

Price Submission 5

Briefing paper for engagement



Diversions Service Standard

Unregulated restrictions concerns raised

Summary:

Unregulated customers hold licences to extract entitlement from rivers, streams and private dams within catchments where the presence of flow is the result of natural inflows; and not as result of the release of water from an authority managed storage (regulated).

Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) monitors flows in unregulated streams to make sure the water is shared equitably and in accordance with the rules specified in the Local Management Rules (LMR).

We undertake regular site inspections to calculate the flow within unregulated streams and apply the roster or restriction specified in the Local Management Rules.

In accordance with licence conditions, GMW is required to inform customers when there is a change to their access to water. Currently notification is done by writing to affected customers and informing them that the status of their access has been changed. In addition to formally writing to customers, we also maintain a website that reflects the current status of access to unregulated streams.

Our Diversions Business Unit also undertakes compliance and enforcement activities to ensure rosters and restrictions are followed to minimise impacts to downstream customers.

Current Service Standard: The number of verified concerns in relation to access during restrictions received and recorded in GMW's Complaints Management System to be less than two per 1000 customers over a year.

Why is this topic being considered?

Our business takes your complaints seriously and we want to minimise any issues we create, so we've evaluated why they're being made and have found most often it's about access to information. We now want you to tell us how we can better let you know about restrictions and changes to access.

What are the decisions to be made?

- Do customers want GMW to find other ways of getting information to them about changes to accessing water?

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- In what form would you like to receive that information? Email, text, other?
- Is there any more information you would like when we inform you about restrictions?
- Are you satisfied with the information – and frequency of information – about how we're managing rostering and restrictions?

How does this matter affect customers and stakeholders?

To ensure we minimise the impact of restricting access to water, we want to provide information in a form, content and timing that best meets your needs.

What is non-negotiable in this topic?

The need for GMW to manage access to water is non-negotiable in unregulated streams across the entire area.

GMW is also required to inform customers of changes to their access status, and provide a summary of the status of all unregulated streams to the Minister on a monthly basis.

What is negotiable in this topic?

The number of verified customer complaints deemed acceptable is negotiable. However, changes need to consider the Diversions Business ability to meet the changed standard, the financial costs to customers, and the impacts to customers' ability to access water.

What are the known, viable options?

- Leave the service standards as they are as the agreed targets are being met
- Remove the Service Standard completely. This would not remove the need to manage to licence conditions and to manage access in accordance with LMR's.
- Find an easier way to explain the service standard. For example: *The number of complaints about access and restrictions is less than two per 1000 customers.*
- Change the way we communicate restrictions to our customers.

If other options are identified, can they be considered?

Yes; we are committed to supporting customers while maintaining financial stability so alternative options can be considered.