme Events Policy being triggered/WSP suspensions → *agreed level of risk for water users and environment*

Why minimum inflows matter

Past droughts (Millennium, Tinderbox) saw record low inflows into dams. This triggered:

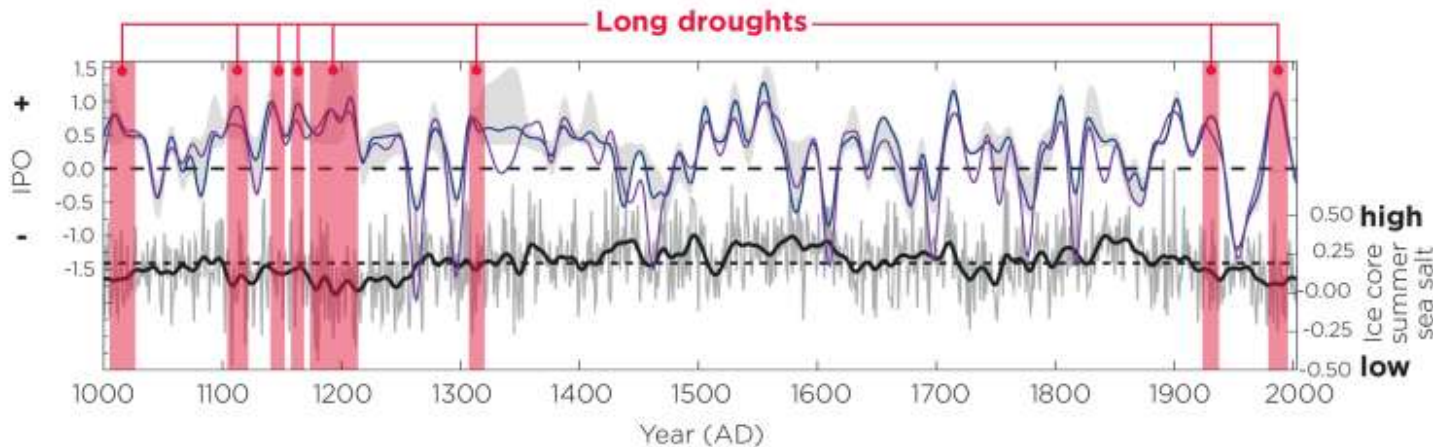
- Extreme Events Policy and Emergency drought measures
- Suspension of water sharing plans
- Reduced allocations for high-priority licences
- Issues delivering water to towns
- Suspension of environmental water to meet critical human needs



Highlighted the need for a review of the current method, particularly with climate change risk

Current approach and new data

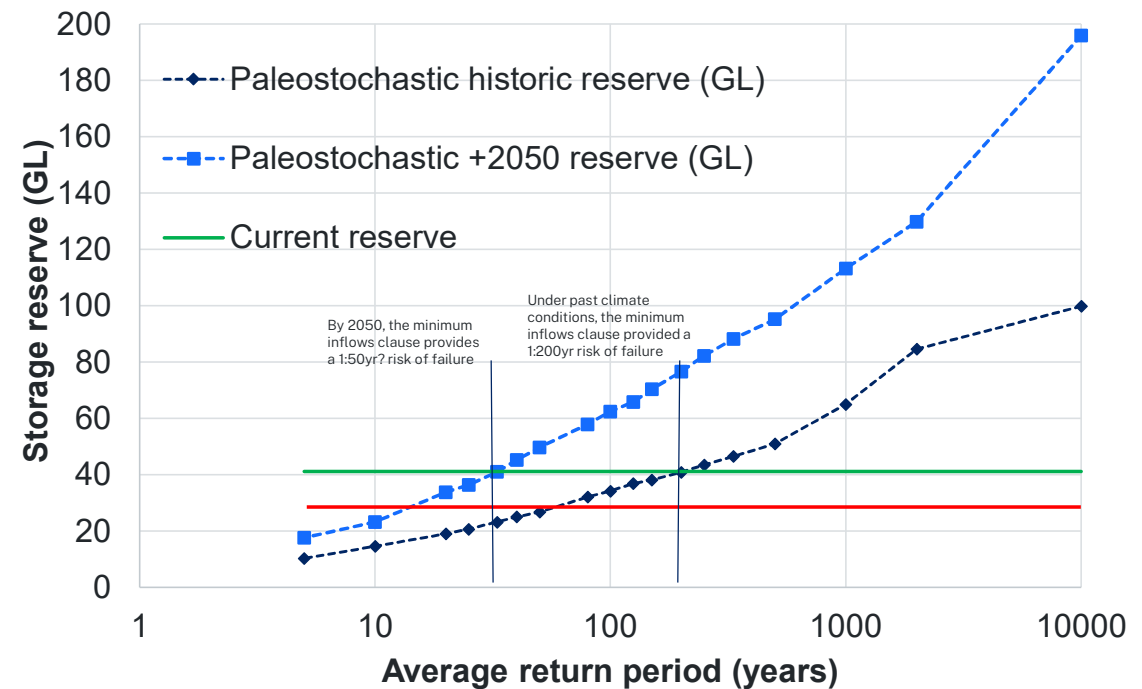
- Use of observed historical data: 1890s to (mostly) 2004 (best available information at the time)
- Excludes the Millennium and Tinderbox droughts and does not consider climate change
- We now have 10,000 years of paleo-stochastic data to better understand long term climate variability and NARClIM 2.0 to help us understand likely climate change impacts
- Picking a single ‘worst drought on record’ like we currently do is not feasible for a 10,000 yr dataset
- New data allows for more nuance in estimating risk and designing WSPs to manage those risks.



New method

- We will need to choose an amount of water to store in the dam to meet a particular level of reliability
- The reliability of the current reserve is approx. 1 in 200 years under historic conditions –or, 1 in 50 years under the 2050 climate (Example only)
- The average stage 4 of the Extreme Events Policy changes from 1 in 75 years to 1 in 20 years.

Comparison of Historic and 2050 projection storage reserve requirements



Method outputs and considerations for decision making



- Impacts and benefits to different licence entitlements/water users
 - Length and severity of expected shortfalls
 - Economic impacts
 - Environmental impacts
 - High priority needs (e.g., basic landholder rights, town water supply, high security, environmental water)
-

Office of the Chief Science Engineer Expert Panel review



- OCSE review was completed in July 2025
- Endorsement of the method with 13 recommendations across 3 categories
- Key feedback was:
 - Represents a strong conceptual framework to estimate the impact of climate change and variability on estimates of minimum inflows.
 - Use of paleo-stochastic data adjusted with climate data is transparent and an improvement compared to using historical data
- The department's response to the review and how we have and will continue to implement the recommendations was recently released.

Where we are up to and next steps



- The method and response to the OCSE review are available on the website:
<https://www.water.dcceew.nsw.gov.au/our-work/projects-and-programs/minimum-inflows-project>
- Webinars will be held on 11 March for Minimum Inflows and Northern Basin Connectivity
- Modelling and impact analysis is being finalised for northern valleys, and has just begun on southern basin valleys.
- Consultation on the results of analysis and how to apply the method will occur for the northern basin valleys starting in late April, prioritising Border Rivers, Gwydir and Namoi.

Peel Regulated WSP amendments

Proposed Amendments to the Peel Regulated Water Sharing Plan to Increase the Reserve in Chaffey Dam



- A proposal to temporarily increase the reserve by 7.1 GL, in Chaffey Dam for the purposes of improving town water security was discussed with stakeholders in March 2025. The proposal also included a 100 per cent carryover of the Environmental Water Allowance (EWA).
- Water users expressed concern about the impacts on allocations.
- Environmental stakeholders expressed concern about the impacts to environmental water requirements.
- In light of these concerns, limited modelling resources and high Chaffey Dam storage volumes, the proposal was delayed.
- The Minimum Inflows project, which addresses similar issues, is the department's priority.
- Chaffey Dam level is being monitored closely, which is at 93.5 percent (10 March 2026).

Replacement of the Upper and Lower Namoi Regulated WSP 2016

Overview of plan replacement



- 6 inland regulated WSPs are due to expire in June 2026, with the NRC recommending the plans be replaced*
- The Minister for Water has given in-principle support to extend these plans until June 2028 to enable them to be remade
- Plans have been batched (south/north) to smooth resourcing peaks and align with key reform project delivery (where possible).

Inland regulated WSP batches

Batch 1 – deliver by end
December 2027

- Murray and Lower Darling
- Murrumbidgee
- Lachlan

Batch 2 – deliver by 1
July 2028

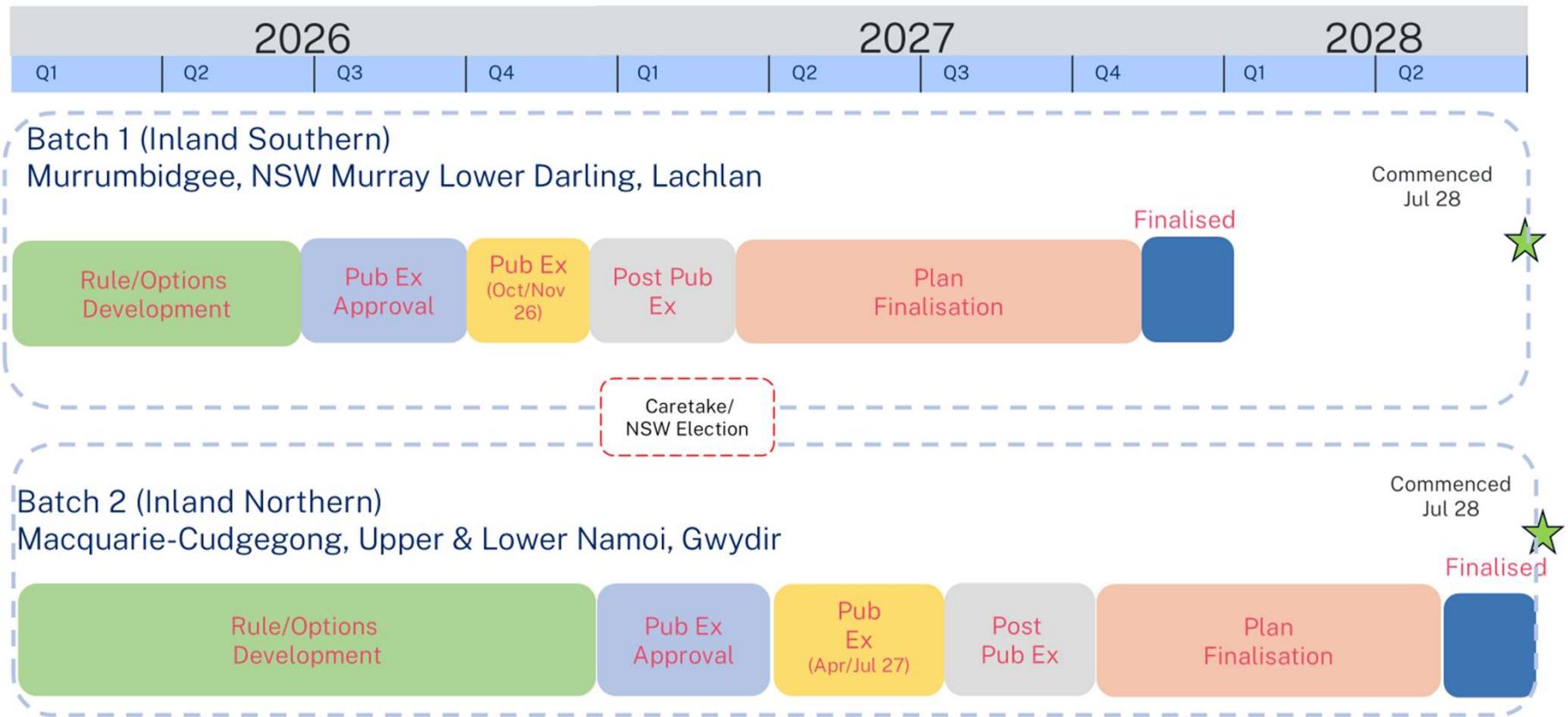
- Macquarie-Cudgegong



Overview of plan replacement



Timing – Inland Regulated WSP replacement – due to expire 2026



Scope of change

Scope will focus on:

- Maximising environmental outcomes with the current PEW and HEW
- NRC recommendations - Water Group have committed to doing during the replacement
- Operational/implementation issues that impact the effectiveness of the plan
- Strengthen protection of environment water where required
- Update information, plan template and correct errors

Out of Scope:

- Changes that are inconsistent with Basin Plan 2012
- Changes that result in a reduction in the protection of PEW
- Anything that would result in being non-compliant with SDL and LTAAELs
- Operational arrangements that sit outside plans
- Matters that are the responsibility of another department/work program

Consultation

- Currently identifying issues to be considered as part of replacement
- Targeted consultation on issues in April/May - opportunity to raise issues
- Targeted consultation to 'road test' proposed changes before public exhibition (2nd half 2026)
- Public exhibition scheduled for early 2027
- Plan expected to be finalised for commencement 1 July 2028

Lapsed unregulated WSPs

Lapsed unregulated WSP update



Replacement status:

- 3 of the 6 unregulated plans that lapsed on 30 June 2025 have now been replaced – Murrumbidgee (Dec 2025), and Barwon-Darling and Lachlan (Feb 2026)
- The 3 plans yet to be replaced are:
 - Namoi and Peel
 - Gwydir
 - Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan

Outstanding issues and next steps:

- Finalise revised CTPs in specific water sources, noting feedback from Sept/Oct 2025 consultation
- Ministerial approval (Minister for Water) and concurrence (Minister for Environment)

Wetlands

WSP protections for wetlands



Project objectives:

- Finalise policy approach and implement across all inland unregulated plans by end of 2026
- Develop a wetlands-specific Minimal Harm Guideline for assessment of new works and trades
- Meet government commitments announced 9 April 2025

Project outcome sought:

- Clear policy that articulates how WSPs help protect different wetland areas, including off-river pools
- Rationale for risks being managed, WSP rules applied and which areas are mapped vs unmapped (criteria)

Wetlands - what's next



Consultation – approximately mid-2026

- 2024 plans – broad consultation on map and rule changes
 - (Intersecting Streams, Border Rivers, Castlereagh, North Western, Lower Murray Darling, Murray plans)
- 2025-6 plans – targeted consultation on FMP derived wetlands only - mapped as at March 2025
 - (Gwydir, Namoi and Peel, Macquarie/Wambuul Bogan, Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, Barwon-Darling plans)
- Current status
 - Policy finalisation in progress
 - Commencing consultation planning

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

Valley specific metering performance update

PRESENTER

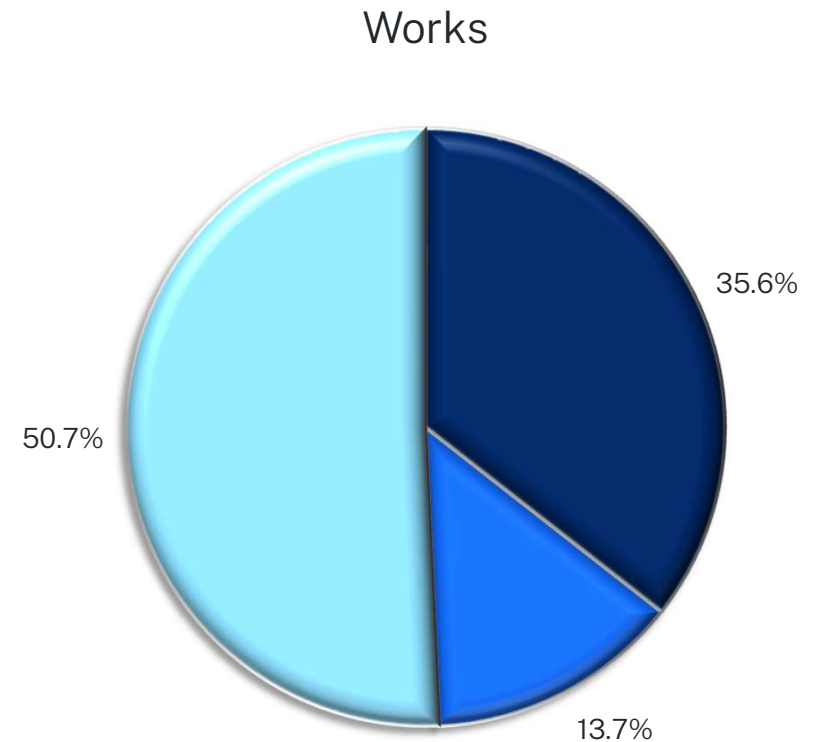
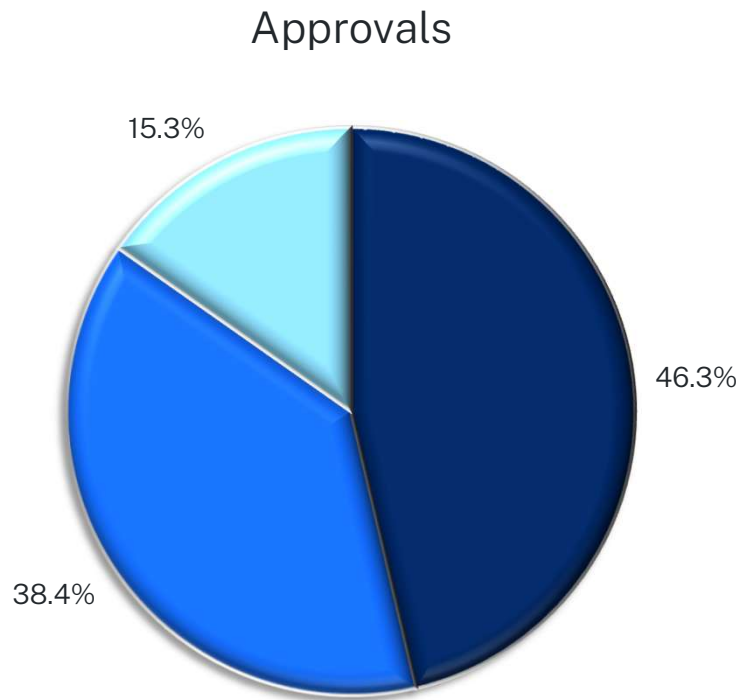
Wayne Andrews
Snr Project Officer – Metering Implementation

Peel CAG meetings

16 March 2026

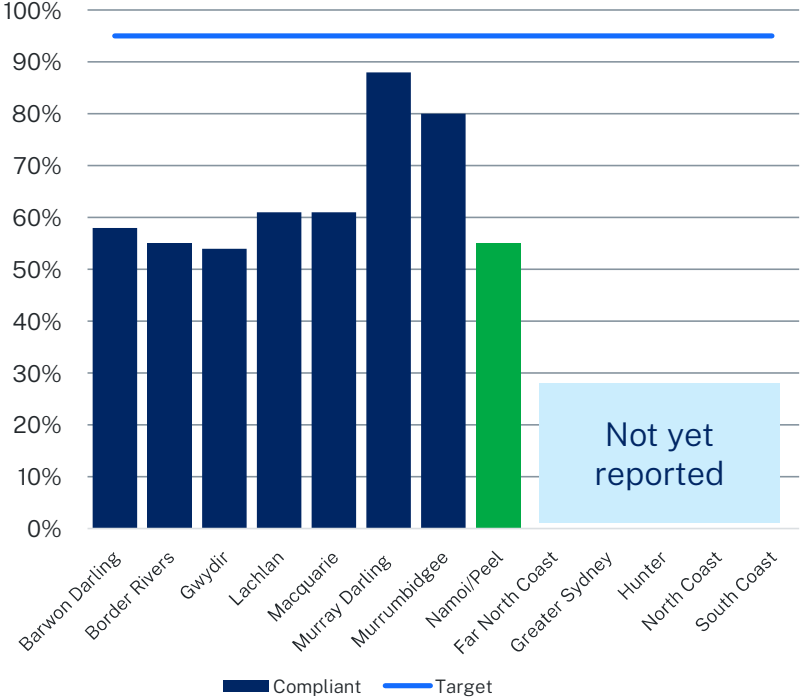
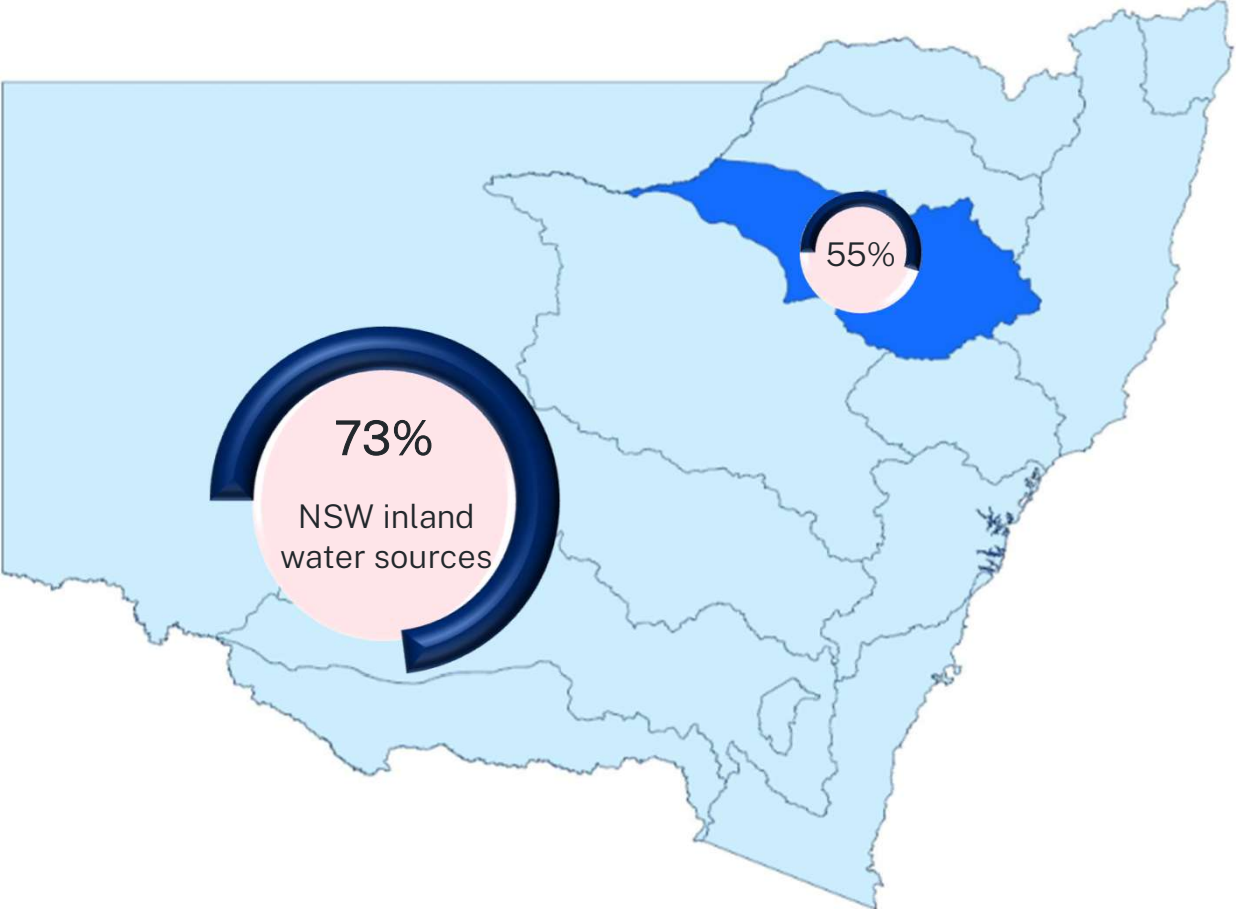


What is the water user profile in Peel Rivers area?



■ Require a DQP ■ Self-installation ■ Exempt

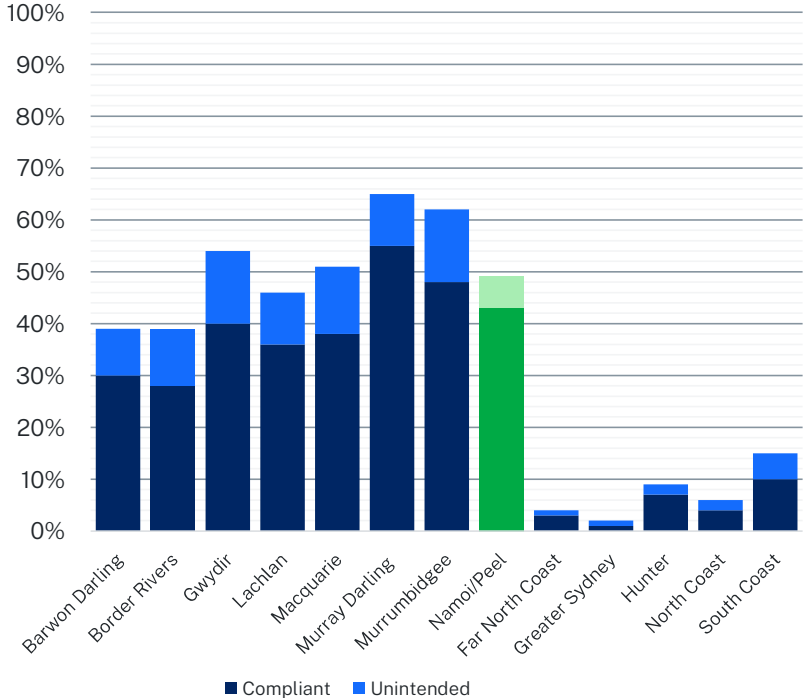
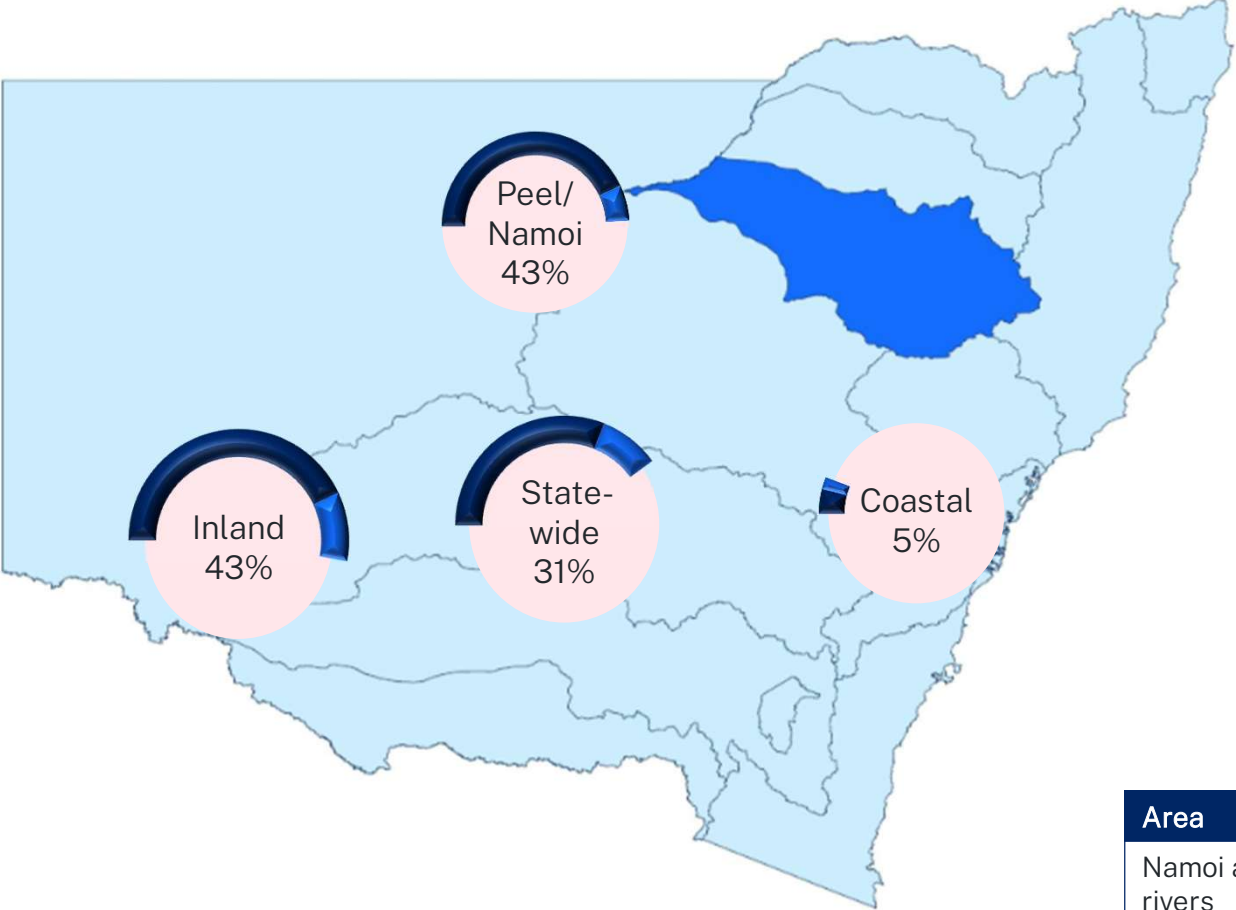
Current compliant volume of entitlement



Includes regulated, unregulated and groundwater. Compliance rate; water users with 100ML or more entitlement, & exclusion of unmeterable works and in-active works. All data sourced from NRAR. Current as at date 25/2/26

Area	Compliant entitlement
Namoi and Peel River	55%
Inland	73%

Current compliance rate of non-metering works



Includes regulated, unregulated and groundwater. Compliance rate; water users with 100ML or more entitlement and exclusion of unmeterable works and in-active works. All data sourced from NRAR. Current as at date 24/02/26.

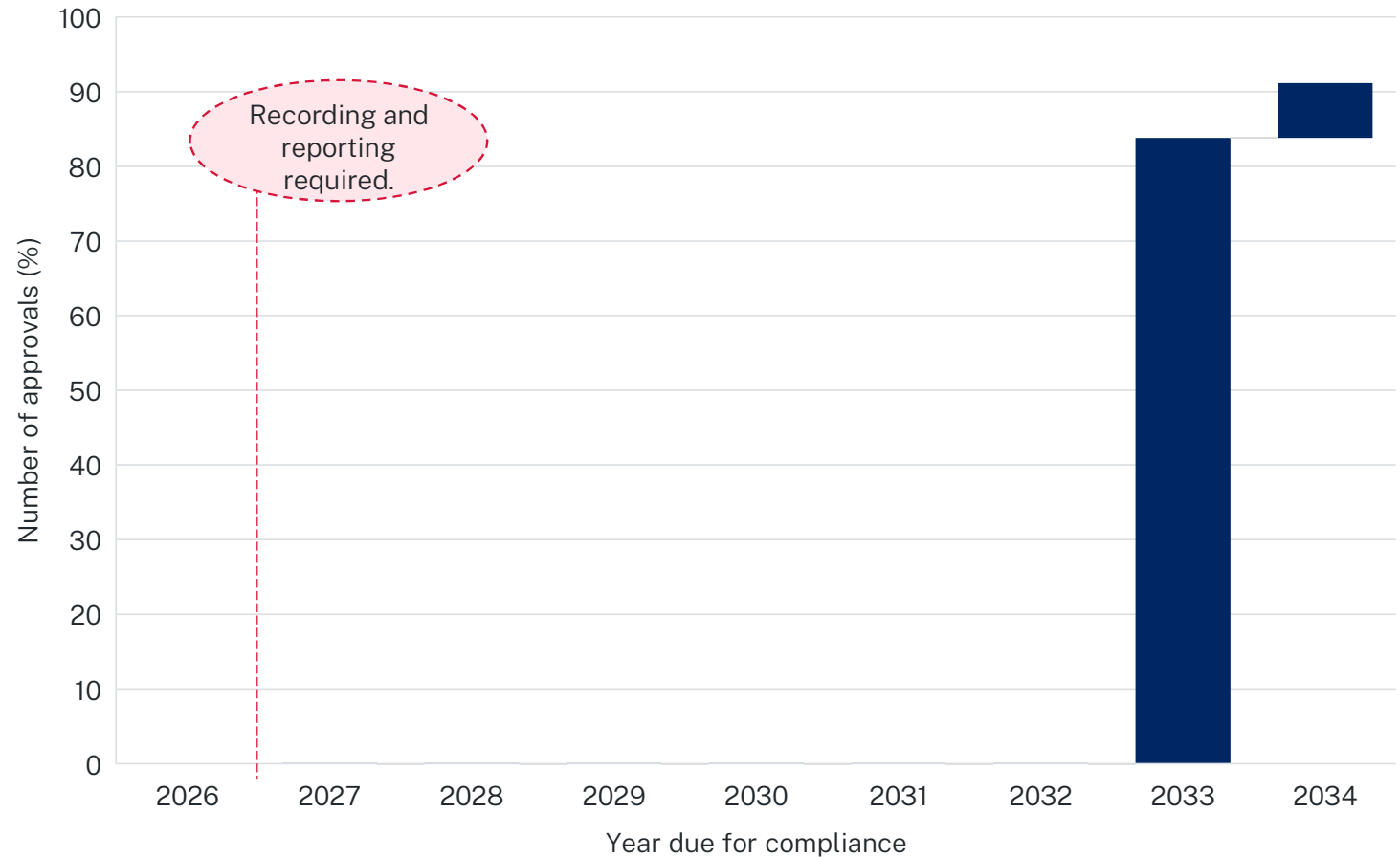
Area	Compliance rate	Classification opportunity
Namoi and Peel rivers	43%	6%
Inland	43%	10%
Coastal	5%	2%
Statewide	31%	9%

Smaller water user compliance dates in Peel area



Despite extension for meter installations. Recording and reporting requirements Water take commences **1 December 2026**.

Having a meter installed assists substantially with reporting and provides water account tariff options.



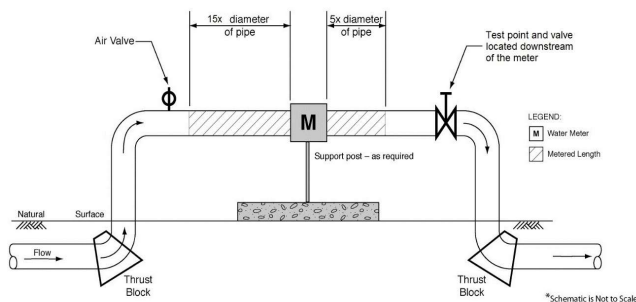
How to approach meter self-installation

Self-installation of meters is permitted if a DQP is not required for your works. There are some key steps:

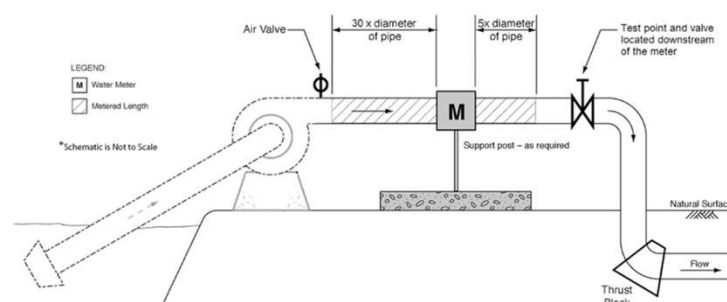
1. Buy a pattern-approved meter from your local agricultural supplier. A list of pattern-approved meters is maintained by the Commonwealth DCCEEW. Visit dcceew.gov.au > search 'pattern approved meters', click on Non-urban water metering framework.
2. Install the meter according to the meter instructions, the work type and extraction method
3. Register your installation with WaterNSW, comms.waternsw.com.au/meterforms

If a water user would still like to have a DQP install their meter, that is fine, the option to self-install is just that – an option

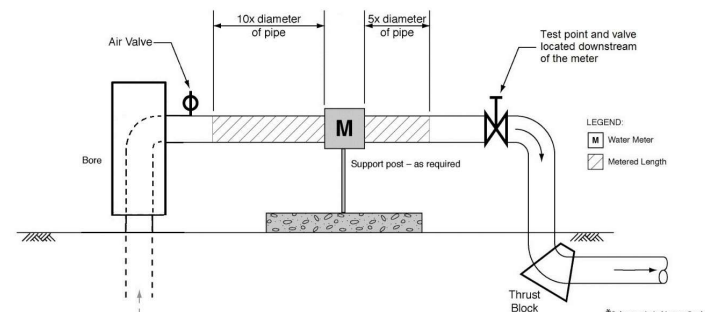
Meter Installation Plan for Two Elbows, in Plane



Meter Installation Plan for Pump causing Spiral Flow



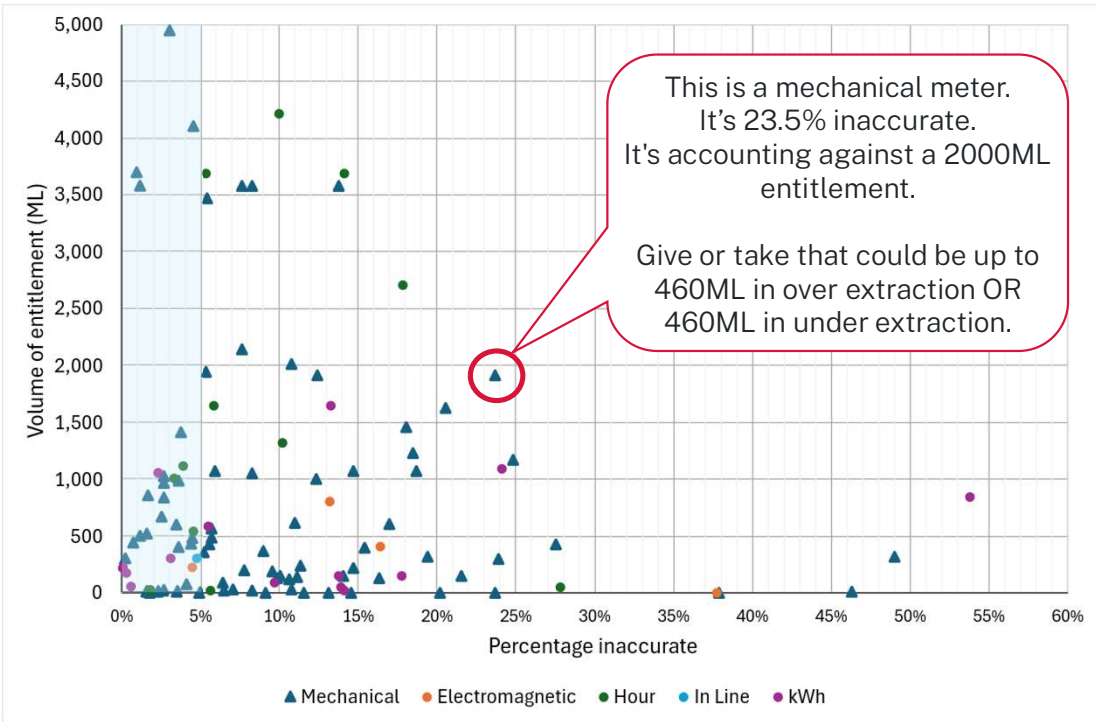
Meter Installation Plan for Underground Bore Pump



Meter accuracy

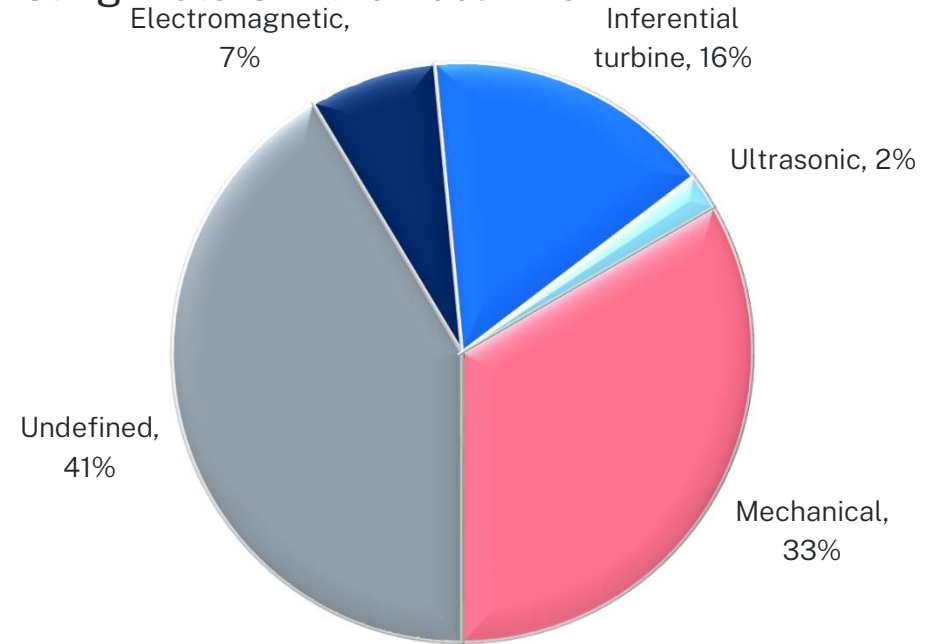


Survey before commencement of metering reform*



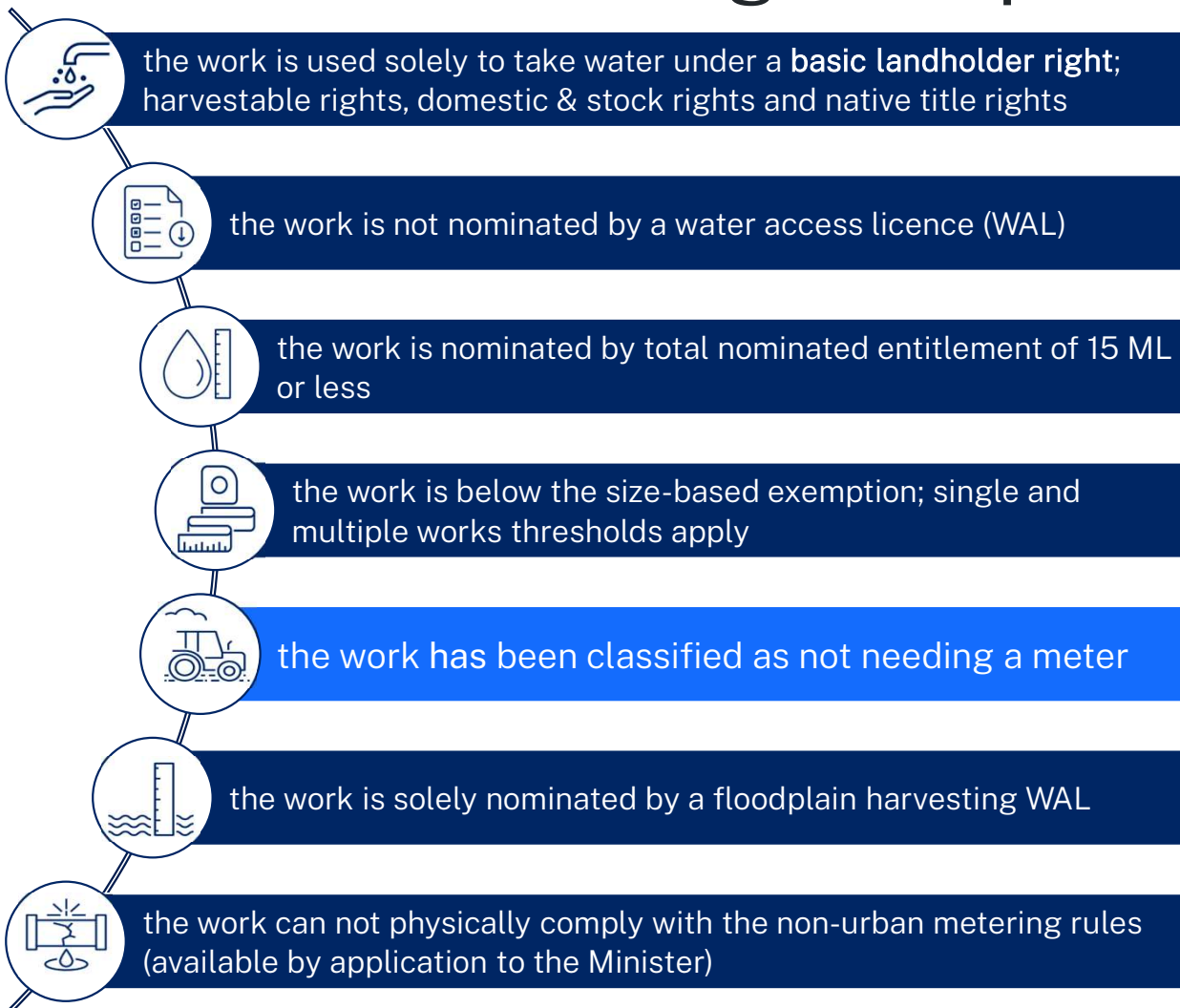
*Graph has been limited to 5,000ML and 50% inaccurate to improve visual

Existing meters in the Peel River



33% need an upgrade
 41% are unknown
25% are compliant or could be
 307 meters currently

Non-urban metering exemptions



Type of work	Number	Maximum size
Surface water (pumps)	1 pump	99mm
Surface water (pumps)	2 pumps	74mm
Surface water (pumps)	3 pumps	49mm
Surface water (pumps)	4 pumps	39mm
Groundwater (bores)	1 bore	199mm
Groundwater (bores)	2 bores	159mm
Groundwater (bores)	3 bores	129mm
Groundwater (bores)	4 bores	119mm

Works classification

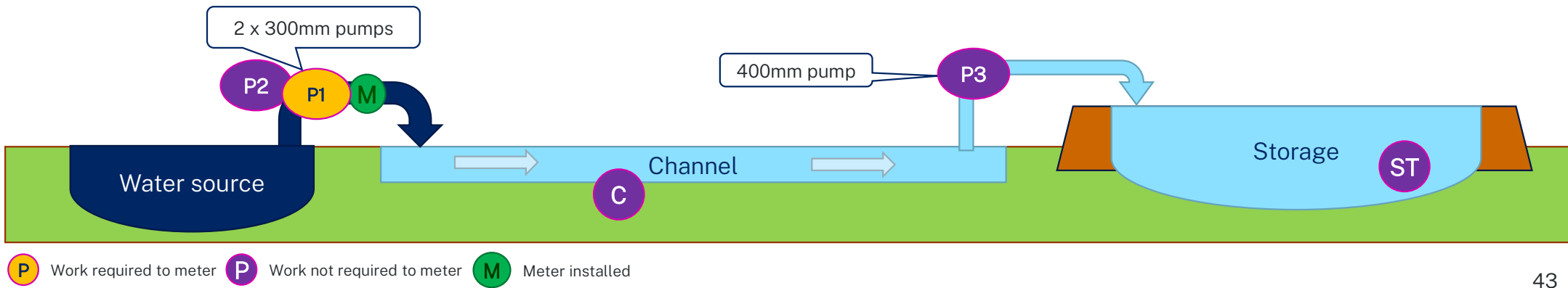
If a work is classified as:

- Constructed, non-taking work
- Constructed, basic landholder rights only
- Constructed, approval holder declared not taking water
- Not constructed
- Decommissioned

Works not classified or classified as constructed are required to be metered

The work is exempt from metering requirements, with no physical modifications required.

However, they are **conditioned not to take water** (excluding Constructed, BLR only that is permitted to take water under a basic landholder right).

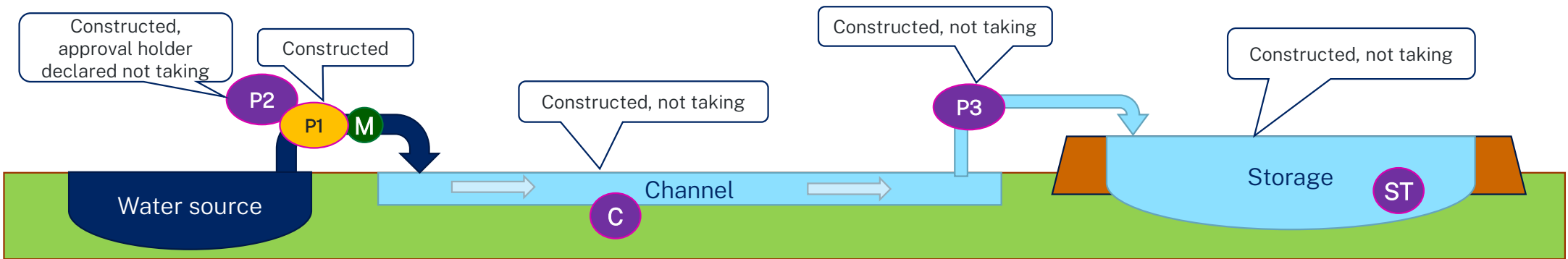


Check your works classifications in NSW Water Register



Kind of Approval	Issue Date	Expiry Date	Approval Number	Status	Water Source
Water Supply Works And Water Use	01-JUL-2016	01-JUL-2026	90CA123456	Current	NSW Border Rivers Regulated River Water source

Work Type	Description	Diameter	Status	No. of works	Location (Lot/DP)	Suffix	Work ID	ESID	Lat/Long	Authorised / Constructed	Takes Water	BL R	Classification
Pump	300mm Axial Flow Pump	N/A	Active	1	Lot 1, DP750789	Whole lot	100023456	1234	-34.0000 145.0012	Constructed	Y	N	Constructed
Pump	300mm Axial Flow Pump	300	Active	1	Lot 1, DP750789	Whole lot	100023457	1234	-34.0012 145.0012	Constructed	Y	N	Constructed, approval holder declared not taking water
Channel		N/A	Active	1	Lot 1, 2, 3 DP750789	Whole lot	100023458	1235	-34.0034 145.0158	Constructed	N	N	Constructed, not taking
Pump	400mm Centrifugal Flow Pump	N/A	Active	1	Lot 2, DP750789	Whole lot	100023459	1234	-34.0085 145.0096	Constructed	N	N	Constructed, not taking
Pump	200mm Centrifugal Flow Pump	200	Active	1	Lot 3, DP750789	Whole lot	100023460	1235	-34.0975 145.0123	Authorised	Y	N	Not constructed
Storage	Storage - Off river	N/A	Active	1	Lot 1, 2, 3 DP750789	Whole lot	100023461	1364	-34.0000 145.0000	Constructed	N	N	Constructed, not taking



P Work required to meter
 P Work not required to meter
 M Meter installed

What are the take homes?

The Peel and Namoi region is not yet compliant only ~43% of works with compliant metering.

The Peel and Namoi region is made up of around 1,997 works that need a DQP, of those there are still approximately 1,141 works that need compliant metering.

There are still a lot of non-pattern-approved meters active in the valley, ~33%, these need updating.

What is being done to assist?

Works classification

A targeted refinement that may reduce the number of works requiring metering by around 6% in the Peel — helping ensure the framework is risk-based, proportionate, and efficient.

Subsidies for telemetry

Water users in the MDB can access no-cost LIDs and installation through the Commonwealth program. With just 17% allocated, there is a major opportunity to reduce costs and fast-track compliance.

Smaller water users <100ML

Extensions on metering deadlines give smaller approval holders more time to plan upgrades and manage costs — while still ensuring they are captured within the metering framework.

Act Now

1. Register for WaterNSW customer portal, and complete your works classification
2. Register for telemetry subsidies, known as the Telemetry Uplift program (or TUP)

Questions



For metering and licensing enquiries contact WaterNSW

- 1300 662 077 (Monday to Friday 8am-5pm)
- Customer.Helpdesk@waternsw.com.au
- Make an online appointment with a metering expert



For more information about metering policy please contact Water Enquiries

- 1300 081 047 (business hours)
- water.enquiries@dcceew.nsw.gov.au

Subsidies for telemetry – the NSW Telemetry Uplift Program



INSTALLATION

- ✓ We do it all for you
- ✓ Installation by a government contractor
- ✓ No out-of-pocket costs for LID installation

Which water users are eligible?

- ✓ In the Murray Darling Basin
- ✓ With a combined water entitlement of 100ML or more, or who have used 100ML or more in any one year since 2023
- ✓ Who have a pattern-approved meter installed by a DQP to meet AS4747
- ✓ Who have telemetry coverage



UP TO \$2,000 CASHBACK

- ✓ Use your own DQP
- ✓ **\$1,000 cashback** for LIDs installed between 1 July 2024 and 31 January 2025
- ✓ **\$2,000 cashback** for LIDs installed from 1 February 2025

Which water users are eligible?

- ✓ In the Murray Darling Basin
- ✓ With a combined water entitlement of 100ML or more, or who have used 100ML or more in any one year since 2023
- ✓ Who have installed a telemetry device between 1 July 2024 and 31 January 2025 - **\$1,000 cashback**
- ✓ Who have installed a telemetry device from 1 February 2025 - **\$2,000 cashback**

Discussion and feedback



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