



Niall Blair
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Regional Water
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MEDIA RELEASE

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TOUGHER PENALTIES FOR WATER THEFT IN NSW

Editor's note: Grabs available [here](#)

Corporations illegally taking water in NSW could face penalties of up to \$5 million and individuals facing \$500,000 fines, as part of tough new laws to protect the state's most precious asset.

Minister for Regional Water, Niall Blair said the *Water Management Amendment Bill 2018* is one of the most important pieces of legislation the NSW Parliament has considered this year.

"We've worked hard since the release of the Matthews' final report in December to consult on and develop our Water Reform Action Plan, which is our road map to improved water management, compliance and enforcement in NSW.

"We've wasted no time getting on with the job to ensure our precious water continues to flow, for the benefit of all.

"Sadly, however, by its own admission, our pace of reform is too fast for NSW Labor, which has no policy on water management, unless it's written by the Greens or simply involves doing nothing.

"We've established the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) to ensure compliance with the law and we've introduced legislation for a robust water meter regime across the State, including increased penalties for serious water offences. Be in no doubt that taking more water than you are licensed for is theft and it will be appropriately punished."

Reforms introduced will include:

- new offences covering metering, including providing false or misleading information and failing to notify when the meter is faulty;
- a single source public information register to include licence holders' details and compliance activity so the public can see law being enforced equitably;
- changes to the rules for water sharing plans including powers for the Minister to embargo water take for the purposes of managing environmental water;
- new tools for the Regulator including mandatory audits and enforceable undertakings and a requirement for all licensed users to be metered subject to some exemptions to be detailed in the regulations

"All these amendments are designed to ensure that the community can have confidence that the water being taken by licensees is what they are entitled to, and no more," Mr Blair said.

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