

Measure and monitor all the water we take

The problem

Not all water use is measured or accounted for in southern Victoria. Large water users such as water corporations and big irrigators have their water take metered, but many smaller users do not. Less than half the volume of entitlements to take water from rivers and creeks for non-urban use is metered. Water for stock and domestic use is not measured at all and the number and use of small catchment dams is often underestimated. There could be thousands of water users in every river basin whose water take is unaccounted for.



This situation is inequitable and damaging to rivers and aquifers. Much of the unmeasured use is in upper catchments which deprives rivers of flow and downstream users of a fair share of the available water. The lack of information makes accurate accounting impossible.

The solution

To ensure equity and fairness between users and to protect the environment, we call on the next Victorian government to:

- **Bring all categories of water take into the licensing framework.** Stock and domestic bores and dams should be included so they can be measured, accounted for and managed.
- **Remove exemptions from metering for small water users.** A 'no meter, no pump' condition should be included in all water use licenses to enable accurate accounting.
- **Overhaul and expand water information and knowledge infrastructure.** Monitoring systems should be reviewed so we can know whether our groundwater and surface water use is sustainable, along with the condition of our ecological assets. There should be publicly available data on all licensed water diversions and rights, and real time monitoring of extraction by urban water corporations.
- **Improve compliance with and enforcement of licence conditions.** Compliance and enforcement are the responsibility of water corporations who are under-resourced and data poor to perform this function effectively. Independent oversight with improved remote sensing and more resources is required.

The Concerned Waterways Alliance is a network of community groups from across southern Victoria from Gippsland to the Otways, united in our desire to see our rivers functioning as they should, as whole living entities, resilient and flourishing in the face of climate change.

Authorised by: The Waterways Network, 1a Foam St, Merricks Beach, VIC 3926