

Explanatory note for the technical reporting requirements of the  
Department of the Environment, Water and Natural Resources

## Introduction

This explanatory note aims to clarify for water industry entities the technical reporting requirements of the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. It has been developed as part of a joint project between water industry regulators (OTR, EPA, DHA, DEWNR and ESCOSA) to highlight the legislative and practical reasons for the request of certain data, how that data is used and what benefits the data provides to the industry, customers, the community and the environment.

## Requirements

On an annual basis, in accordance with the conditions of their water licence and/or section 128 authorisation under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004* (NRM Act), water industry entities are required to report the following information to DEWNR.

In some cases, water industry entities may be required to report on a more frequent basis, such as quarterly or monthly, in accordance with the conditions of their licence or section 128 authorisation.

## Meter Readings

- Action required:** *Water industry entities are required to provide meter readings annually, as a minimum, in July, following conclusion of the previous water use year. The licence or authorisation will indicate whether water industry entities are required to collect and submit the meter readings themselves.*
- Aim:** *This requirement aims to identify volumes of water extracted during the water year by accurately measuring each licence/authorisation holder's extraction activities.*
- Benefit:** *Measuring water use is an important tool in managing water resources sustainably. Meter readings enable DEWNR to monitor water usage at the individual, management zone and water resource scale to ensure resource management objectives are being met. This benefits the broader community, including other water users, and the environment.*
- Metering information also helps water industry entities monitor their own water usage, which can improve understanding of system performance and asset condition, and help to identify potential issues such as leakage or inefficiencies or other aspects of their operations.*
- Licence holders are encouraged to use the online meter reading form and water usage advice statement to understand and track their water use throughout the year, and are able to submit meter readings at any time, not just when readings are required as a condition of their licence or authorisation.*
- [link to <http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/managing-natural-resources/water-resources/planning/water-licences-and-permits/water-meter-self-reads>]*

## Managed Aquifer Recharge schemes

**Action required:** *Water industry entities that operate Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) schemes are required to report at least annually to DEWNR as a condition of their water licence and/or section 128 authorisation, and to the EPA as a condition of their EPA licence.*

*All MAR scheme operators are required to report meter readings and extraction volumes (see separate note above).*

*Depending on the particular authorisation or licence conditions for the MAR scheme, operators may be required to report also on salinity levels and/or standing water levels and, if authorised to take water from a prescribed watercourse, threshold flow rates.*

*Injection volume, water quality, and an exceedance register are also included in this reporting, as required by the EPA.*

*DEWNR and the EPA have developed a combined reporting template covering the information requirements of both agencies to assist MAR operators with their reporting.*

**Aim:** *Salinity and standing water level data enable trends in salinity and depth to groundwater to be observed, and the state of balance of the aquifer to be monitored. Changes in salinity and groundwater levels can affect water dependent ecosystems as well as other users of underground water.*

*To ensure essential flows are protected, water can only be taken from certain watercourses when flow rates reach or exceed a prescribed threshold. Reporting of threshold flow rates enables DEWNR to monitor compliance with prescribed flow rates and to observe temporal patterns of water extractions.*

**Benefit:** *These data support the overarching objective of ensuring that MAR operations are operated and managed to limit potential risks. This includes managing risks to the water resource (including associated ecosystems) and to community infrastructure, as well as risks to the productivity and value to communities of the water resource. The reporting requirements reflect management arrangements designed to avoid adverse impacts, including on the ability of other water users to lawfully take water, and to ensure the longevity of MAR operations.*

*With this information, DEWNR and the EPA are able to assess the ongoing risks and therefore the monitoring and management requirements for the scheme.*

*This reporting also allows MAR operators to:*

- understand the risks associated with their schemes;*
- have planned actions to mitigate such risks if they arise; and*
- to iteratively update their Risk Management and Monitoring Plans, implementation of which is a condition of any authorisation associated with the MAR scheme.*