



# **NRAR engaging – Murrumbidgee Groundwater Users**

# The past.....

4 Corners episode: *Pumped*  
aired 24 July 2017



**Ken Matthews'** independent investigation into water management and compliance in NSW – reports 2017 and **NRAR Establishment Plan**

**NSW Ombudsman's** investigations – reports Nov 2017, Aug 2018



# About NRAR



*Independent* regulator

- Founded under the **NRAR Act 2017**
- Doors opened **30 April 2018**

# Water management – where does NRAR fit

- **Department of Planning Industry & Environment (DPIE) makes the rules** – water management in NSW
- **WaterNSW implements the rules** – issues 94% licences and approvals
- **NRAR enforces the rules** – all compliance & enforcement and licensing of larger entities



# NRAR Act objectives

- Ensure the **efficient, effective, transparent** and **accountable** water regulation

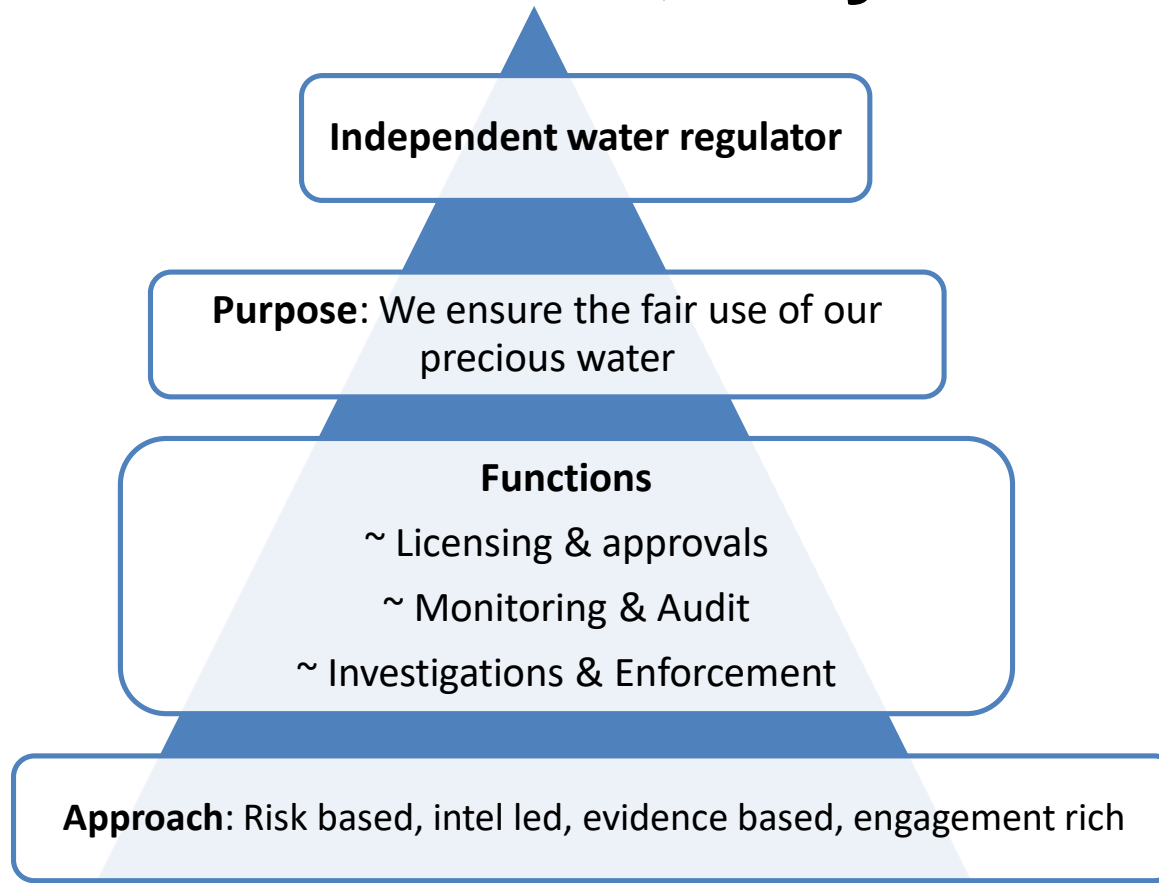


- (Restore and) maintain **public trust** and **confidence** in enforcement of water laws

*We aspire to be recognised as an **ethical**, world class regulator*

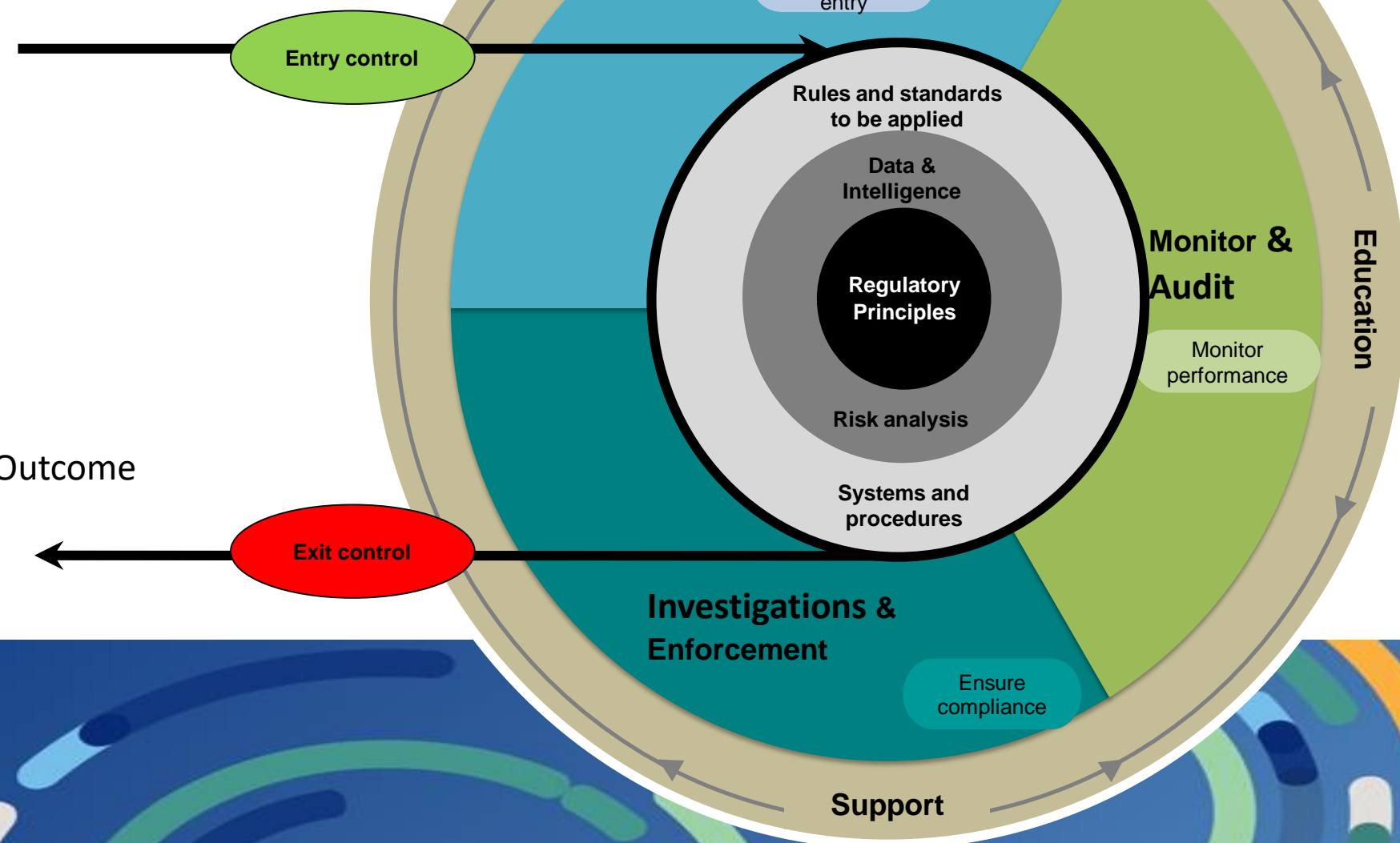


# NRAR – what we do, why & how



# NRAR's ROLES & FUNCTIONS

Need



# Licensing & approvals

## NRAR issues licences and approvals for:

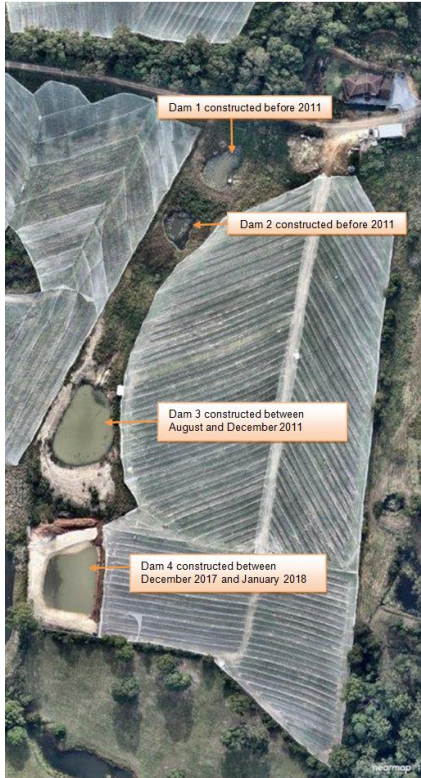
- government agencies
- major water utilities
- Aboriginal communities and businesses
- Mining, State significant development & irrigation corps.

NRAR also issues approvals for controlled activities on waterfront land.





# Compliance & enforcement



NRAR's reactive & proactive work lines:

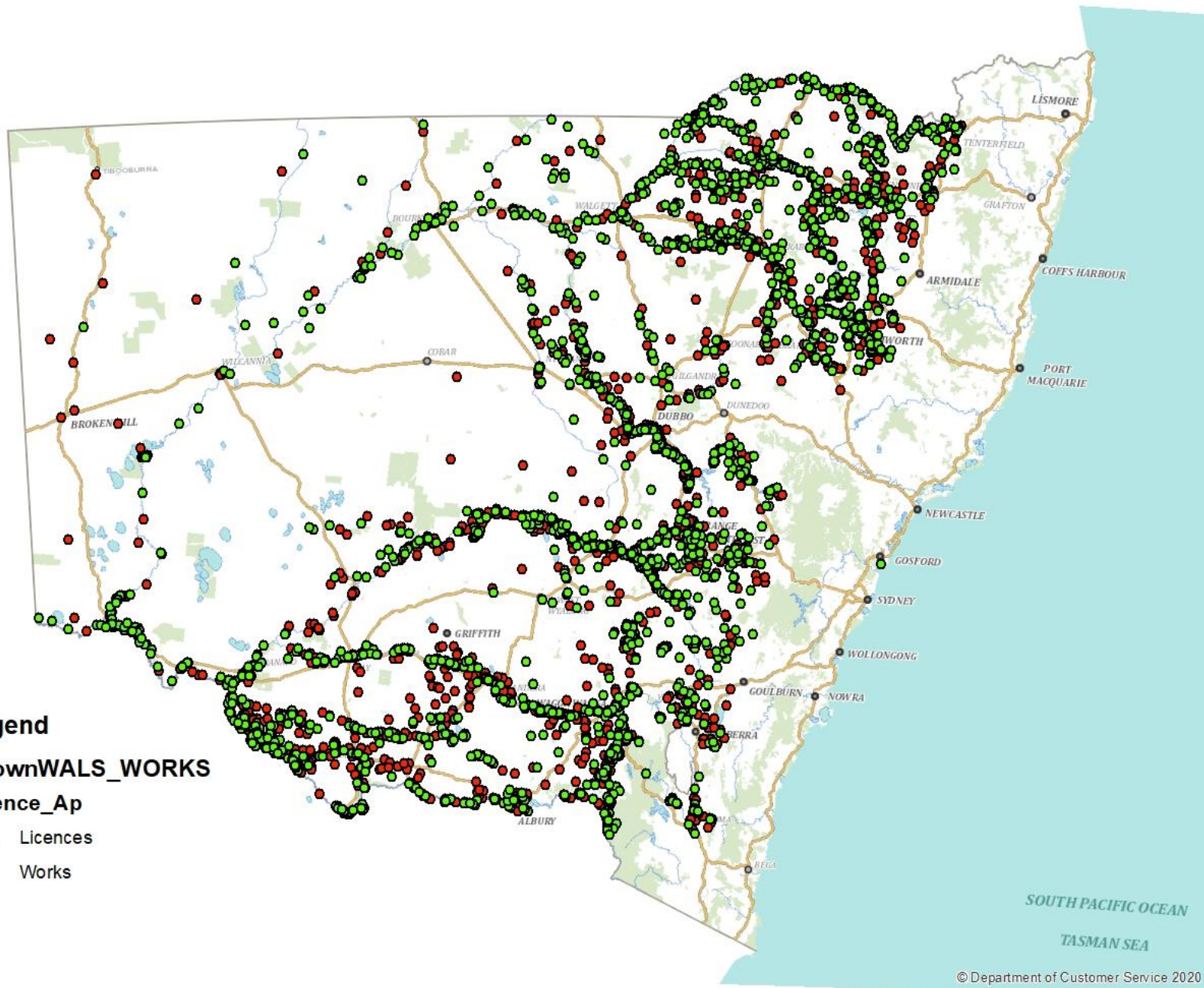
- suspicious activities reports from **public** (hotline), **other agencies**, **self generated**
- **satellite imagery**, **data analytics** and **intelligence led**
- **Investigations**
- **Proactive compliance** programs
  - routine monitoring
  - targeted campaign & audit programs

**Legend**

**KnownWALS\_WORKS**

**Licence\_Ap**

- Licences
- Works



# Compliance

## Responses to non-compliance

NRAR takes a risk based graduated approach

**Prosecution, Licence variation, suspension, cancellation**

High degree of severity

High culpability, unwilling or incapable of achieving compliance outcomes

**Penalty Infringement Notices**

**Written or official warnings, stop work orders, remedial directions**

Increasing response severity

**Persuasion, guidance, education, information, training**

Low degree of severity

Low culpability, willing and capable of achieving compliance outcomes

# Compliance priorities

NRAR publishes compliance priorities:

- ✓ **Water take** - no or insufficient allocation
- ✓ **Install / maintain a meter** and log book
- ✓ **Protection of environmental water**
- ✓ **Unlicensed bores**
- ✓ **Activities on waterfront land**
- ✓ **Floodplain harvesting**





# Way forward

- ❖ More proactive
- ❖ Fair & level playing field
- ❖ Active attitude compliance
- ❖ Outcomes & benefits driven
- ❖ Engaging industry, community grps & govt.



# Operation Drawdown

NRAR **identified** Bore Extraction Limits (BELs) in the Lower Murrumbidgee as a regulatory priority.

- BELs are designed to limit **local impacts** from groundwater extraction.
- BELs are not the same as an overdrawn Water Account.
- They are a condition issued on some Work Approvals or Combined Approvals



# Operation Drawdown

NRAR **identified** approvals with Bore Extraction Limits (BELs) in the Lower Murrumbidgee GW Sources.

- Undertook **desktop audits** to identify breaches.
- Sites with breaches of BELs were then targeted for a complete **site audit**.
- Two sets of outcomes from the sites identified;
  1. Audit report and recommendations.
  2. Regulatory actions being taken for breaches.





# Operation Drawdown – Phase 1

- ✓ **205** approvals have been desktop audited
- ✓ **13** approvals with **non-compliances** for BELs
- ✓ **13 site audits** undertaken by NRAR staff.
- ✓ **Audit reports** sent to auditees.
- ✓ **Regulatory actions being taken** include Warning Letters, Penalty Notices, Directions and further investigations.



# Operation Drawdown – Phase 2

**Phase 2** will look at the remaining approvals in the Lower Murrumbidgee GW sources.

- **Encourage** approval-holders to check their approval conditions.
- **174** Approvals to be desktop audited
- NRAR is looking at extraction limits in other areas.



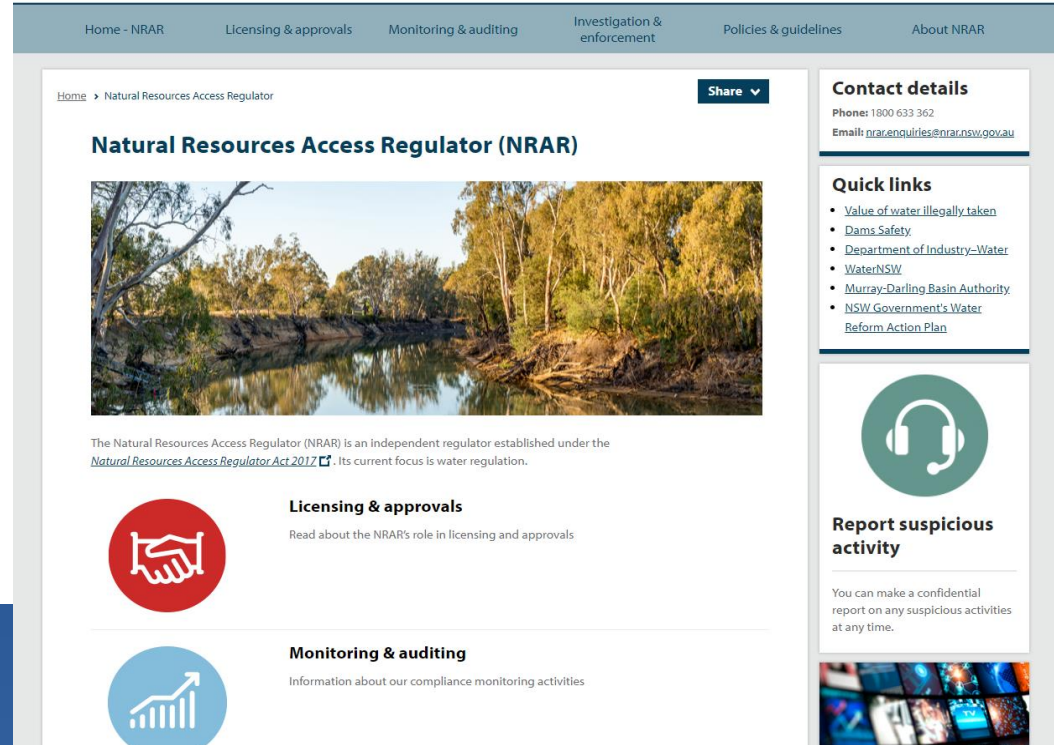
# Want more on NRAR?

**NRAR website: [industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar)**

- go there to report suspicious activity or
- get more information on news, policies and guidelines

**Phone: 1800 633 362**  
during business hours

**Email:**  
[nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au)




The screenshot shows the NRAR website homepage. The navigation bar includes links for Home - NRAR, Licensing & approvals, Monitoring & auditing, Investigation & enforcement, Policies & guidelines, and About NRAR. The main content area features a large image of a river and trees, with the heading "Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)". Below the image is a brief description of the NRAR's role. The page is organized into sections: "Licensing & approvals" (with a red icon of a hand holding a document), "Monitoring & auditing" (with a blue icon of a bar chart), "Contact details" (with phone and email information), "Quick links" (with a list of related topics), and "Report suspicious activity" (with a green icon of a headset and a brief description of the reporting process).

Home - NRAR    Licensing & approvals    Monitoring & auditing    Investigation & enforcement    Policies & guidelines    About NRAR

Home > Natural Resources Access Regulator Share

## Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR)



The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is an independent regulator established under the [Natural Resources Access Regulator Act 2012](#). Its current focus is water regulation.

### Licensing & approvals

Read about the NRAR's role in licensing and approvals

### Monitoring & auditing

Information about our compliance monitoring activities

### Contact details

Phone: 1800 633 362  
Email: [nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nrar.enquiries@nrar.nsw.gov.au)

### Quick links

- [Value of water illegally taken](#)
- [Dams Safety](#)
- [Department of Industry-Water](#)
- [WaterNSW](#)
- [Murray-Darling Basin Authority](#)
- [NSW Government's Water Reform Action Plan](#)

### Report suspicious activity

You can make a confidential report on any suspicious activities at any time.



**Thank you**