



## Water for life: Western Australia's Water Reform Program

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### Metering

The Western Australian Government is embarking on an important water reform program to improve water management in Western Australia. Metering of water use is a fundamental tool for gathering vital information.

#### *Key benefits of metering*

- A more secure water access entitlement system and an effective water trading market require accuracy in water use measurement that can only be achieved by metering.
- Information provided by meters can improve the business performance of water users and improve water use efficiency.
- Securing sustainable water resources for future generations.
- Information gathered from metering will be used by the Department for management and planning of water resources.

#### *What are the changes for water metering requirements?*

As a general rule, metering **will not** be required for livestock and non-scheme domestic water use, including garden bores.

In the future, metering **will** generally be required:

- for all new water licences or water access entitlements (regardless of the licensed volume) from a date that is yet to be determined; and
- for existing licensed water users with an annual allocation of 50 megalitres or greater.

Metering **may** also be required for water users with an existing allocation of less than 50 megalitres where:

- there is a need to manage specific risks to environmental water requirements, water quality and impacts on other water users;
- trading is undertaken, or there is an intention to trade;
- there is conflict over water use;



- there is community demand for water metering; and
- the requirement to meter is specified in an existing water management plan or licence.

*When will this happen and how will I know if I fall into one of the categories?*

The Department of Water is currently assessing the necessary legislative changes needed to facilitate any statewide metering program. This forms part of Department's legislative reform project.

The Department will also undertake a detailed scoping study of metering needs for Western Australia. This will include details of when and where metering will be undertaken. This study will commence in the near future and take time to complete. In the mean time the Government's pilot metering project in Gngarara will continue and knowledge gained from the pilot project will better place the Department to assess difficulties and costs associated with the vast array of meter installations.

The plan, once developed, will be communicated to relevant stakeholders and include a priority for metering areas across the State. In addition, it will include details of any costs or fees associated with the metering program.

Once the plan is completed the Department will write to affected licensees providing detail of proposed meter installations in priority areas. We will then contact individuals to arrange a suitable time for a Departmental representative to meet with water licensees and discuss information about the proposed meter installation.

If you already have a meter on your bore, the Department will meet with you, assess the installation, and discuss maintenance schedules and possible replacement options.

*Will metering result in charges for pumping groundwater?*

The State Government is bound by the requirements of the National Water Initiative to introduce water resource management charges to recover the costs of water resource planning and management. The Government is participating in a national review to develop uniform national principles for cost recovery.

Apart from the introduction of a water licence administration fee and in-principal agreement to introduce a meter charge, no other decisions have been made at this time about the form of any future charging for cost recovery.



### *Who will pay?*

Under National Water Initiative provisions, the future direction for all service delivery is towards 'user pays', as is the case with the supply of electricity or urban water. The Department of Water will pay the up-front cost of the meter, its installation maintenance and administration costs. On-going costs will be recovered through an annual metering charge, which is yet to be determined.

### *Who will own the meters?*

Meters will be owned by the Department. All existing meters that are privately owned will be replaced as necessary by the Department.

### *Who will install the meters?*

The Department will establish contracts with suitably qualified suppliers. Where an existing bore or well requires a meter, we will coordinate the installation with our contractors.

Where a new bore or well is to be constructed, the Department will arrange the supply of a suitable meter and associated pipe work. In most circumstances, this will also be installed by the Department's contractors.

### *What happens if the installed meter is damaged or destroyed?*

You are responsible for ensuring the meter is not damaged, destroyed or interfered with. If it can be proved that a meter was damaged or destroyed accidentally, we will arrange appropriate repairs and maintenance. However, it is an offence to damage, destroy or tamper with a meter and penalties may apply.

### *Reading*

Water users will be responsible for meter reading, unless telemetric options are available. Meter readings must be taken monthly and submitted to the Department of Water annually. Further details will be outlined at the time of the meter installation. The Department will audit meter readings and meter performance periodically to ensure accuracy.



### *What will happen with the data?*

The Department will develop a meter data collection and management strategy, this will identify:

- what the data can be used for (eg to develop and review statutory management plans);
- how data will be used to monitor user compliance;
- information that will be made readily available to water users through a user-friendly and informative interface; and
- how the data will be aggregated and reported on to improve water accounting systems and promote and assist with economic and social development.

### *Further information*

Please contact the Department of Water if you require further information. Phone: 1800 734 659 or email: [waterreform@water.wa.gov.au](mailto:waterreform@water.wa.gov.au)