



STATEMENT 9 May 2022

Statement on NRAR prosecution

Comment from Adam Kay, CEO, Cotton Australia:

Cotton Australia, the peak body for cotton growers in Australia, supports the actions of the National Resources Access Register in enforcing water management laws.

Last week a Brewarrina farmer pleaded guilty to two charges for breaching the conditions of their water licence, and illegally pumping water while a water meter was not working. The charges related to a period in 2017 when a pump was relocated for repairs and the data logger was disconnected. In evidence, the farmer said he was not present when the repaired motor was reconnected and was unaware the time and event data logger was not fitted to the motor.

In the Land and Environment Court document the farmer confirmed water was pumped through the river pump from April 21st to May 3rd 2017. NRAR noted the farmer took full responsibility for not having the time and event meter installed during the pumping event.

In citing mitigating factors, the judge noted the farmer cooperated with authorities, was a person of good character and was unlikely to re-offend.

Cotton Australia CEO Adam Kay said the peak body acknowledges the public anger and concern about any illegal activity around water issues. "We support measures to ensure improved compliance with water rules and believe if someone is known to be doing the wrong thing, they should be reported to relevant state authorities and those concerns should be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate legal action taken."

Mr Kay also supported the comments of NRAR's Chief Regulatory Officer Grant Barnes when he stated it was crucial that landholders knew the rules around their water access licence and abided by them.

The full judgement can be found here: <https://www.nrar.nsw.gov.au/>

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