



The *Water Act 2007* and Water Regulations 2008



This information sheet is a general introduction to the relevant provisions of the Commonwealth *Water Act 2007* and should be read with the Act and the Water Regulations 2008.

Accelerating national water reform

The *Water Act 2007* and the Regulations they provide for support the National Water Initiative, a blueprint for national water reform agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2004. This initiative, designed to accelerate water reform, includes the following objectives:

- enhancing water markets and reducing impediments to water trading;
- reducing over-allocation of water, particularly in the Murray–Darling Basin;
- implementing best practice water pricing;
- returning water to the environment to improve the health of river systems;
- improving water resources management and planning through better water information.

The *Water Act 2007*

The *Water Act* gives the Bureau specific powers and obligations in relation to compiling and disseminating water information, in addition to its weather and climate functions under the *Meteorology Act 1955*.

The Bureau's statutory functions include:

- collecting, interpreting and disseminating water information;
- conducting regular national water resources assessments;
- publishing an annual National Water Account;
- providing regular water availability forecasts;
- issuing national water information standards;
- advising on matters relating to water information;
- enhancing understanding of Australia's water resources.

Functions are listed in the *Water Act* under Part 7 – Water Information.

Definition of water information

The *Water Act* defines water information as any raw data or any value-added information product that relates to:

- (a) the availability, distribution, quantity, quality, use, trading or cost of water; or
- (b) water access rights, water delivery rights or irrigation rights.

It also includes metadata or contextual information about land use, geology and ecology relevant to water.

Giving water information to the Bureau

Section 126 of the Act requires certain persons or organisations to give water information in their possession, custody or control to the Bureau. Under Section 127 of the Act, the Director of Meteorology may also require, in writing, persons or organisations to give specified water information to the Bureau.

The Bureau's role in improving water information

In 2008, the Australian Government announced an investment programme which included \$450 million over ten years for the Bureau to deliver the *Improving Water Information Programme* in conjunction with key water industry stakeholders. Since 2008, the Bureau has been working closely with data collectors and stakeholders across Australia on accounting standards, data collection, warehousing and management, agreements for sharing and licensing data and upgrades to hydrological monitoring systems. Together these activities ensure that the water information made available to the Australian public is accurate, current and comprehensive.

National water information standards

According to Section 130 of the Act, the Director of Meteorology may, by legislative instrument, issue national water information standards.

Section 132 of the Act stipulates that the Director of Meteorology must consult with the States and Territories in preparing national water information standards and may undertake other consultation as appropriate.

Publishing water accounts and other water information

Section 122 of the Act requires the Director of Meteorology to publish the National Water Account annually in a form that is readily accessible to the public. Under Section 123, he or she may publish any water information that the Bureau holds but must not publish water information if he or she believes it would not be in the public interest. Water information may not be published in a way that identifies an individual's water use unless that information is already published or publicly available.

The Bureau publishes the annual National Water Account and other water information products for free on its website at www.bom.gov.au/water.

Creative Commons

The Creative Commons Attribution Licence is the default licence for all water information products. It permits the broadest reuse of water information, meeting the policy objectives of the Water Act. The licence ensures that organisations or individuals that supply information are correctly attributed when their information is used. This approach aligns with the [Australian Government Public Data Policy](#), which commits agencies to a culture of openness and recognises that public sector information is a national resource that should be available on the most unrestricted terms wherever possible.

The Water Regulations 2008

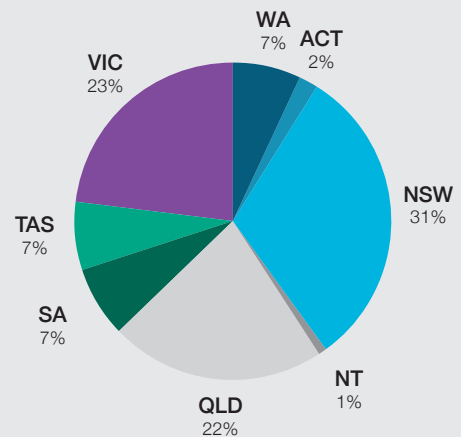
Section 256 of the Water Act provides for the making of Regulations to support the Bureau's water information functions. Section 126 of the Act obliges persons named in the Regulations to give specified water information to the Bureau.

The Water Regulations 2008 provide all persons or organisations with a high level of certainty about their obligations to provide water information to the Bureau.

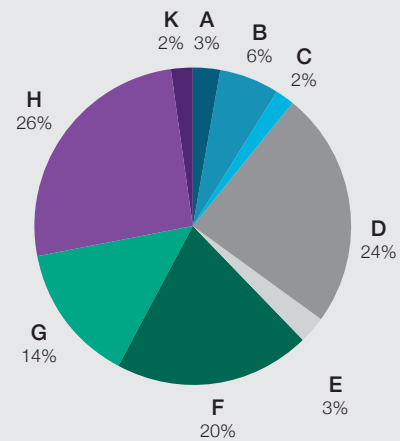
They define who must give specified water information to the Bureau and the time and format in which it must be given.

The Regulations name over 200 organisations that are required to give the Bureau specified water information in their possession, custody or control. We encourage water data providers to visit the [Regulations page on the Bureau's website](#), search for their organisation and generate a customised list of their reporting responsibilities.

Water Regulations organisations by State and Territory



Water Regulations organisations by category



- A - Lead water agencies
- B - Other State and Commonwealth agencies
- C - Hydroelectricity generators
- D - Major storage owners or operators
- E - Rural water utilities
- F - Urban water utilities
- G - Catchment management authorities and others
- H - Flood forecasting and warning water information providers
- K - NGIS and Aquifer Framework information providers

FIND OUT MORE

For more information visit www.bom.gov.au/water/regulations or contact regulations@bom.gov.au

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