



# UNBUNDLING WATER ENTITLEMENTS

## Water-use Licences

When water entitlements are unbundled on 1 July 2007, customers who currently have a water right or diversion licence will be issued with a water-use licence that recognises existing practices and conditions that currently apply to the property.

The conditions irrigators and diverters currently have on their water use will be transferred to the water-use licence.

For most customers the conversion to water-use licences will not result in any changes. Water-use licences will give existing irrigators and diverters certainty that they can continue using water in the same way as they are legitimately doing now.

Water-use licenses for existing district irrigators and diverters will have four standard conditions:

- 1** an annual use limit (AUL), based on either their existing entitlements, or their history of use, or any pre-existing limit. This will set the maximum amount of water that can be applied to the property. The AUL is a key tool to help control groundwater infiltration and high water tables
- 2** a requirement to take water through a meter approved by the water authority, unless exempted in writing
- 3** a continued ability to dispose of drainage in ways that meet with the water authority's standards, terms and conditions
- 4** a need to get further approvals before growing rice.

Water-use licences aim to manage the impact of water use on other people and the environment by managing groundwater infiltration and the disposal of drainage, reducing salinity and protecting animal and plant life.

Customers who have developed properties since 1994 will be issued with water-use licences that recognise any special conditions put in place through the irrigation development guidelines.

Future new irrigation developments will have to meet higher best practice standards set as conditions on their water-use licence.

The water-use licence will be attached to a specific parcel or parcels of land. If land that is covered by a single water-use licence is subdivided it will be necessary to have a separate water-use licence for each separate piece of land.

Where blocks of land that are not adjacent or close to each other have been amalgamated (known as a non-contiguous amalgamation), separate water-use licences will be issued for each block. The AUL established for each block at unbundling will be based on the maximum water use limit determined at the time the blocks were amalgamated.

The Minister cannot make changes to the standard conditions for water-use licences without consulting irrigator representative bodies and catchment management authorities.

Water-use licences are ongoing. They only expire if no water is used on the property for 10 years.

There is no need to issue a paper licence as licence details and conditions will be kept in the electronic statewide water register.

You can find out more about water-use licences through

- the Water Wheels information caravan visiting all localities in the next three months (keep an eye on local papers for dates and locations)
- your local Goulburn-Murray Water office or by visiting or calling:

[www.g-mwater.com.au](http://www.g-mwater.com.au)

1800 013 357