

Process to assess applications to take water

Fact Sheet

WaterNSW is responsible for managing access to water, ensuring water is shared equitably between the environment, landholders and industries. This fact sheet outlines the steps in assessing applications to take water other than under basic landholder rights (BLR) to use for example, in irrigation. To find more information on BLR, please visit our website.

Approvals required to take water

To take water other than under BLR the following approvals are required:



Water use approval

to use water for a particular purpose at a specific location, such as irrigation.



Amend an existing approval

to make a work active or inactive, to reduce or increase a pump size, change use or increase irrigation area.



Water supply works approval

to construct and operate water supply works such as pumps, dams, bores, spear points or wells. Each approval includes conditions to minimise adverse impacts.



Combined approvals

to use water on land except for BLR and to construct and use water supply works to take water from a river or groundwater source, capture excess rainwater run-off and to store, transfer, divert or hold back water.

Further details about approvals can be found on our [approvals website page](#).

WaterNSW and the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEE) each conduct thorough assessments before approving any application. The steps involved in assessing applications are outlined on the next page.

Steps in assessing applications

Check & receipt	WaterNSW checks the application to ensure all relevant information has been received. The application fee also needs to be received at this time.
Register	The application is then registered and receives a unique reference which is supplied to the applicant. A detailed assessment commences - this may require referral to external agencies. The applicant can track the progress of their application online.
Assess Water sharing plans (WSP)	<p>Is the application consistent with the rules and principles of the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>(WMA)?</p> <p>WaterNSW is required to consider the relevant water sharing plan (WSP) to which the application relates. WSPs may differ because of the nature of specific water source/s. Water resource plans compliment WSPs. More information can be found via the links below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How water sharing plans work• Water resource plans in NSW
Hydrogeological assessment (groundwater applications only)	<p>Will the application impact on the groundwater source and its dependent ecosystems?</p> <p>Potential impact of groundwater extraction is managed through NSW DCCEE. WaterNSW may refer the application to NSW DCCEE for hydrogeological assessment to ensure that no more than minimal harm will be done to any water source. For further information on how groundwater is assessed see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing groundwater applications <p>WaterNSW refers applications to NSW DCCEE as early as possible.</p>
Native title	<p>Will the application impact on the individual or communal rights of Aboriginal people?</p> <p>The application is referred to Native Title Services (NTSCORP) for assessment*.</p>
Aboriginal heritage	<p>Will the application impact on recorded sites of archaeological and cultural heritage?</p> <p>Geographical features with cultural and spiritual significance must be protected. The application is checked against a database to ensure no sites are impacted*.</p>
Threatened species	<p>Will the application impact on habitat containing threatened species, flora or fauna?</p> <p>WaterNSW considers issues such as vegetation clearing and potential site damage. If special assessment is required, additional information may be required about the proposed site*.</p>
Contaminated land	<p>Does the application include contaminated land?</p> <p>WaterNSW checks to ensure groundwater is not affected by site contamination. Contamination may be caused by previous land use*.</p>
Site inspection	<p>Is a site inspection required?</p> <p>A site inspection may be required depending on how complex the application is. If an inspection is required, the applicant will be contacted by WaterNSW*.</p>

Steps in assessing applications

Advertising and objections

WaterNSW is required to advertise specific application types under the WMA on the [WaterNSW website](#).

WaterNSW allows 28 days for any objections to the application to be submitted. If objections are received, WaterNSW will work with both the applicant and the objector/s to attempt to resolve any issues.

Find out more at the [WaterNSW objections website page](#) or in the [Prepare to lodge an objection fact sheet](#).

Tracking and notification

Applicants can track the progress of applications using the [Water Applications Online service](#).

The application number and holder name is required to access the tracker. The applicant is notified in writing of the outcome of the application within 10 days of WaterNSW completing the assessment.

**There are no additional costs charged for referrals to other agencies or third parties in the assessment process - this is covered by the application fee. If issues are identified as a result of these assessments, WaterNSW will contact the applicant to discuss options. If an application is refused, the applicant can appeal to the Land and Environment Court within 28 days of receiving notification of the decision.*

Need help?

If you need more information, please contact our Customer Service Centre on [1300 662 077](tel:1300662077), Monday to Friday between 8am-5pm or email Customer.Helpdesk@waterNSW.com.au

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