

TERRITORY WATER PLAN



Monitoring and
evaluation framework

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Office of Water Security
✉ watersecurity.ntg@nt.gov.au
🏠 watersecurity.nt.gov.au



The Northern Territory Government respectfully and proudly acknowledges the Northern Territory's Aboriginal people and their rich cultures. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands and waters that we rely on for our livelihoods. We recognise the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country and value their ongoing contribution to managing the lands and waters. We support the need for genuine and lasting partnerships with Traditional Owners to better understand cultural connections, and we will work to establish lasting partnerships to manage water together, now and into the future.



Hand with water

Purpose



This document outlines the evaluation and monitoring framework for the **Territory Water Plan** (the plan). It will be used to assess how the NT Government is making progress towards long term outcomes and priority areas. It identifies the baseline data and questions that should be answered to measure progress and success of the plan over time. By evaluating progress on the plan's outcomes at the end of 3 years, the NT Government can identify where further action may be needed.

Context



The plan was published in June 2023 and aims to deliver water security for all Territorians, now and into the future. Water security is a core principle of the plan and is defined as 'having an acceptable quantity and quality of water for people, economic opportunities, cultural and environmental needs, now and into the future'.

Territory Water Plan framework

PLAN PURPOSE

To deliver water security for all Territorians, now and into the future.

PRIORITY AREAS AND OUTCOMES

To work towards achieving this overall purpose, the plan identifies four priority areas and outcomes which will be necessary for the NT Government and partners to strive towards providing water security outcomes in the Territory.



PRIORITY ACTIONS

The plan includes 16 priority actions the NT Government will deliver over the short term (from 2023 to 2026).

1. New safe drinking water legislation.
2. Securing Darwin's future water supply.
3. Improved water security for remote communities.
4. Improved water outcomes for homelands.
5. Government leadership on water efficiency.
6. Placing a value on water.
7. Territory voices in water security.
8. Enhancing Aboriginal participation in water decisions.
9. Understanding the Aboriginal cultural values of water.
10. Improved water planning.
11. Contemporary water resource management legislation.
12. Climate resilience and adaptation for a water secure future.
13. Accelerated water science program.
14. Ensure water supply and sewerage services meet customer needs.
15. Sustainable water supply for energy transition.
16. The role of the Office of Water Security.

Monitoring and evaluation plan

This monitoring and evaluation framework will be used to assess how the NT Government is tracking on implementing priority actions, working towards priority outcomes and the long-term goal of water security for all.

The activities below outline what we will do to monitor and evaluate progress on the plan each year and at the end of the initial 3 years:

Reporting Activity	Evaluation type	Purpose	Frequency
Annual Ministerial Statement to the Legislative Assembly	Progress update	Provides an update on the progress of 16 priority actions and other relevant initiatives that support outcomes.	Annual
Annual progress report	Progress update	Provides an update on the progress of 16 priority actions and other relevant initiatives that support outcomes.	Annual
Evaluation report	Outcome and impact evaluation	The Evaluation Report will examine the progress of 16 priority actions and outcomes achieved over the program. The report will inform the next iteration of the plan.	End of third year (2025-2026)

The plan sets the foundations for long term, transformational improvement to water security. The timeline below shows how the plan will contribute to water security in the short, medium and long term:

SHORT TERM: 1-3 YEARS - SETTING THE FOUNDATIONS

Delivery of priority actions:

- Legislative and policy reform (Priority actions 1, 6, 10, 11, 14)
- Priority infrastructure planning and investment (2, 3)
- Community engagement and information sharing (2, 3, 16)
- Capacity building for the water services sector (4)
- Government sets water efficiency targets (5)
- Collaborative research projects to enhance scientific, cultural and local knowledge about water (2, 9, 13, 15)
- Advisory councils established (7, 8)
- Climate change risk assessment (12)

2023

Territory Water Plan released

2024

Annual progress report and Ministerial Statement

2025

Annual progress report and Ministerial Statement

2026

Annual progress report, Ministerial Statement and Evaluation report

MEDIUM TERM: 5-15 YEARS EMBEDDING CHANGE

Change embedded into business as usual:

- New and reformed legislation commences
- Stage 2 of Darwin Water Supply Project underway: Manton Dam returned to service and AROWS pre-construction
- Continued infrastructure planning, investment and delivery for remote and regional communities
- Water efficiency programs underway and water savings being made
- Integration of cultural values in water research, management and planning
- Greater community representation in water governance
- Trust and confidence in water management is growing
- Climate risk and adaptation is embedded in decision making and planning

LONG TERM: 20 YEARS AND BEYOND ACHIEVING OUTCOMES

Progress towards long term outcomes:

1. SAFETY

Safer and secure drinking water

2. SUPPLY

Maximised economic opportunities and livelihoods through water management

3. SUSTAINABILITY

Water is used sustainably to protect the Territory's environmental and cultural assets

4. TRUST and CONFIDENCE

Territorians are engaged in water management and decisions to build confidence and foster a shared understanding

2026 onward

Future Plans
& Actions



Program logic for outcome evaluation

This program logic outlines how the NT Government will evaluate success of the plan. Each table shows the measures of progress and information sources which will be used to assess progress towards the priority areas and outcomes. These will inform the evaluation report to be delivered at the end of 2026.



Outcomes

What long term outcomes do we want to see?



Measures of progress

What does progress look like?



Information sources

What information will we use to measure progress?



1 SAFETY Provide safe and secure drinking water for Territorians



Priority actions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 16

- 1.1. All Territorians have safe drinking water with secure supply
- 1.2. Fit for purpose management and governance structures for safe drinking water
- 1.3. The Territory's water is resilient to climate change.

Drinking water management plans consistent with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) are in place for all public water supplies.

Reduction in the number of communities with water quality notifications or ADWG exceedances.

Drinking water quality data is available and accessible for all public water supplies.

Climate adaptation plans are developed for identified water security risks.

Annual drinking water quality report (Power and Water)

Water quality monitoring reports from other public providers

National Climate Change Risk Assessment (Australian Government)

Climate change and water security risk assessment (DEPWS)

NT Climate Change Response reporting (DEPWS)



2 SUPPLY Maximise economic opportunities and livelihoods through water management



Priority actions: 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16

- 2.1. Secure public water supply for urban centres to support population and economic growth
- 2.2. Support remote services through infrastructure investment
- 2.3. Enable sustainable development and regional economic participation
- 2.4. Economic opportunities from the energy transition, circular economy and environmental offsets are realised

Manton Dam returned to service and AROWS pre-construction activities underway.

Continue investment for remote water infrastructure upgrades, improvements and efficiencies.

Water infrastructure investment priorities for remote communities are publicly available.

Information on water availability and source status is accessible to prospective licensees and the public.

Reduction in the volume (ML/year) of unused water from licensed water entitlements.

Increase in the volume (ML/year) of water licensed for Aboriginal economic development, including the Aboriginal water reserve.

NT and Australian Government Budgets

Remote water infrastructure priority list (Power and Water / DTFHC / DIPL)

NT Infrastructure Plan and Pipeline (DIPL)

Closing the Gap reporting on Target 9b and 15c (NT Government / Australian Government)

Water usage, demand modelling and source status information for public water supplies (Power and Water)

Water resource assessments (NT Government / Australian Government)

Annual state of the water resource reports for water allocation plan areas (DEPWS)

Water licensing data (DEPWS)



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SUSTAINABILITY Use water sustainably to protect the Territory's environmental and cultural assets



Priority actions: 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16

- 3.1. Territory rivers, groundwater and water-dependent ecosystems remain healthy
- 3.2. Water use supports and maintains liveability and the Territory lifestyle
- 3.3. Water use is efficient and productive across the water cycle
- 3.4. Aboriginal cultural values are recognised and protected

Reduction in distributed water usage per capita (ML/year).
 Continue investment in water science and research for priority resource areas.
 A framework and methodology for cultural values assessment and monitoring for water allocation planning and water licensing is developed.
 Peer-reviewed and reputable ecological and cultural water research findings are available and accessible to the public.

State of the Environment report (Australian Government)
 Annual state of the water resource reports for water allocation plan areas (DEPWS)
 Water licensing data (DEPWS)
 Water usage, demand modelling and source status information for public water supplies (Power and Water)
 National water accounts (ABS / BOM)
 Closing the Gap reporting on Target 15c (NT Government / Australian Government)
 Water resource assessments (NT Government / Australian Government)
 Review of water research outputs and communications products by NT Government, partners and other research bodies (DEPWS)



TRUST and CONFIDENCE

Engage Territorians in water management and decisions to build confidence and foster a shared understanding



Priority actions: 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16

- 4.1. Water management and governance frameworks fit the Territory context and align with best practice
- 4.2. Water is valued by community, business and government
- 4.3. Water science, literacy and communication supports water stewardship
- 4.4. All Territorians are empowered to participate in water management.

Increase of local and Aboriginal representation on water related boards, advisory councils and committees.
 Number and quality of water information forums and community visits delivered.
 Water information and communication products are available and accessible to the public.
 Improvements in customer and community satisfaction with water supply services and NT Government programs.

Productivity Commission reports on progress against the National Water Initiative (2004) and future agreements (Australian Government)
 Boards and committee membership (NT Government)
 National performance reporting urban water utilities (BOM)
 Indigenous Essential Services customer satisfaction survey (DTFHC)
 Power and Water customer satisfaction survey (Power and Water)
 Water security stakeholder and community survey (DEPWS)



*Todd River after rain, Alice Springs,
Mparntwe, © Department of Territory
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