

Bore assessments

What is a bore assessment?

A bore assessment establishes whether the bore is, or is likely to be, impacted (impaired capacity) by the extraction of underground water associated with petroleum operations.

The *Water Act 2000* (Water Act) imposes make good obligations on petroleum tenure holders to ensure that the impacted water bore owners are able to maintain access to a reasonable supply of water.

The make good obligations for a petroleum tenure holder include:

- undertaking bore assessments
- negotiating make good agreements with bore owners
- complying with make good agreements.

Who must undertake a bore assessment?

A bore assessment is undertaken by the petroleum tenure holder.

If a bore is within a Cumulative Management Area (CMA), the responsible tenure holder identified in the underground water impact report (UWIR) will undertake the bore assessment.

When must a bore assessment be undertaken?

A bore assessment must be undertaken in one of three circumstances:

- if an underground water impact report (UWIR) or an amendment of a report takes effect, for water bores located in an 'immediately affected area'
- if a final report (when the tenure is about to cease) or an amendment of a report takes effect, for any water bores in a 'long term affected area'
- if the chief executive of the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) directs the tenure holder to undertake a bore assessment.

What are 'immediately affected areas' and 'long term affected areas'?

An 'immediately affected area' is an area where the water level in an aquifer is predicted to decline by more than the 'bore trigger threshold', within three years of the underground water impact report being released for consultation. The decline in aquifer water level is due to the extraction of water associated with petroleum activities.

A 'long term affected area' is an area where the water level in an aquifer is predicted to decline by more than the trigger threshold at any time (beyond three years), due to the extraction of water associated with petroleum activities.

Maps of an 'immediately affected area' and a 'long term affected area' are included in an UWIR.

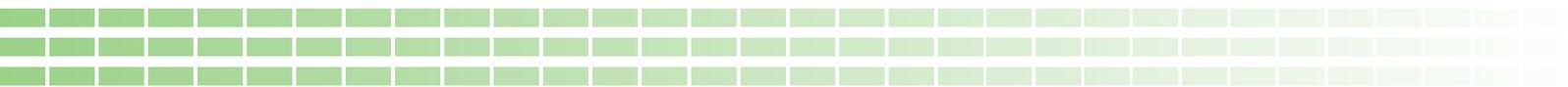
Draft UWIR's will be released for public consultation. Once approved, UWIR's will be made publicly available on the DERM website.

When does a water bore have an impaired capacity?

A water bore is considered to have an impaired capacity where:

- there is a decline in the water level of an aquifer due to extraction of water by the petroleum tenure holder
- the bore can no longer provide a reasonable quantity or quality of water for its authorised use or purpose.

For water bores that are constructed after the first UWIR for the area takes effect, a bore is considered to have an impaired capacity only if the decline is greater than predicted in the UWIR.



How is a bore assessment undertaken?

Bore assessments must be undertaken in accordance with guidelines that are published on the DERM website. Before a guideline is implemented, the assessment must be undertaken in accordance with best practice industry standards

To ensure bore owners are given sufficient notification of when an assessment will be undertaken, there is a requirement for the petroleum tenure holder to notify the bore owner at least 10 business days before conducting the assessment.

The bore owner may also be requested to give information to the petroleum tenure holder about the location of water bores on their land and other information that may be reasonably required.

Outcome of bore assessment

The Queensland Water Commission (QWC) is responsible for maintaining a database of certain information about underground water. The data collected through bore assessments will be recorded in this database.

After a bore assessment has been undertaken, the petroleum tenure holder will give both the owner of the water bore and the QWC notice of the outcome.

Make good agreements

The outcome of a bore assessment provides the obligation for the petroleum tenure holder to enter into a 'make good agreement' with the bore owner.

If it is determined through the bore assessment that a bore has, or is likely to have, an 'impaired capacity' the make good agreement must provide details on the make good measures to be undertaken.

This ensures that the bore owner is able to maintain access to a reasonable supply of water for the bore's authorised purpose.

For general enquiries contact the Queensland Government call centre 13 74 68 (13 QGOV) or visit <www.derm.qld.gov.au>