

The Water Compliance Project

Fact Sheet



Protecting Victoria's water

- A new project to help rural water users understand their legal rights and obligations around taking and using water. The project sets out a fair and consistent approach for all water users.
- The project ensures fair access for all and will include more on-ground checks of water use.

Most water users are responsible and abide by the conditions of their water licence. However, each year a small number of users break the law when they take and use rural water from an aquifer, dam, stream, river, creek or irrigation channel.

They may take water without an entitlement or licence, they may build an illegal bore or dam, or they might interfere with a water meter. Sometimes these offences are deliberate, and sometimes they happen because people do not know the law.

The Water Compliance Project is a nationally funded project to improve understanding of the Victorian water law by:

- Helping people to understand their obligations;
- Helping people to understand the impacts of illegal water use on their neighbours, their environment and their region;
- Conducting more on-site checks of water use across Victoria; and
- Pursuing action against offenders, ranging from verbal and written warnings to court action.

How am I affected?

If you are doing the right thing with your water, you will not be affected by this project. You may notice more checks by field officers.

If you don't know what your legal obligations are, you can:

- Phone your local water corporation for a chat (see list of contacts below);
- Check your local water corporation's website; or
- Visit the Victorian Water Register website at <http://waterregister.vic.gov.au/default.aspx>

An example of unlawful water use, may be taking water from a stock and domestic bore (not metered) to irrigate a small commercial crop. In this case, you are breaking the law and need to speak to your water corporation about obtaining a commercial use licence. Stock and domestic water can only be used for household and stock watering purposes.

What happens if I am caught doing the wrong thing?

Preliminary sanctions may include verbal and written warnings. Persistent offenders may be pursued in court.

All water corporations are there to help customers understand their rights and entitlements.

What should I do if I think someone is doing the wrong thing?

We encourage anyone who suspects a breach of the Water Act to contact their local water corporation.

How is this project funded?

This project is funded by the Australian Government through the *Water for the Future* initiative.

It is a collaborative reform project funded by the Australian government with support from the Council of Australian Governments.

More information

For more information, contact your local rural water corporation:

- Coliban Water 1300 363 200
- Goulburn-Murray Water 1800 013 357
- Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water 1300 659 961
- Lower Murray Water (03) 5051 3400
- Melbourne Water **131 722**
- Southern Rural Water 1300 139 510

The National Framework for Compliance and Enforcement Systems for Water Resource Management promotes common water laws and compliance mechanisms across Australia. The Framework is funded by the Australian Government through the *Water for the Future* initiative.

For general information call or visit

1800 013 357

www.g-mwater.com.au