

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Common sense prevails on metering and works

**11/10/2021**

In a victory for common sense, water users with works smaller than approved will not have to formally amend their works approval to match.

The welcome decision by DPIE-Water that water users need only notify WaterNSW that they have installed a smaller work will come as a relief to water users.

“It wasn’t just the cost of paying more than \$500 to amend each approval causing widespread angst, but NRAR’s heavy-handed approach,” said NSWIC CEO Claire Miller.

“Water users have always understood from DPIE-Water and WaterNSW that their works approvals allowed them to install works up to the approved size.

“It was not fair for NRAR to decide otherwise, telling irrigators they had to amend the approval to match the smaller size or risk being deemed non-compliant.

“NRAR always says it enforces the rules, but it does not make them. It is pleasing to see DPIE-Water step in to clarify what the rules require in these cases.”

The change comes a few days after the Government also announced it would exempt up to 500 small water users taking water under a domestic and stock water access licence, fixing an inconsistency in the non-urban metering policy.

The exemption will apply to pumps smaller than 100mm and bores smaller than 200mm, which are used solely to take water under a domestic and stock water access licence.

It does not apply to works that supply town water, take water from at-risk groundwater sources or properties with other metered works. The exemption will apply until 1 December 2024.

The announcements come after NSWIC published a report on administrative and technical barriers preventing water users from complying with the non-urban metering policy.

“NSWIC and its members are pleased to see common sense finally starting to apply in fixing anomalies and unintended outcomes from the metering policy,” said Ms Miller.

“It was ridiculous that people using small amounts of water for their household needs and livestock were being told they had to install meters costing thousands of dollars.”

NSWIC supports the metering policy to upgrade meters to a new gold standard, and will continue working with the Government and agencies to overcome outstanding barriers to compliance outside water users’ control, and perverse and unintended impacts.