

**Media Release:**

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## **Draft Water Allocation Plan Released for Public Comment**

A blueprint for future water sustainability, drafted by the Northern Territory Government and Katherine Water Advisory Committee (KWAC) was released for public comment yesterday.

KWAC Chairperson Anne Shepherd said the draft Water Allocation Plan for the Tindall Limestone Aquifer was a necessary step forward in establishing a framework to share water between human and environmental needs.

“The rate of current and proposed extraction from the Tindall Limestone Aquifer has increased to the point where further use may impact on the environment,” Ms Shepherd said.

“The Aquifer is an underground limestone feature with many large cavities filled with fresh water which lies directly under Katherine, and the water from this Aquifer is vital to the existence and growth of the community.

“The draft Water Allocation Plan aims to create a balance between taking water for short term use and retaining water to maintain the eco-systems, meet social and cultural needs and provide for future public and private use.”

The Tindall Limestone Aquifer is an extremely important system with water from it used for:

- Public Water Supply – Katherine town drinking water
- Environment – limestone cave system and river ecology
- Cultural – Indigenous living, camping and fishing
- Agricultural – irrigation of crops
- Rural - stock and domestic
- Industry – irrigation of lawns in schools and gardens
- Aquaculture – commercial production of red-claw and other aquatic species.

“KWAC was created to advise the Northern Territory Government on the management of the Tindall Limestone Aquifer, and each of the twelve members represents a different section of the community to ensure all user needs are met,” Ms Shepherd said.

“This draft Water Allocation Plan was developed through detailed technical and scientific assessment and extensive community consultation, through KWAC, to determine the right balance between the competing requirements for water.

“Details within the draft plan include limits on the availability of water assigned to each use, rules for managing licenses and information about water trading.

The draft plan is now being released for public comment over the next five weeks, with a public information session to be held in Katherine on Wednesday 16 July 2008.

Copies of the draft plan are available at [www.nt.gov.au/kwac](http://www.nt.gov.au/kwac) or by contacting the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts on 8973 8115.

**Media Note – for more information contact Anne Shepherd on 0438 886 693**

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