



Understanding Water Resource Planning

Water is vital for the wellbeing, prosperity and lifestyle enjoyed by many Territorians and also maintains the health of our unique environment.

Despite wet season rainfall in the Top End, water is not in endless supply and we rely heavily on groundwater reserves during the dry season. Central Australia relies on groundwater supplies all year round.

To protect the health of our rivers and groundwater reserves for future generations we need to ensure water is used sustainably.



What Are Water Allocation Plans?

The Water Act allows for enhanced water resource management in certain areas through the development of Water Allocation Plans.

A water allocation plan includes:

- water allocations for towns, agriculture and industry
- water allocations for the environment designed to protect river/groundwater ecology.
- Strategies to achieve water use efficiency, including arrangements for water trading.
- Information about the reliability of water allocations.
- A monitoring and reporting program to ensure that the plan is working.

Water allocation plans are developed through detailed technical and scientific assessments as well as extensive community participation and consultation.

A finalised Water Allocation Plan applies for 10 years and is reviewed every 5 years. The review process provides an opportunity to update the Plan based on new information gained through its monitoring program.

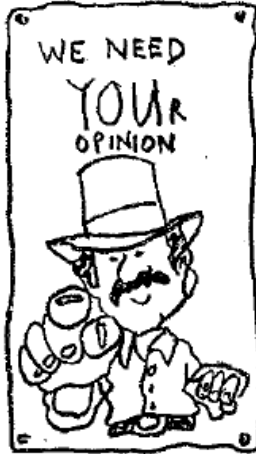
Water Planning Outcomes

- Transparent sharing of water to protect human and environmental interests.
- Sustainable water allocations for consumptive uses without undue environmental harm.
- Identified reliability of water supply for water users.
- Established basis for water allocations to be traded subject to safeguards.
- Protection of water dependant ecosystems.
- Protection of water related cultural values.



A Community Process

Community involvement is integral to the water allocation planning process. Regional communities, indigenous groups, industry, conservationists and other stakeholders all have a role to play. Through stakeholder involvement long term resource management approaches will be coordinated.

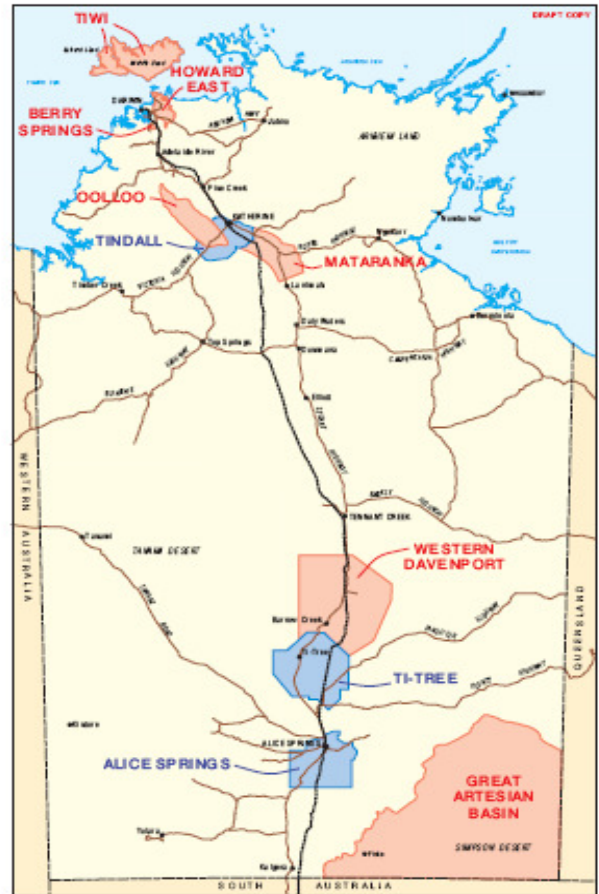


At the commencement of a water allocation planning process a community advisory committee is usually established. Members are drawn from economic, cultural and environmental interests and this group ensures the aspirations and concerns of the people living in the Plan area are fully considered during the planning process.

A technical panel is also established to evaluate the best available scientific information about the water resource in question and assess the environmental implications of different water allocation scenarios. Their advice helps inform suitable management strategies within water allocation plans.

Where is Water Allocation Planning Happening?

WAPs are being developed on a priority basis in areas where there are competing demands for human consumptive needs and/or where natural aquatic ecosystems have significant ecological or social values.



Picture Above: NT Water Allocation Areas

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