

New South Wales

Natural Resources Access Regulator Bill 2017

Explanatory note

This explanatory note relates to this Bill as introduced into Parliament.

Overview of Bill

The objects of this Bill are as follows:

- (a) to constitute the Natural Resources Access Regulator (the *Regulator*) as a statutory corporation having functions relating to the enforcement of natural resources management legislation (including determining whether proceedings for offences under that legislation should be instituted),
- (b) to provide for the Regulator to have a governing Board comprising 3 part-time members appointed by the Minister,
- (c) to authorise the exchange of information and records relating to the administration of natural resources management legislation between the Regulator and other agencies or persons (including Water NSW) responsible for the administration of that legislation,
- (d) to provide for the transfer of compliance and enforcement staff in Water NSW to any Public Service agency in which the staff of the Regulator are employed or in which persons are employed in connection with the administration of natural resources management legislation.

Outline of provisions

Part 1 Preliminary

Clause 1 sets out the name (also called the short title) of the proposed Act.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation.

Clause 3 defines certain words and terms used in the proposed Act. The term *natural resources management legislation* includes the *Water Management Act 2000* as well as any other legislation administered by a relevant Minister that is prescribed by the regulations under the proposed Act. The Minister for Primary Industries, the Minister for Regional Water and the Minister for Lands and Forestry are *relevant Ministers*.

Part 2 Natural Resources Access Regulator

Division 1 Constitution and management of Regulator

Clause 4 constitutes the Regulator as a body corporate and provides that it is a NSW Government agency (which has the effect of conferring the status, privileges and immunities of the Crown on the Regulator).

Clause 5 establishes a Board of the Regulator which will consist of 3 part-time members appointed by the Minister. The Board may establish committees to give advice and assistance to the Board.

Clause 6 provides that the Board acts for the Regulator.

Clause 7 provides that the Minister may give directions of a general nature to the Regulator with respect to its functions if the Minister is satisfied it is in the public interest to do so.

Clause 8 provides that the Chief Regulatory Officer of the Regulator will be responsible for the day to day management of the activities of the Regulator.

Clause 9 provides that persons (including the Chief Regulatory Officer) may be employed in the Public Service under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* to enable the Regulator to exercise its functions.

Division 2 Functions of Regulator

Clause 10 specifies the functions of the Regulator. The Regulator's functions will include any functions under any natural resources management legislation administered by a relevant Minister that are prescribed by the regulations made under the proposed Act with the concurrence of the relevant Minister.

Clause 11 provides that the Regulator is to determine, based on legal advice, whether proceedings for offences under the natural resources management legislation should be instituted by the Crown.

Clause 12 requires the Regulator to report annually to the Minister on its work and activities.

Clause 13 enables the Regulator to delegate its functions.

Part 3 Miscellaneous

Clause 14 provides that the Minister may transfer to the relevant Public Service agency designated Water NSW employees who are required for the purposes of enabling the Regulator to exercise its functions or who are required to exercise enforcement powers under the natural resources management legislation. The *relevant Public Service agency* to which the designated Water NSW staff may be transferred is the agency in which persons are employed to enable the Regulator to exercise its functions or any other agency in which persons are employed in connection with the administration of the natural resources management legislation.

Clause 15 authorises the exchange of information or records relating to the administration of the natural resources management legislation between the Regulator and other agencies or persons (including Water NSW) responsible for the administration of that legislation. The information or records that may be exchanged includes information or records relating to the exercise of enforcement powers, and the institution of proceedings for offences, under the natural resources

management legislation. The Regulator may also require Water NSW to provide the Regulator with (or with access to) relevant information or records (which includes any database or system containing relevant information or records).

Clause 16 limits personal liability for matters or things done or omitted to be done in good faith in exercising the Regulator's functions.

Clause 17 enables the Governor to make regulations for the purposes of the proposed Act (including regulations of a savings or transitional nature consequent on the enactment of the proposed Act or any Act that amends the proposed Act).

Schedule 1 Members and procedure of Board

Schedule 1 contains standard provisions with respect to the members and procedure of the Board of the Regulator.



New South Wales

Natural Resources Access Regulator Bill 2017

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New South Wales

Natural Resources Access Regulator Bill 2017

No , 2017

A Bill for

An Act to constitute and confer functions on the Natural Resources Access Regulator.

The L	Legisla	ture of New South Wales enacts:	1
Part	: 1	Preliminary	2
1	Name	e of Act	3
		This Act is the Natural Resources Access Regulator Act 2017.	4
2	Com	nencement	5
		This Act commences on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation.	6
3	Defin	itions	7
Ū	(1)	In this Act:	8
	(1)	Board means the Board of the Regulator established under this Act.	9
		enforcement powers, in relation to the natural resources management legislation, means any powers that may be exercised under that legislation in connection with the enforcement of that legislation, including:	10 11 12
		(a) powers that may be exercised for the purposes of determining whether there has been compliance with or a contravention of that legislation, or	13 14
		(b) the issuing of any notice, order or direction, or the imposition of any penalty or charge, under that legislation.	15 16
		<i>function</i> includes a power, authority or duty, and <i>exercise</i> a function includes perform a duty.	17 18
		<i>natural resources management legislation</i> means any of the following Acts and the regulations and other instruments made under those Acts:	19 20
		(a) this Act,	21
		(b) Water Management Act 2000,	22
		(c) Water Act 1912,	23
		(d) any other Act or part of an Act administered by a relevant Minister that is prescribed by the regulations.	24 25
		Regulator means the Natural Resources Access Regulator constituted under this Act.	26
		relevant Minister means any of the following:	27
		(a) the Minister for Primary Industries,	28
		(b) the Minister for Regional Water,	29
		(c) the Minister for Lands and Forestry. Note. The <i>Interpretation Act 1987</i> contains definitions and other provisions that affect the interpretation and application of this Act.	30 31 32
	(2)	Any regulation prescribing an Act or part of an Act for the purposes of the definition of <i>natural resources management legislation</i> may only be made with the concurrence of the relevant Minister administering that Act or part.	33 34 35
	(3)	Notes included in this Act do not form part of this Act.	36

Par	t 2	Natural Resources Access Regulator	1
Divi	sion	1 Constitution and management of Regulator	2
4	Con	stitution of Regulator	3
	(1)	There is constituted by this Act a body corporate with the corporate name of the Natural Resources Access Regulator.	4 5
	(2)	The Regulator is a NSW Government agency.	6
		Note. See section 13A of the <i>Interpretation Act 1987</i> in relation to the status, privileges and immunities of statutory bodies declared to be NSW Government agencies.	7 8
	(3)	The Regulator is not subject to the control and direction of the Minister except to the extent specifically provided for under this or any other Act.	9 10
5	Boa	d of Regulator	11
	(1)	There is to be a Board of the Regulator.	12
	(2)	The Board is to consist of 3 members appointed by the Minister.	13
	(3)	The members of the Board are to be persons who together have experience and expertise in law, natural resources management, compliance and regulation and any other areas the Minister considers relevant.	14 15 16
	(4)	The Board may establish committees to give advice and assistance to the Board in connection with any particular matter or function of the Board. It does not matter that some or all of the members of any committee are not members of the Board.	17 18 19
	(5)	Schedule 1 contains provisions relating to the members and procedure of the Board.	20
6	Role	of Board	21
	(1)	Any decision relating to the functions of the Regulator is to be made by or under the authority of the Board.	22 23
	(2)	Any act, matter or thing done in the name of, or on behalf of, the Regulator by or under the authority of the Board is taken to have been done by the Regulator.	24 25
7	Gen	eral directions by Minister	26
	(1)	The Minister may give the Regulator a written direction with respect to the functions of the Regulator if the Minister is satisfied that it is necessary to do so in the public interest.	27 28 29
	(2)	A direction by the Minister may be of a general nature only and may not relate to a specific matter that is being considered or determined by the Regulator.	30 31
	(3)	In particular, a direction by the Minister under this section may not be made in relation to the following:	32 33
		(a) the content of any advice or report given by the Regulator,	34
		(b) any determination by the Regulator whether proceedings for offences under the natural resources management legislation should be instituted.	35 36
	(4)	The Regulator must ensure that any direction given to it under this section is complied with.	37 38
	(5)	Any direction given to the Regulator under this section is, as soon as practicable after it is given, to be published on the website of the Public Service agency in which persons are employed to enable the Regulator to exercise its functions. The Regulator must also include in its annual report particulars of each direction given under this section during the year to which the report relates.	39 40 41 42 43

8	Chie	f Regu	ulatory Officer	1
	(1)		Chief Regulatory Officer of the Regulator is the person employed in the Public ice as the Chief Regulatory Officer.	2
	(2)	The	Chief Regulatory Officer:	4
		(a)	is responsible for the day to day management of the activities of the Regulator, and	5 6
		(b)	is to report to the Board on those activities.	7
	(3)		Chief Regulatory Officer is entitled to attend and to participate in discussions at ings of the Board but is not entitled to vote at any such meeting.	8 9
9	Staff	of Re	gulator	10
			ons may be employed in the Public Service to enable the Regulator to exercise unctions.	11 12
		so en empl	Section 59 of the <i>Government Sector Employment Act 2013</i> provides that the persons inployed (or whose services the Regulator makes use of) may be referred to as officers or byees, or members of staff, of the Regulator. Section 47A of the <i>Constitution Act 1902</i> udes the Regulator from employing staff.	13 14 15 16
Divi	sion	2	Functions of Regulator	17
10	Fund	tions	of Regulator	18
		The	Regulator has the following functions:	19
		(a)	to prepare strategies, policies and procedures relating to enforcement powers under the natural resources management legislation,	20 21
		(b)	to advise and report to the Minister or any relevant Minister on any matter relating to the administration of the natural resources management legislation,	22 23
		(c)	to provide the Minister or any relevant Minister with such other advice or reports as the Minister or relevant Minister may, by instrument in writing, request,	24 25 26
		(d)	to publish details of convictions in prosecutions for offences under the natural resources management legislation,	27 28
		(e)	any functions under any natural resources management legislation administered by a relevant Minister (including functions of a relevant Minister) that are prescribed by the regulations made under this Act with the concurrence of the relevant Minister,	29 30 31 32
		(f)	any other functions conferred or imposed on the Regulator (including by way of delegation) by or under the natural resources management legislation or any other Act.	33 34 35
11	Regu	ılator	to determine whether proceedings for offences should be instituted	36
	(1)		Regulator is to determine whether proceedings for offences under the natural arces management legislation should be instituted by the Crown.	37 38
	(2)		Regulator may not determine that any such proceedings should be instituted as the determination is supported by legal advice.	39 40
	(3)		his section, <i>the Crown</i> means the Crown within the meaning of the <i>Crown</i> eedings Act 1988, and includes any officer, employee or agent of the Crown.	41 42
	(4)		ninal proceedings may not be challenged on the ground that they were instituted entravention of this section.	43 44

12	Ann	ual report	1
	(1)	The Regulator is, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, to prepare and forward to the Minister a report of its work and activities for the 12 months ending on that 30 June.	2 3 4
	(2)	Without limiting subsection (1), the report must include the following:	5
		(a) details of notices, orders and directions issued under the natural resources management legislation in connection with the enforcement of that legislation,	6 7
		(b) such other particulars as may be prescribed by the regulations.	8
	(3)	The Regulator is to make copies of its annual report publicly available at no cost.	9
	(4)	Any annual report of the Regulator (whether required under this section or under any other Act) may be included in the annual report of the Public Service agency in which	10 11
		the staff of the Regulator are employed.	12
13	Dele	egation	13
		The Regulator may delegate any of its functions (other than this power of delegation) to any of the following:	14 15
		(a) a member of the Board,	16
		(b) a committee of the Board,	17
		(c) the Chief Regulatory Officer or any other Public Service employee,	18
		(d) any person, or any class of persons, authorised for the purposes of this section by the regulations.	19 20

Par	t 3	Mis	scellaneous	1
14	Tran	sfer o	f certain Water NSW staff	2
	(1)	In th	is section:	3
		relev	vant Public Service agency means:	4
		(a)	the Public Service agency in which persons are employed to enable the Regulator to exercise its functions, or	5 6
		(b)	any other Public Service agency in which persons are employed in connection with the administration of the natural resources management legislation.	7 8
			sferred employee means an employee of Water NSW who is the subject of an runder this section.	9 10
	(2)		Minister may, by order in writing, transfer to the relevant Public Service agency person who:	11 12
		(a)	is employed by Water NSW, and	13
		(b)	is designated by the Minister as a person who:	14
			(i) is required to enable the Regulator to exercise its functions, or	15
			(ii) is to exercise enforcement powers under the natural resources management legislation.	16 17
	(3)	A tra	unsfer under this section does not require the consent of the transferred employee.	18
	(4)	On t	he day specified in the order, the transferred employee:	19
		(a)	ceases to be employed by Water NSW, and	20
		(b)	is employed as a Public Service employee under the <i>Government Sector Employment Act 2013</i> in the relevant Public Service agency specified in the order.	21 22 23
	(5)	A tra	ansferred employee:	24
	,	(a)	retains any rights to annual leave, extended leave, sick leave or other forms of leave accrued or accruing immediately before the transfer, and	25 26
		(b)	is not entitled to receive any payment or other benefit (including in the nature of severance pay or redundancy or other compensation) merely because the person ceases to be employed by Water NSW, and	27 28 29
		(c)	is not entitled to claim, both under this Act or any other Act or law, dual benefits of the same kind for the same period of service.	30 31
	(6)	prov be p	nout limiting subsection (5), a transferred employee is not, despite any other ision of this or any other Act or law, entitled to elect, because of the transfer, to aid the money value of any annual leave or extended leave accrued by the aftered employee.	32 33 34 35
	(7)		er NSW is liable for the cost of any annual leave or extended leave accrued by a sferred employee immediately before the transfer.	36 37
	(8)	Sche	er NSW is taken to be a government sector agency for the purposes of Part 2 of edule 2 to the <i>Government Sector Employment Regulation 2014</i> in respect of the alation of a transferred employee's extended leave.	38 39 40

15	Excl	nange	of information and records between relevant agencies	1
	(1)	In th	nis section:	2
	()	adm	inistration of the natural resources management legislation includes the owing:	3 4
		(a)	the granting of licences or other authorities under the natural resources management legislation and the suspension or revocation of any such licence or other authority,	5 6 7
		(b)	the issuing of any notice, order or direction under the natural resources management legislation,	8 9
		(c)	the exercising of enforcement powers under the natural resources management legislation,	10 11
		(d)	the institution of proceedings for offences under the natural resources management legislation.	12 13
			<i>rds</i> includes plans, specifications, maps, reports, books and other documents ether in writing, in electronic form or otherwise).	14 15
		rele	vant agency means any of the following:	16
		(a)	the Regulator,	17
		(b)	the person, statutory body or Public Service agency responsible for the administration of any natural resources management legislation,	18 19
		(c)	Water NSW.	20
		rele	vant information or records means:	21
		(a)	information or records obtained by the Regulator in connection with the administration of the natural resources management legislation, or	22 23
		(b)	information or records obtained by, or otherwise in the possession of, any other relevant agency to the extent that the information or records relate to the administration of the natural resources management legislation,	24 25 26
		and	includes any database or other system containing such information or records.	27
	(2)	anot	evant information or records held by a relevant agency may be provided to her relevant agency for the purposes of the administration of the natural urces management legislation.	28 29 30
	(3)	Wate notice the reque Note of ar	nout limiting subsection (2), the Regulator may, by notice in writing given to er NSW, require Water NSW, within the time and in the manner specified in the ce, to provide the Regulator with any relevant information or records specified in notice or with access to any such relevant information or records. Water NSW is sired to comply with a notice under this subsection. 3. Under section 28 (2) of the <i>Water NSW Act 2014</i> the Minister may transfer ownership by specified assets of Water NSW (which would include records and databases) to the ulator.	31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38
	(4)	A re this	elevant agency may rely on relevant information or records provided to it under section for the purposes of the administration of the natural resources agement legislation.	39 40 41
16	Excl	usion	of personal liability	42
	(1)	Any	matter or thing done or omitted to be done by a person who is:	43
	` /	(a)	a member of the Board or a committee of the Board, or	44
		(b)	the Chief Regulatory Officer or any other Public Service employee, or	45

		(c) acting under the direction of the Board,	1
		does not, if the matter or thing was done or omitted to be done in good faith in connection with exercising the functions of the Regulator under the natural resources management legislation, subject the person personally to any action, liability, claim or demand.	2 3 4 5
	(2)	However, any such liability attaches instead to the Crown.	6
17	Regu	ulations	7
	(1)	The Governor may make regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, for or with respect to any matter that by this Act is required or permitted to be prescribed or that is necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to this Act.	8 9 10 11
	(2)	The regulations may contain provisions of a savings or transitional nature consequent on the enactment of this Act or any Act that amends this Act.	12 13
	(3)	Any such provision may, if the regulations so provide, take effect from the date of assent to the Act concerned or a later date.	14 15
	(4)	To the extent to which any such provision takes effect from a date that is earlier than the date of its publication on the NSW legislation website, the provision does not operate so as:	16 17 18
		(a) to affect, in a manner prejudicial to any person (other than the State or an authority of the State), the rights of that person existing before the date of its publication, or	19 20 21
		(b) to impose liabilities on any person (other than the State or an authority of the State) in respect of anything done or omitted to be done before the date of its publication.	22 23 24

Sch	Schedule 1 Members and procedure of Board		
		(Section 5 (5))	2
Par	t 1	General	3
1	Defi	nitions	4
		In this Schedule:	5
		Chairperson means the Chairperson of the Board.	6
		member means any member of the Board.	7
Par	t 2	Members	8
2	Tern	ns of office of members	9
		Subject to this Schedule, a member holds office for such period (not exceeding 3 years) as is specified in the member's instrument of appointment, but is eligible (if otherwise qualified) for re-appointment.	10 11 12
3	Part	-time appointments	13
		Members hold office on a part-time basis.	14
4	Rem	nuneration	15
		A member is entitled to be paid such remuneration (including travelling and subsistence allowances) as the Minister may from time to time determine in respect of the member.	16 17 18
5	Acti	ng members	19
	(1)	The Minister may, from time to time, appoint a person to act in the office of a member during the illness or absence of the member (or a vacancy in the office of the member) and, while so acting, the person has and may exercise all the functions of the member and is taken to be a member.	20 21 22 23
	(2)	The Minister may remove a person from the office to which the person was appointed under this clause.	24 25
	(3)	For the purposes of this clause, the requirement under clause 9 that a member must not be present at a meeting of the Board is to be regarded as an absence from office of the member.	26 27 28
6	Vaca	ancy in office of member	29
	(1)	The office of a member becomes vacant if the member:	30
		(a) dies, or	31
		(b) completes a term of office and is not re-appointed, or	32
		(c) resigns the office by instrument in writing addressed to the Minister, or	33
		(d) is removed from office by the Minister under this clause, or	34
		(e) is absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the Board of which reasonable notice has been given to the member personally or by post, except on leave granted by the Minister or unless the member is excused by the Minister for having been absent from those meetings, or	35 36 37 38

		(f)	becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, compounds with his or her creditors or makes an assignment of his or her remuneration for their benefit, or	1 2 3
		(g)	becomes a mentally incapacitated person, or	4
		(h)	is convicted in New South Wales of an offence that is punishable by imprisonment for 12 months or more or is convicted elsewhere than in New South Wales of an offence that, if committed in New South Wales, would be an offence so punishable.	5 6 7 8
	(2)	The	Minister may remove a member from office at any time.	9
7	Fillir	ng of v	racancy in office of member	10
			e office of any member becomes vacant, a person is, subject to this Act, to be inted to fill the vacancy.	11 12
8	Chai	rpers	on	13
	(1)		Minister may, in a member's instrument of appointment or by subsequent ument, appoint a member to be Chairperson.	14 15
	(2)	The	Chairperson vacates office as Chairperson if the person:	16
		(a)	is removed from that office by the Minister under this clause, or	17
		(b)	resigns that office by instrument in writing addressed to the Minister, or	18
		(c)	ceases to be a member of the Board.	19
	(3)	The	Minister may at any time remove the Chairperson from office as Chairperson.	20
9	Disc	losure	e of pecuniary interests	21
	(1)	If:		22
		(a)	a member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered at a meeting of the Board, and	23 24
		(b)	the interest appears to raise a conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties in relation to the consideration of the matter,	25 26
			member must, as soon as possible after the relevant facts have come to the aber's knowledge, disclose the nature of the interest at a meeting of the Board.	27 28
	(2)	A di	sclosure by a member at a meeting of the Board that the member:	29
		(a)	is a member, or is in the employment, of a specified company or other body, or	30
		(b)	is a partner, or is in the employment, of a specified person, or	31
		(c)	has some other specified interest relating to a specified company or other body or to a specified person,	32 33
		com	sufficient disclosure of the nature of the interest in any matter relating to that pany or other body or to that person that may arise after the date of the disclosure that is required to be disclosed under subclause (1).	34 35 36
	(3)	in a l	culars of any disclosure made under this clause must be recorded by the Board book kept for the purpose and that book must be open at all reasonable hours to ection by any person.	37 38 39
	(4)	Afte:	r a member has disclosed the nature of an interest in any matter, the member not, unless the Minister or the Board otherwise determines:	40 41
		(a)	be present during any deliberation of the Board with respect to the matter, or	42
		(b)	take part in any decision of the Board with respect to the matter.	43

	(5)	a member who has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter to will disclosure relates must not:	hich the
		(a) be present during any deliberation of the Board for the purpose of madetermination, or	king the
		(b) take part in the making by the Board of the determination.	•
	(6)	A contravention of this clause does not invalidate any decision of the Board	
	(7)	This clause applies to a member of a committee of the Board and the committee same way as it applies to a member of the Board and the Board.	nittee in
10	Effe	ct of certain other Acts	10
	(1)	The provisions of the <i>Government Sector Employment Act 2013</i> relating employment of Public Service employees do not apply to a member.	g to the 12
	(2)	If by or under any Act provision is made:	1;
		(a) requiring a person who is the holder of a specified office to devote the of the person's time to the duties of that office, or	e whole 14
		(b) prohibiting the person from engaging in employment outside the dutie office,	17
		the provision does not operate to disqualify the person from holding that of also the office of a member or from accepting and retaining any remurpayable to the person under this Act as a member.	
Par	t 3	Procedure	2
11	Gene	eral procedure	22
		The procedure for the calling of meetings of the Board and for the corbusiness at those meetings is, subject to this Act, to be as determined by the	
12	Quo	rum	25
		The quorum for a meeting of the Board is all of the members of the Board.	26
13	Pres	siding member	27
	(1)	The Chairperson (or, in the absence of the Chairperson, a person elected members of the Board who are present at a meeting of the Board) is to present a meeting of the Board.	
	(2)	The presiding member has a deliberative vote and, in the event of an equivotes, has a second or casting vote.	uality of 3
14	Voti	ng	33
		A decision supported by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting of the E which a quorum is present is the decision of the Board.	Board at 34
15	Tran	nsaction of business outside meetings or by telephone etc	36
	(1)	The Board may, if it thinks fit, transact any of its business by the circulation of among all the members of the Board for the time being, and a resolution in approved in writing by a majority of those members is taken to be a decision Board made at a meeting of the Board.	writing 38
	(2)	The Board may, if it thinks fit, transact any of its business at a meeting a members (or some members) participate by telephone or other electronic me	

		only if any member who speaks on a matter before the meeting can be heard by the other members.	1 2
	(3)	For the purposes of:	3
		(a) the approval of a resolution under subclause (1), or	4
		(b) a meeting held in accordance with subclause (2),	5
		the Chairperson and each other member have the same voting rights as they have at an ordinary meeting of the Board.	6 7
	(4)	A resolution approved under subclause (1) is, subject to the regulations, to be recorded in the minutes of the meetings of the Board.	8 9
	(5)	Papers may be circulated among the members for the purposes of subclause (1) by electronic means.	10 11
16	First meeting		12
		The Minister may call the first meeting of the Board in such manner as the Minister thinks fit.	13 14