

# What's in your water?

How to monitor and test your bore water for safety

If your household or business uses water from a private bore, it's your responsibility to ensure it's safe for drinking and general use. Regular water quality testing protects your health and helps detect changes early.



## When to Test:

### 1 Monitor water levels several times a year

- ▶ After bore construction is complete
- ▶ Before using water for the first time
- ▶ At least once a year after that

If you're supplying drinking water as part of a business or service, regular testing is essential to meet safety requirements.

## What to Test For:

### 2 Use a NATA-accredited laboratory to check for:

- ▶ Bacteria (especially E. coli)
- ▶ Nitrates
- ▶ Trace metals, particularly if your bore draws from black shale areas (e.g. Acacia Hills, South Alligator)

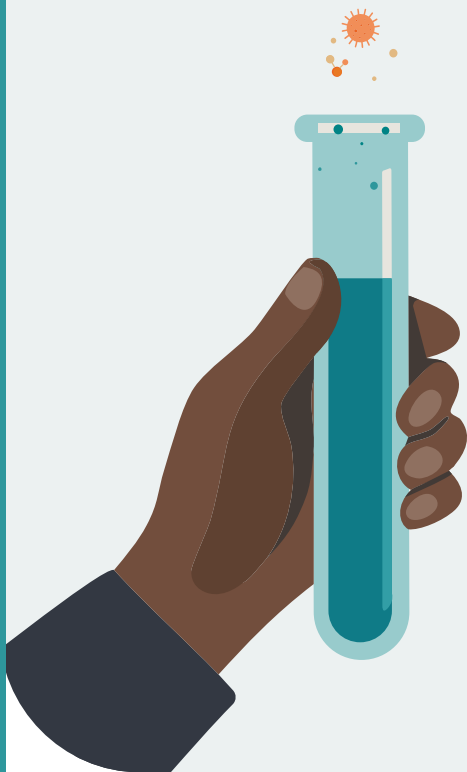
### 3 Understanding Your Water Test Results

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG), developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), are used to interpret water quality results.

- ▶ A health guideline value indicates a safe level of a substance that should not cause health risks over a lifetime.
- ▶ An aesthetic guideline value relates to the water's appearance, taste, and odour – important for acceptability, even if not harmful.

#### Common indicators include:

- ▶ E. coli: A sign of faecal contamination. If detected, water should not be consumed.
- ▶ Coliforms: May indicate issues with water disinfection. High levels should be investigated.
- ▶ Trace metals: May be naturally occurring depending on your location and should be compared to guideline values.



### 4 What to Do If Results Are Unsatisfactory

- ▶ Boil water before use, or use bottled water
- ▶ Treat water using filtration, UV or chlorination
- ▶ Contact your testing laboratory or Environmental Health for advice
- ▶ Retest after treatment to confirm safety



#### Where to Get Your Water Tested

##### Contact a NATA-accredited laboratory:

- ▶ NTEL (Intertek) – Darwin

Chemical and trace metals testing:

T: 08 8947 0510 | E: [ntel@intertek.com](mailto:ntel@intertek.com)

W: [intertek.com](http://intertek.com)

- ▶ NT Government Laboratories

Chemical testing:

Darwin (Berrimah Farm) | T: 08 8999 2194

- ▶ Microbiological testing:

Darwin T: 08 8999 2347

Alice Springs (AZRI) T: 08 8951 8110

- ▶ For more information

Contact Environmental Health

T: 08 8922 7152 | E: [envirohealth@nt.gov.au](mailto:envirohealth@nt.gov.au)