



**Marion Scrymgour**

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ARTS

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### **New Flood Forecasting system for Alice Springs**

New technology recently implemented in Alice Springs will enable more precise flood forecasting in the region, Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour said today.

Ms Scrymgour said the use of URBS, a modern Windows-based modelling program, will enable Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts flood forecasters to better predict the height of flowing water in the Todd River within Alice Springs.

The model uses relationships between rainfall runoff to provide forecasted stream flows.

She said URBS software, used by interstate flood forecasting agencies and by China for flood forecasting in locations similar to central Australia, has been specifically written for flood forecasting river heights.

Ms Scrymgour said real time data from NRETA and the Bureau of Meteorology are collected by an environmental monitoring data recording software program called EnviroMon, enabling flood forecasters to advise police and emergency services if a major flood is imminent or bad situation is likely to improve or not.

“Our ability to forecast floods has improved with the recent introduction of this upgraded technology,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“Our flood forecasters are in a better position now than before to advise police and emergency services behind the scenes with particular information that will better enable them to co-ordinate a flood response, should this be necessary.

“The last big flood to hit Alice Springs was in 1988, but with conditions being as dry as they are, water flows produced by heavy rains could flow very quickly rather than being absorbed into the ground.

“But this largely depends on a number of factors such as where the storms are, what their intensity is, the gradient of the land and capacity of the dry land to absorb rain.”

Ms Scrymgour said the URBS is a more advanced flood forecasting system, and is used by the Bureau of Meteorology as their flood forecasting modelling system.

She said the new technology is also linked to Darwin so monitoring equipment could be checked and tested daily.

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