

Water access licence exemption for excavation dewatering taking greater than 3ML of groundwater per year

Where does the exemption apply?

The exemption only applies in the Botany Sands Groundwater Source (as at August 2020).

What activities does the exemption apply to?

The exemption only applies for groundwater taken through dewatering to conduct excavation for buildings, roads and infrastructure.

Is this a permanent exemption?

No, it will only apply until 30 June 2025 or until a controlled allocation of access licences occurs, whichever happens first. During this time, longer term arrangements for managing temporary take by infrastructure dewatering activities will be considered. There are provisions within the regulation to extend this exemption beyond 30 June 2025 even if a controlled allocation event does not occur. It is important to continually monitor this exemption for updates.

Can I use the water I take?

Yes. The groundwater taken may subsequently be used for example for dust suppression, washing equipment or mixing concrete.

Is the exemption conditional?

Yes. You can only rely on the exemption if all of the following apply:

- an extraction limit has been put on your approval
- your take is recorded using a datalogger and an approved meter
- a record of your take is made weekly and provided to the Minister by the 29th July each year.

What about the potential impacts of water taken under this exemption?

An assessment of the local impacts of the activity and an approval are still required unless an approval exemption applies. A major benefit of the exemption for water management is that the volume of groundwater taken must be metered and reported.

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Do the metering regulations apply?

Yes. Proponents are required to use a meter approved under the metering regulations to measure the water they take. They must also use a datalogger but this does not need to meet approved specifications under the metering regulations.

Do I need telemetry?

No. The regulations specify that the record of take must be given to the Minister (or delegated representative) and the way to do this is set out on the recording form.

How do I report my take?

For the 2019/20 water year, use the [record of groundwater take under exemption form](#) which can be downloaded from the WaterNSW website. For the 2020/21 year and beyond, the intention is to be able to make and submit records electronically.

Why do I have to report water taken under this exemption?

Records of water taken under a licence exemption provide a greater understanding of the full volume of water being taken from a groundwater source under licences, basic landholder rights and exemptions each year. This will inform decision making and enable better management of the groundwater source.

Can I still report my take after 29 July for the 2019/20 water year?

Yes. Although the form for making this record was not available before 29 July 2020, the current reporting form should be used to report any take made under the exemption during the 2019/20 water year.

More information

[See fact sheet](#) for this exemption.

If you have any questions, please contact one of our friendly Customer Service team on [1300 662 077](tel:1300662077) or email Customer.Helpdesk@waternsw.com.au