

## Changes to water licence arrangements

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### Improving delivery of water licensing in Queensland

The Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) is committed to improving service delivery.

The department is implementing an initiative to improve how we deliver water licensing across Queensland and the way we service our customers.

These improvements have been developed as a result of customer feedback. This will provide for water licence arrangements that are more streamlined, flexible and customer service oriented, and which improve the management and use of our water resources.

### What is changing?

Three things will change under the new arrangements:

#### 1. Payment of the annual water licence fee will be separated from licence applications.

Currently, payment of the water licence fee is made upfront at the time of application. Under the new arrangements, the licence fee will be charged annually and licence applications will be dealt with separately.

#### 2. DERM will introduce an expanded range of payment options.

Customers will be able to pay their water licence fees in more convenient ways, including online via BPay and BPoint.

However, we will continue to maintain a strong network of regional offices to provide over-the-counter payments at departmental business centres.

#### 3. Maximum licence periods will be longer.

The department can now grant a licence for longer than the current five-year maximum period.

The maximum licence periods will be up to 20 years for a water licence for taking water solely for stock or domestic purposes and up to 10 years for licences for any other purpose.

Licence periods will be subject to water planning objectives and resource management priorities.

### When will the new arrangements commence?

The new arrangements will commence on 1 July 2009.

### What are the benefits for customers?

The new arrangements will have a number of benefits for water licence holders:

- Customers will be able to pay the water licence fee annually instead of the current upfront payment at the time of application. This will allow customers to spread payment of the water licence fee over the term of the licence period.
- Customers will be provided with more flexible payment options for annual water licence fees, with the introduction of online payment methods such as BPay and BPoint (internet and phone) in addition to existing payment methods.
- The period for which a water licence is issued will not be dependent on the amount of the annual water licence fee paid at the time of application.
- Longer maximum licence periods of up to 20 years for licences for taking water solely for stock or domestic purposes and up to 10 years for licences for any other purpose will provide greater certainty for licensees.

### How will the new arrangements be implemented?

Water licences issued and applications received before the commencement of the new arrangements will continue to be administered under the existing arrangements until the licence is renewed or expires.

Any application regarding a water licence received up to and including 30 June 2009 and not yet decided or issued by 1 July 2009 will be treated in accordance with the current arrangements in place prior to the 1 July 2009.

Applications regarding water licences received on or after 1 July 2009 will be processed under the new arrangements and will not require upfront payment of the water licence fee. Instead, the licensee will be invoiced annually for the water licence fee while the licence remains in force.

The following water licences will remain exempt from payment of the annual water licence fee:

- a water licence to take only supplemented water
- a water licence to take water for stock or domestic purposes, unless the licence is for taking underground water for stock or domestic purposes from the Great Artesian Basin.

## Will the amount of the water licence fee change?

No, the amount of the water licence fee will not change under the new arrangements.

However, as in the past, it may be subject to Consumer Price Index (CPI) movements and adjusted accordingly.

## Do the new arrangements affect application fees?

No, the new arrangements do not affect application fees. If applicable, payment of the application fee at the time of application will still apply. Only the water licence fee will be invoiced annually.

At this time, the online payment options being introduced for the water licence fee will not be available for payment of application fees. However, this is being considered as a future enhancement under the department's commitment to move to electronic lodgement, payment and tracking of applications.

## When will invoices be issued for the annual water licence fee?

An invoice for the annual water licence fee will be issued in the month after the month in which the water licence was issued, and then annually thereafter while the licence remains in force.

For example, a water licence issued during July 2009 will be invoiced for the annual water licence fee in August 2009 for the first year and in August every year thereafter while the licence remains in force.

## How can I pay the annual water licence fee?

The department is introducing an expanded range of payment options to provide greater flexibility for customers in addition to existing payment methods. Payment options available include:

- BPay
- Commonwealth Bank BPoint—Internet banking
- Commonwealth Bank BPoint—Phone banking
- Cheque payment sent through the mail or over the counter at a departmental business centre
- Credit card or cash payment over the counter at a departmental business centre.

## How long do I have in which to pay the annual water licence fee?

You have up to 20 business days from the date of the invoice to pay the annual water licence fee.

A water licence holder who does not pay the annual water licence fee by the due date will be subject to the department's policy for non-payment of fees.

## Further information

For general water licensing information, refer to fact sheet W81—*Water licences*, available on the DERM website <[www.derm.qld.gov.au](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au)>.

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For general enquiries contact the  
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