

Spearpoints

What you need to know

March 2021 Natural Resources Access Regulator



Spearpoints are a relatively cheap and easy way to access shallow groundwater. However, like bores and wells, they must be licensed and approved and constructed by a licensed driller.

The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is the independent water regulator in NSW. We ensure water is used lawfully so that communities and the environment get a fair share.

NRAR understands there are unlicensed spearpoints in your area.

Unauthorised spearpoints can damage built structures and harm animals and plants.

What is a spearpoint?

A spearpoint is a simple type of small bore typically used in coastal or alluvial areas to draw water out of shallow groundwater (aquifer) systems. Like bores, spearpoints must be licensed and approved and constructed by a licensed driller.

Why spearpoint licensing is important

Without knowing how many spearpoints are in the area, it's difficult to manage a groundwater resource and allocate water fairly and sustainably.

When new developments are being proposed for an area, the impact on existing groundwater works is considered. If the number and location of spearpoints are not known, it's difficult to understand the overall impact of any new developments.

Unauthorised spearpoints can also contribute to the damage and contamination of aquifers. For example, in some areas acid sulphate soils can present an issue when drilling a spearpoint. Exposure can be harmful to the environment and built structures.

Figure 1. Example of a spearpoint





The importance of water quality

Shallow groundwater is vulnerable to contamination. Chemical spills, leaking septic tanks, nearby industries, flooding and other factors can all affect the quality of groundwater.

The groundwater you use on your vegetable garden, to water your pets, or to fill up the kids wading pool should always be tested and monitored.

If groundwater quality issues are identified in your area and your spearpoint isn't licensed, you may not be contacted or made aware of the problems.

Ensuring your spearpoint is licensed means you will be informed of any groundwater water quality issues in your area so you can protect the health and wellbeing of you, your family and your pets.

Licensing your spearpoint helps with sustainable groundwater resource management

By licensing your spearpoint, you are providing crucial information about your water extraction. This will help us ensure an equitable allocation of water.

By licensing your spearpoint, you also contribute valuable information to drilling reports. Hydrogeologists use these reports to better understand groundwater sources, allowing them to analyse factors such as the depth of the water bearing zones, the geology and water quality.

What you should do if your spearpoint is not licensed

It is simple and inexpensive to apply to have your spearpoint licensed. Simply visit the [Water Supply Work and Use Approvals](#) page on the WaterNSW website to apply for your licence.¹

WaterNSW will assess your application and advise you of the outcome.

By being proactive and voluntarily licensing your spearpoint, you can have peace of mind about the quality of the groundwater you are using and avoid potential fines associated with unlicensed works.

We thank you for doing your bit to ensure groundwater in your area is shared fairly and will be sustainable into the future.

More information

This fact sheet is one in a series explaining water management, compliance and associated issues.

You can find this series and more information about licensing, approvals and compliance on the NRAR website at industry.nsw.gov.au/nrar

Copies of the Acts and associated Regulations governing water use in the state are available on the NSW Government legislation site at www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

For enquiries, contact NRAR by:

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¹ Visit the page at waternsw.com.au/customer-service/water-licensing/approvals/water-supply-work-and-use-approvals