

Best practice guidelines for minimum metering thresholds

2019

The guidelines are agreed between the governments of:

New South Wales

Victoria

Queensland

South Australia

Australian Capital Territory

and the Australian Government

Australian governments have committed to better and more accurate water meters to be used by irrigators and farmers throughout Australia and especially in the Murray-Darling Basin. Accurate meters are essential for comprehensive water accounting.

All Australian states and territories agreed to the National Framework for non-urban water meters (2009) which committed governments to the Australian Standard for non-urban water meters (AS4747).

The Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact (2018) commits all of the Basin governments to the effective measurement of non-urban water users' diversions (metering take), and of the water resources themselves.

These best practice guidelines for minimum non-urban water metering thresholds are designed collaboratively and will assist the states and territories when they are developing or reviewing their metering thresholds. All Australian states and territories have contributed to the design of the guidelines.

The Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact requires the development of the guidelines to support the establishment and improved coverage of non-urban water meters in the Basin:

*Section 3.3 (iv): **Basin States** and the **MDBA** will agree guidelines for reviewing metering thresholds by 30 June 2019.*

For Murray-Darling Basin zones in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

Principles

1. All Basin governments have committed to the National Water Initiative and the Basin Compliance Compact and have undertaken to improve the measurement and metering of water taken across the Basin.
2. Non-urban water meters must meet the Australian Standard AS4747 as mandated by Part 3 of the Compliance Compact.
3. Basin governments are responsible for determining their non-urban water metering policy and regulations, including metering thresholds, so that commitments to the National Water Initiative and the Compliance Compact can be met.
4. In setting metering thresholds, Basin governments should take a risk-based approach that maximises the measurement of water taken, particularly for high-risk users, and avoids imposing undue costs, particularly for low-risk users.
5. Risks that are relevant to setting the metering thresholds include risks to meeting the environmental, social, economic or cultural requirements for the water, in the local area and across the Basin.
6. The basis upon which the metering thresholds have been set, including any exemptions to thresholds, should be justified and published on the relevant state agency website.

Guideline:

7. Subject to clause 8, all licensed water take (meterable take) or utilised water take capacity will be metered by 2025, including for:
 - a. Licensed surface water and groundwater take
 - b. Large or high risk licensed water take for stock and domestic uses, mining and industrial uses
 - c. Water captured through floodplain harvesting and by collecting overland flows, but only when it is possible to meter the water or measure the water through best practice means.
8. A Basin government can determine that exemptions apply to their metering threshold requirements. Exemption criteria can apply for individuals or groups of entitlement (allocation) holders and may include:
 - a. For small entitlements (determined by volume or infrastructure size)
 - b. Where the water taken is not capable of being measured by a meter
 - c. Where the costs of metering would otherwise significantly outweigh the benefits

- d. Where the entitlement holder can demonstrate that water can't be taken (e.g: inactive infrastructure)
- e. Where any environmental, social, economic or cultural requirements for the water are not at risk through the use of the exemption.

For zones outside of the Murray-Darling Basin in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia; and all zones in Western Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania

Principles

1. Australian states and territories committed to the National Water Initiative and have undertaken to improve the measurement and metering of water.
2. Non-urban water meters must meet the Metrological Assurance Framework requirements of the National Framework for non-urban water meters (Australian Standard AS4747).
3. State and Territory governments are responsible for determining their non-urban water metering policy and regulations, including metering thresholds.
4. In setting metering thresholds, governments should take a risk-based approach that maximises the measurement of water taken, particularly for high-risk users, and avoids imposing undue costs, particularly for low-risk users.
5. Risks that are relevant to setting the metering thresholds include risks to meeting the environmental, social, economic or cultural requirements for the water.
6. The basis upon which the metering thresholds have been set, including any exemptions to thresholds, should be justified and published on the relevant state agency website.

Guideline

7. Subject to clause 8, licensed water take (meterable take) or utilised water take capacity will be metered by a date determined by the jurisdiction, including for:
 - a. Licensed surface water and groundwater take
 - b. Large or high risk licensed water take for stock and domestic uses, mining and industrial uses; and
 - c. Water captured through floodplain harvesting and by collecting overland flows, but only when it is possible to meter or measure the water through best practice means.
8. A government can determine that exemptions apply to their metering threshold requirements. Exemption criteria can apply for individuals or groups of entitlement (allocation) holders and may include:
 - a. For small entitlements (determined by volume or infrastructure size)
 - b. Where the water taken is not capable of being measured by a meter
 - c. Where the costs of metering would otherwise significantly outweigh the benefits
 - d. Where the entitlement holder can demonstrate that water can't be taken (e.g: inactive infrastructure)
 - e. Where any environmental, social, economic or cultural requirements for the water are not at risk through the use of the exemption.