



Our ref: V19/894#1

Mr Bryce Wilde
Executive Director
Natural Resources Commission
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Mr Wilde

Audit of the implementation of coastal groundwater sharing plans

Thank you for your email of 22 March 2021 regarding the Natural Resources Commission's audit report of the implementation of the south coast groundwater, north coast coastal sands groundwater and north coast fractured and porous rock groundwater water sharing plans. I apologise for the delay in my response.

I am pleased the report acknowledges the Natural Resources Access Regulator's (NRAR) role as an independent regulator that takes reactive and proactive compliance approaches.

We note the audit report advises there was no information available at the time of writing the report on compliance campaigns undertaken by NRAR in these water sharing plan areas. I can confirm that during the audit period NRAR undertook a proactive compliance campaign to educate and encourage water users about the need for approvals for spearpoints (small bores) in the Harrington area. The campaign included hand delivering 257 letters to residents and distributing a new [spearpoint fact sheet](#). Prior to this campaign, Water NSW had issued only 14 approvals. As at April 2021, Water NSW had received 21 new applications to approve spearpoints. Of these applications, 14 spearpoints have now been approved and 2 applications refused.

I note the audit report includes no recommendations or suggested actions for NRAR. However, we will continue to work collaboratively across the water sector, supporting the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to ensure mandatory conditions are applied where needed (recommendation 8); and Water NSW to investigate incorrect conversions of water access licences (recommendation 4.2).

I also look forward to working with you and your colleagues to champion improvements to the management of natural resources through the audit process and reiterate our willingness to consider any future audit findings relevant to NRAR.

Yours sincerely

Grant Barnes
Chief Regulatory Officer
Natural Resources Access Regulator
2 July 2021