



Meter Action Plan 2019

Summary



Lower Murray Water Meter Action Plan 2019

The Lower Murray Water (LMW) non-urban water Meter Action Plan 2019 outlines LMW's intention to comply with Victoria's Non-Urban Water Meter Policy and its direction for non-urban water meter management, investment and improvement under the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Statement of Obligations.

In the 2018/2019 irrigation season, over 99% of non-urban water consumption was accounted for by either AS4747 compliant meter or by an interim standard water meter.

The LMW Metering Policy and Meter Management Procedure for Potable & Non-Potable Meters provide direction on priorities for metering and telemetry, ensuring both effective coverage and accuracy of water take in the LMW region.

The LMW Metering Policy sets out high-level obligations and requirements for metering of non-potable water extraction from within LMW-managed areas or supply districts. The Meter Management Procedure provides the rationale for managing metering maintenance and meter replacement frequencies and provides the scope for meter validation timeframes to be enacted.

LMW currently maintains its meter fleet with a team of nationally certified meter installers/validators (CMI). In addition to nationally accredited training, staff members have undertaken training provided by meter manufacturers for the maintenance and installation of the different meter types.

LMW's confidence in the accuracy of its meters is assured by regular readings through a comprehensive telemetry network, planned maintenance schedules and metering approval process which customers must adhere to when altering metering requirements. LMW plans to maintain confidence in metering by ensuring appropriate resourcing is available to continue meter maintenance schedules.

LMW is committed to continuously improving how it manages, and measures water take, which includes utilising new technology, developing a cost-effective meter validation program and aspiring to industry best practice.

Summary

Statement of Obligations and state policy

Sections 7-4 of the DELWP Statement of Obligations 2018 requires water corporations undertaking non-urban metering to do so in accordance with state policies and plans.

The Victorian Non-Urban Water Metering Policy sets the requirements for water corporations to meet the national Metrological Assurance Framework for metering and to align with the requirements of the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact. The policy sets the circumstances where metering requirements can be varied. In summary, these circumstances cover where:

- use is below a low-use threshold
- the cost of metering is disproportionate to the benefits.

Metering objectives

LMW metering objectives are aligned with the Victorian Non-Urban Metering Policy objectives, which include:

- To encourage comprehensive metering of non-urban water extraction in a way that is consistent with risk to water resources
- To provide for water take to be measured accurately and reliably
- To provide that meters installed are accurate and well maintained
- The benefit of water measurement outweighs the costs
- To improve reporting by linking the meters compliance data with water use data in the Victorian Water Register (VWR).

LMW monitors its metering fleet and data regularly to identify connections which pose a risk to the resource they are drawing from by either the overall volume they extract, or the compliance of the meter fitted to that connection. At the end of the 2018/2019 irrigation season, LMW had 29 connections identified to pose a risk as they were non-compliant meters and accessed 10ML per year or more.

LMW works in conjunction with the VWR to ensure all relevant information is passed on routinely to address VWR reporting requirements within the policy outlined above.

Metering fleet profile and categorisation

The metering standards for non-urban water are specified for two main categories of meters:

- Full flowing pipe meters
- open channel meters.

LMW has a small proportion of outdated open channel meters in the form of Dethridge Wheels within its jurisdiction. The majority of these are inactive services where it has been cost prohibitive to remove. To avoid use, LMW often locks the connections as they are superseded with a more modern full flowing pipe connection. The few remaining active Dethridge Wheels are in an area which is being reviewed for potential water savings and modernisation.

Any upgrades to or replacement of meters for channel connections will be with compliant full flowing meters as LMW is not seeking to use open channel meters for customer billing therefore, all references to open channel meters have been excluded from the Meter Action Plan.

LMW manages four irrigation supply districts. These managed supply networks have bulk extraction master meters which are validated each year under LMW's Bulk Meter Management Plan.

Impact of Risks on metering/telemetry

LMW recognises metering and telemetry accuracy, maintenance and decommissioning are vital to addressing key risk of non-compliance with water allocation register and for managing assets involved in converting users from non-urban to urban systems. Accurate metering is also important in realising LMW's current plans to record water balances for water saving initiatives.

Priorities for metering/telemetry

The LMW Metering Policy and Meter Management Procedure for Potable & Non-Potable Meters provide direction on priorities for metering and telemetry. The metering policy and procedure are supported by accompanying LMW documents to address the risk surrounding metering non-compliance and water delivery.

The LMW Metering Policy sets out LMW's high-level obligations and requirements for metering of non-potable water extraction from within LMW-managed areas or supply districts. Targets include:

- LMW to meter all off-takes to surface water and LMW-managed water delivery systems including domestic & stock, syndicated or shared off-takes
- LMW will install meters as close as practicable to the extraction source or reticulation system to avoid unmetered off-takes
- All irrigation outlets are to be fitted with a telemetry device.

The LMW Meter Management Procedure for Potable & Non-Potable Meters provides the rationale for managing metering maintenance, meter replacement frequencies and provides the scope for meter validation timeframes to be enacted. To complement the procedure, LMW aims to develop a Meter Maintenance Plan which will not only inform LMW of the health of its meter fleet but satisfy the need of meter validation.

Supporting LMW documents include:

- 2018-2023 Essential Services Commission (ESC) Price Submission
 - Details LMW service standards, pricing and tariffs
- 2019-2020 Corporate Plan
 - Reports on LMW second-year objectives for Water Plan 4 to June 2020.
- Rural Customer Charter
 - Sets out the rights and obligations of both LMW and customers in relation to rural water supply and drainage services
- Compliance and Enforcement Strategy
 - Supports the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact
 - Guides the LMW compliance and enforcement approach in respect of rural water supply customers
 - Applies extra focus to ensure water sourced from the Murray-Darling Basin is taken in a lawful manner
- Statement of Obligations
 - Sets out the Victorian Water Minister's expectations of LMW
- Rural Strategic Plan (April 2018)
 - Outlines the strategy and broad plans for the rural irrigation business of LMW over the next strategic horizon

LMW aims to ensure accurate metering on their non-urban systems based on the principles of a level playing field for all water users, regardless of water share or entitlement. Accurate metering is needed to directly address compliance with the VWR and paint a picture of compliance with Allocation Account balances (ABA). It also ensures accurate reporting can be completed in response to the requirements of DELWP and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Management priorities relating to metering to address risks identified above are ordered throughout these documents highlighted above and focus on:

1. Asset optimisation
2. Cost/benefit analysis
3. Meter renewal and automation projects
4. Addressing non-urban risks

Performance measures

LMW is constantly reviewing its meter performance to align with the Meter Management Procedure. Where it is identified meters are reaching their end-of-life prior to the expected age or consumption, LMW is ceasing the use of them and has for a number of years been installing compliant meters on all connections that meet our criteria and where it is economically feasible.

Noting LMW has already proven that over 95% of measured take within its jurisdiction is from compliant or contemporary meters, this indicates LMW is performing well in this area. The number of identified improvement meters is a very small proportion of the fleet and the upgrade of these can be managed comfortably within capital budgets.

LMW aims to develop a Meter Maintenance and Validation Plan to provide greater understanding of its meter fleet and to best utilise future capital spend for the upgrading of specified contemporary meters.

LMW's central database links meter data fields as stipulated in the DELWP Metering Policy. LMW is working toward future development to successfully transfer this information to the Victorian Water Register.

