Customer Newsletter
SEPTEMBER 2019

Drought relief package extended

The NSW Government continues to recognise the difficulties that families and farmers are experiencing with the drought and has extended its Emergency Drought Relief Package. This means all eligible regulated license holders will continue to receive a rebate of up to $4,000 over the coming four invoices.

The first instalment of up to $1,000 has been applied to this bill (April to June 2019), the remaining amount of up to $3,000 will be applied proportionally over your next three regulated bills.

For further rebate information from the NSW Government, please refer to the Rural Assistance Authority raa.nsw.gov.au

We remain committed to providing assistance during this difficult time. If you’re having trouble paying your WaterNSW bill, get in touch as we have a range of options that may help you. Find out more on our website at waternsw.com.au/hardship under the section “having difficulty paying your bill”.

Drought restrictions

From 1 July, the NSW Government announced that new water restrictions have been applied due to ongoing drought conditions impacting NSW.

The majority of the restrictions apply to water users in the state’s hardest hit northern river valleys (Peel, Border, Gwydir, Upper and Lower Namoi, Macquarie) where storages are at record low.

Further information regarding the temporary water restrictions can be found on the NSW Government’s website industry.nsw.gov.au/water/allocations-availability/temporary-water-restrictions

Response to recent media reports

With high interest and sensitivity around water due to the drought, we are committed to providing timely and reliable information to ensure the facts around water availability, usage and other key water management issues are available to all water stakeholders and commentators in the interests of properly informed public discussion.

We provided advice to Water Minister Melinda Pavey following a misrepresentation in the media that irrigators extracted 87% of water in the Barwon-Darling. The media coverage followed a draft report from the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) claiming that water extraction caused the drought to occur three years earlier than it would have normally in the river below Bourke. WaterNSW subsequently provided data that cast doubt on this conclusion.

We appreciate our customers reaching out to clarify information in the media during this critical time.
Timely water information at your fingertips

We are excited to announce that our Water Insights Portal is now live for the Border Rivers, Gwydir, Lower Namoi, Peel, Macquarie and Murrumbidgee valleys. Our Insights Portal gives you timely information in a visual manner to help you make informed water planning decisions.

Information provided includes:

- water availability
- river heights
- valley storage information

Water availability, for example, allows you to see how much is allocated for customers, the environment or other purposes.

Check out the portal for yourself at waternsw.com.au/waterinsights

Metering - are you compliant?

The NSW Department of Industry has released an interactive online tool to help water users understand how the new metering rules apply to them under the NSW non-urban water metering framework.

The tool helps water users determine if they are required to comply with the current metering framework following a few short questions.

The new standards are being rolled out in a staged manner over five years. Since 1 April this year, all new and replacement water meters are required to meet the new requirements set out by the department.

The Metering Guidance Tool can be accessed via the Department of Industry’s website at industry.nsw.gov.au/water-reform/metering-framework

IPART review water prices for 2019-20

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) have reviewed prices for WaterNSW’s Rural Bulk Water Services and Greater Sydney for the 2019-20 financial year. These services relate to storing and delivering water to license holders in 12 valleys across NSW.

To get a better understanding of fees and charges we have provided a calculator on our website to assist you. You can review the fees and charges on our website at waternsw.com.au/pricing. Alternatively, the IPART determination can be accessed at ipart.nsw.gov.au

NSW Farmers conference - our support

Partnering with NSW Farmers we continue to share where you can find drought information and bring their annual conference live to our customers through our website.

In addition to 230 attendees at the conference, more than 800 people logged onto our website to watch a live stream of this year’s NSW Farmers conference to understand the issues facing the farming industry.

While drought and water security were a key focus, farmers also had the opportunity to discuss safety on farms, protecting biodiversity, criminalising illegal farm surveillance, protecting dairy farmers and social license and changing perceptions around animal welfare.

Customer Advisory Groups (CAGs) update

Our ten area-based CAGs met during July and August at various locations around the state. Some of the key issues discussed include the drought, water operations, maintenance activities, IPART pricing determinations, levels of service, metering reform, our capital plan progress and our new Insights Portal.

CAGs meet face-to-face three times a year and provide a forum for WaterNSW to regularly consult with a broad cross-section of our customers on issues relevant to our performance and delivery of services.

The next round of CAGs are scheduled for late October and November 2019. If you would like further information on the CAGs, including your local representatives, please visit our website at waternsw.com.au/cag

Contact us

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