

# ROLES OF WATER MANAGEMENT AGENCIES IN NSW

June 2018



## Roles of water management agencies in NSW

There are four agencies responsible for developing and implementing the regulatory framework for water management in regional NSW: Department of Industry, WaterNSW, Natural Resources Access Regulator and Office of Environment and Heritage. Their goal is to achieve economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes for the people of NSW. They are involved in the design of the water market, NSW water management rules, operating the river system and other water delivery systems within NSW, and encouraging and enforcing compliance with NSW water management rules.

### Department of Industry

[industry.nsw.gov.au/water](http://industry.nsw.gov.au/water)

NSW Department of Industry—Water is responsible for planning, policy development, and regulatory frameworks for regional water in NSW. It develops, assesses and recommends changes to NSW’s water legislation, water sharing/water resource plans and water management rules. These plans, rules and legislation form the regulatory framework that all water users and operators must work within.

- **Water planning, policy and regulation**—establishes the legislation and regulatory frameworks for managing the state’s surface and groundwater resources to enable the achievement of social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes over the long-term.

This includes regional water strategies, water sharing plans and water resource plans. This provides for equitable access to and sharing of the state’s surface and groundwater resources and ensures the security and tradability of water entitlements and allocations.

- **Regional water security**—identifies opportunities to improve medium- and long-term regional water security through regional water strategies.
- **Government relations**—leads collaboration and negotiations with Commonwealth agencies and other jurisdictions on behalf of NSW, including the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA)



- **Stakeholder engagement**—works with the community and water users to develop water resource legislation and regulatory frameworks, including regional water strategies, water sharing plans and water resource plans and water management rules
- **Local water utilities**—ensures that the water and wastewater services provided by regional NSW’s local water utilities are safe, secure and sustainable by setting a planning, operations and business management framework and managing local water utilities infrastructure funding programs

Department of Industry—Water is accountable to the NSW Minister for Regional Water.

## WaterNSW

[waternsw.com.au](http://waternsw.com.au)

WaterNSW supplies and seeks to improve availability of water that is essential for water users and communities throughout NSW. WaterNSW is responsible for supplying the state’s bulk water needs, operating the state’s river systems and the bulk water supply system for Greater Sydney and providing services to its customers with respect to licensing and approvals, water allocation trades, water licence trades and water resource information.

- **Source water protection**—protection of the Greater Sydney drinking water catchment to ensure safe water is supplied to Sydney Water, local councils and other distributors for treatment and distribution to their customers
- **Bulk water supply**—supplying water from its storages to customers in the Greater Sydney drinking water catchment and in the state’s regulated surface water systems
- **System operator**—efficient management of the state’s surface and groundwater resources to maximise reliability for users through the operation of the state’s river systems and bulk water supply systems. This is done in collaboration with the MDBA, which directs operations of the River Murray system
- **Bulk water supply infrastructure planning, delivery and operation**—meets customer-defined levels of service consistent with NSW Government policy and priorities to increase the security and reliability of water supplies to customers and the communities of NSW
- **Customer water transaction and information services**—provides efficient and timely services to customers for water licensing and approvals, water trades, billing and to meet their water resource information needs for surface and groundwater quantity and quality

WaterNSW is a state-owned corporation with its own enabling legislation and board of directors.



## Natural Resources Access Regulator

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

The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is responsible for compliance with and enforcement of the regulatory framework for water including water management rules, and licence and approval conditions. It also undertakes all controlled activity approvals, and licensing for some entities.

- **Compliance monitoring and enforcement**—conducts compliance monitoring and enforcement of NSW water law
- **Prosecutions**—determines when to commence prosecutions or use other enforcement tools in the event of non-compliance
- **Compliance information**—provides:
  - **guidelines**—develops and implements strategies, policies and procedures for compliance activities and enforcement powers under natural resources management legislation
  - **reporting**—reports on compliance and enforcement activities and publishes details of convictions in prosecutions
  - **informs the public**—develops and delivers educational material on compliance and enforcement matters and publishes information about compliance activities
- **Responds to community reports**—receives and responds to complaints and breach notifications and provides a hotline for compliance matters
- **Collaboration and liaison**—works with the Commonwealth, including the MDBA, and other jurisdictions to share information and collaborate on joint compliance monitoring and enforcement activities
- **Licensing and approvals**—provides water licensing and approval services to certain entities, including government agencies, irrigation corporations and mining projects

- **Controlled activity approvals**—issues controlled activity approvals and assesses and advises on impacts of State Significant Developments
- **Dams Safety Committee**—ensures compliance with dam safety legislation (but is not under direction of the NRAR Board)

NRAR is directed by an independent board and sits within the NSW Department of Industry.

## NSW Office of Environment & Heritage

[environment.nsw.gov.au](http://environment.nsw.gov.au)

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) manages environmental water within NSW.

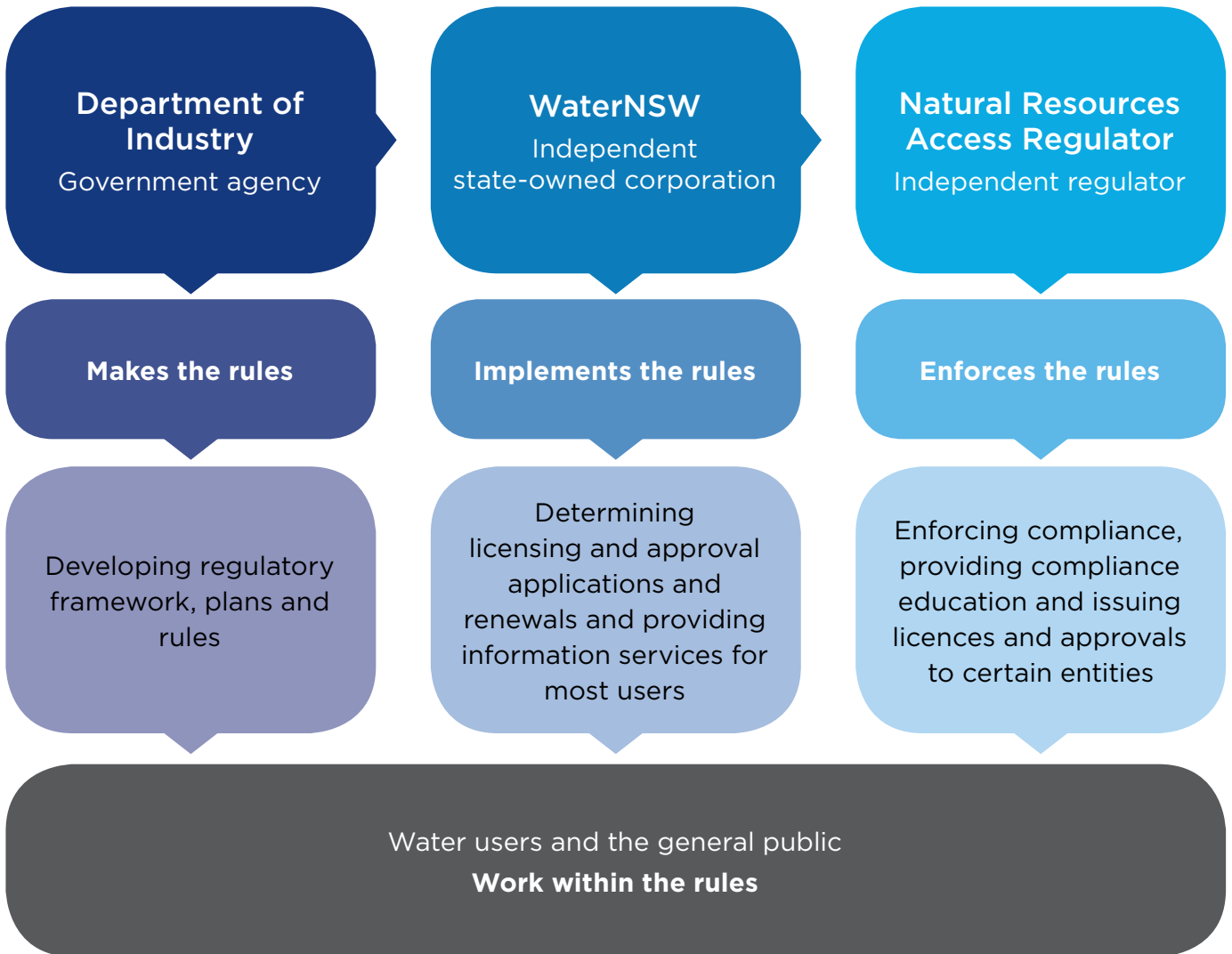
- **Environmental water holder**—manages held environmental water, including environmental water licences held by the NSW Government and planned environmental water allocations made under water sharing plans
- **Collaboration**—works with the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder on the management of environmental water held by the Commonwealth Government. OEH convenes and supports Environmental Water Advisory Groups to inform environmental water priorities and planning.
- **Environmental water planning**—develops long-term environmental watering plans as required under the Basin Plan, and prepares annual watering plans for the use of environmental water each year. OEH also develops Floodplain Management Plans to assist in the regulation of floodplain infrastructure and minimise the impacts of flooding on communities and the environment.

OEH is accountable to the NSW Minister for the Environment.

## Licensing and compliance

Three key agencies are involved in the licensing and compliance of water use in NSW: Department of Industry, WaterNSW and NRAR.

Figure 1. NSW Government agencies engaging with water users and communities on licensing and compliance.

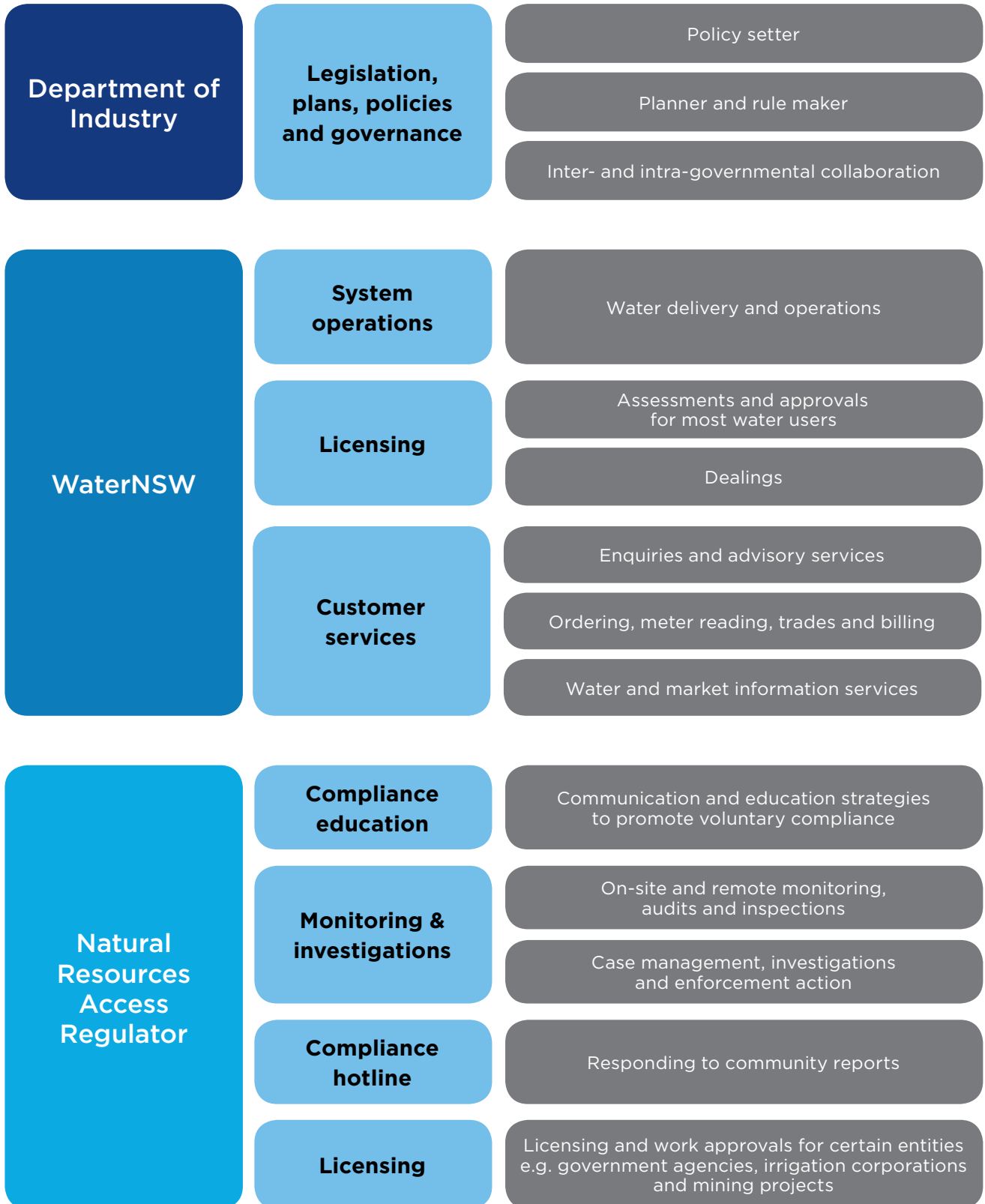


The objectives of the NSW Government in relation the end-to-end licensing and compliance process are:

- clarity of organisational purpose and focus for each agency through clearly defined functions
- efficiency of delivery so there is no overlap or duplication of functions and activities or cost to the taxpayer and/or end use customer
- seamlessness of operation so there are no ‘gaps’ in the delivery chain between agencies and their respective roles
- transparency and simplicity so rules are clear, understood and enforceable
- cost-effective services that are delivered by the most appropriate government entity.

## Licensing and compliance services

Figure 2. Services provided in the licensing and compliance delivery chain.





# Who to contact for information

Department of Industry **9338 6600**

WaterNSW **1300 662 077**

Natural Resources Access Regulator Hotline **1800 633 362**

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage **131 555**



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The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (June 2018). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the NSW Government or the user's independent adviser.

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