

Territory Water Plan

Annual progress report 2025





The Northern Territory Government respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Nations people of this country. We acknowledge the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities, and the evolving cultures of all our First Nations peoples. We pay our deepest respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to their leaders - past, present and emerging.

While this Plan uses the term 'Aboriginal', we respectfully acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples are First Nations people living in the Territory. Therefore, strategies, services and outcomes relating to 'Aboriginal' Territorians should be read to include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians.



Purpose



This is an annual report of the activities undertaken and achievements that support water security for Territorians.

Context



Water security for Territorians means having an acceptable quantity and quality of water for people, economic opportunities, cultural and environmental needs, now and into the future.

Our actions address Territorians diverse water needs:

1 SAFETY

All Territorians have safe drinking water.

2 SUPPLY

Essential infrastructure is prioritised to enable economic development and regional growth.

3 SUSTAINABILITY

Efficient water use maintains healthy ecosystems and supports the Territory lifestyle.

4 TRUST & CONFIDENCE

Territorians are informed and engaged in water management.



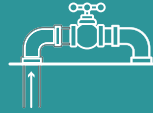
The activities and achievements are a collaboration between Government agencies and businesses:

- Department of Lands, Planning and Environment
- Department of Treasury and Finance
- Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
- Power and Water Corporation
- Department of Logistics and Infrastructure
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Safety



All Territorians have safe drinking water.



\$34.3 million secured for the Better Bores for Communities program



“Know Your Bore” information products released

Activities and achievements

- Continued to look at ways to improve management of safe drinking water including the delivery of a remote infrastructure program.
- Secured \$34.3 million through the National Water Grid to deliver the Better Bores for Communities program. This project will provide better access to safe and reliable drinking water by drilling and equipping bores in Atitjere, Wugularr, Finke, Gapuwiyak, Haasts Bluff, Hermannsburg, Robinson River, Titjikala, Warruwi and Yuelamu.
- The NT Government has also committed to an additional \$25.1 million to enable critical upgrades to water systems in high-need areas which will deliver clean, reliable water to remote communities across the Territory.
- Completed early engagement with Homeland water service providers. Resources and tools are being developed to train and support service providers to take care of and repair bores and tanks in Homelands.
- Released the “Know Your Bore” a series of easy to understand and simple to use fact sheets and guidance materials that will help rural property owners and pastoralists to keep the bores working. Rural residents and pastoralists rely on bore water for their lifestyle and operations.



Report Remote Water Leaks
1800 245 092

Supply



Essential infrastructure is prioritised to enable economic development and regional growth.



15km of Manton Dam's Pipeline to Strauss Water Treatment Plant is complete



\$489.2 million investment secured in water supply projects since 2021.

Activities and achievements

- Secured \$489.2 million for water security projects in partnership with National Water Grid since 2021.
- Installed 15km of pipeline from Manton Dam site to the site of the Strauss Water Treatment Plant along with the construction of the building that will house the pump station at the Manton Dam site.
- Referred the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) project to the NT Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) and Commonwealth environmental regulator. The NT EPA will assess the project on behalf of the Commonwealth. An environmental impact statement is being prepared.
- Amendments to the *Water Act 1992* were introduced to streamline approvals processes and encourage businesses to grow. These include:
 - giving Aboriginal landowners the power to decide who can apply for their share of the Aboriginal Water Reserve.
 - strengthening decision making by removing third-party merit review of licence and permit decisions providing certainty for investment.
- Started the process to amend the *Water Supply and Sewerage Services Act 2000*. The amendment will increase the area where the Act applies beyond urban centers.
- Launched a free 1800 number for remote customers to report water leaks. This included promotional materials that are provided in new tenant packs and through council offices.

Sustainability



Efficient water use maintains healthy ecosystems and supports the Territory lifestyle.



8 water allocation plans are active across the NT providing certainty for communities and industry on water availability



\$244,000 in water savings achieved from school water efficiency



3 National Water Grid Science projects (totalling \$3,740,000 million) completed

Activities and achievements

- Completed \$3.7 million science projects co-funded through National Water Grid including:
 - To update the Flora, Roper, Ooloo/ Lower Daly Rivers and the Western Davenport Central Plains Aquifer models. Updating these models means we can be more certain about the results they deliver.
 - A four-year project to investigate the feasibility of recharging the Tindall Limestone Aquifer using wet season flows from the King River. This process enables water to be stored for later use.
 - Collection of high resolution LiDAR survey data across Ti Tree Basin, Berry Springs aquifer, Koolpinyah aquifer, Flora River and Katherine River catchments to improve water resource management and modelling capability.
- Started a \$1.3 million two-year project funded by the National Water Grid in the Ti Tree region with Traditional Owners to establish a method for describing Aboriginal water science features on Anmatyerre and Kaytetye Country.
- Constructed new monitoring bores in the Western Davenport region, taking the total to 81 bores including 6 bores that are more than 100 meters deep. Monitoring of these bores will improve the understanding of the water resource, including isotope sampling to examine the age of the water.
- Declared the first 'Mataranka Water Allocation Plan 2024-2034' for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer. The plan ensures flows are maintained in the Roper River and economic development can continue.
- Declared the 'Western Davenport Water Allocation Plan 2024-2034', providing longer term certainty and a clarity on water availability in a region.
- Saved \$244,000 tax payers money through more efficient water use across 20 Territory schools.
- Updated resources for bush schools to help teachers and students in remote communities get involved with *That's My Water!* program. Alcoota and Numbulwar Schools were the first to run the program, with more schools registered to participate. The program teaches students about water usage awareness and inspires them to study STEM.



13 remote community water forums delivered by the Remote Water Team

Trust and Confidence



Territorians are informed and engaged in water management.



Increased transparency in water planning.



36 stakeholder engagement events delivered by the Remote Water Team

Activities and achievements

- Completed an Aboriginal cultural values assessment of the Adelaide River water plan area. In a Territory first, this two-year project co-funded by the National Water Grid was co-developed and delivered in collaboration with the Northern Land Council.
- Increased Aboriginal participation in water management, through increased Aboriginal membership on water advisory committees. Water advisory committees ensure community voices are incorporated when water plans are being developed, implemented and reviewed.
- Increased transparency and improved water planning by publishing water management information:
 - Managing water in the Territory: clarifies the NT Government's approach to water planning.
 - Setting management boundaries: explain how boundaries are set to define water control districts, water allocation plan areas and water management zones.
- Estimated sustainable yield: clarifies how estimated sustainable yields are determined.
- Water modelling: clarify how models are used in water management.
- Engaging Territorians: explains our approach to water advisory committees and how the NT Government engages on water management more broadly, and increasing availability of information and transparency through its website.
- Engaged with the Commonwealth Government on national water reform and the development of a new national water agreement to ensure it works for the Territory.
- Engaged with stakeholders, landowners and industry representatives, with stalls at community events such as the Alice Springs Show, Katherine Show and Freds Pass Rural Show.
- The Remote Water Team delivered 13 community water forums in Numbulwar, Gunbalanya, Nyirripi, Alpururulam, Engawala, Wurrumiyanga, Jilkminggan, Nauiyu, Robinson River, Warruwi and Maningrida. The Remote Water Team brings together and delivers water information relating to water quality and health, water supply and water resource information.

