

NT Water Act - What is it?

What is the Function of the Act?

The Northern Territory *Water Act* provides for the investigation, allocation, use, control, protection, management and administration of water resources, and for related purposes such as recreational, social and cultural uses.

The Minister administers the Act through the Controller of Water Resources while the Controller directs day-to-day operation of the Act and its Regulation within NRETAS.

The Act is not responsible for public health control in regard to water supply or water-based recreation. This responsibility rests with the Department of Health and Families. A copy of the NT *Water Act* is available at: <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/water/legislation/>

Water Extraction Licences

Landholders have the right, without a licence, to take groundwater and surface water on their land for domestic purposes, wandering stock, and for domestic gardens of up to 0.5 hectares. This is referred to as “Riparian Right”

Excepting Riparian Rights, Water Extraction Licences are required in the following circumstances:

1. When extracting from any waterway; and
2. When pumping a bore situated inside a Water Control District with the exception of the Darwin Rural Water Control District where the bore needs to be pumping greater than 15 litres per second.

These licences can be temporary for a few months or permanent with a renewal every 10 years. If the owner of the land or the licence changes, then a licence is reissued in the new owner’s name.



Pivot Irrigation- Commercial Operation, Katherine



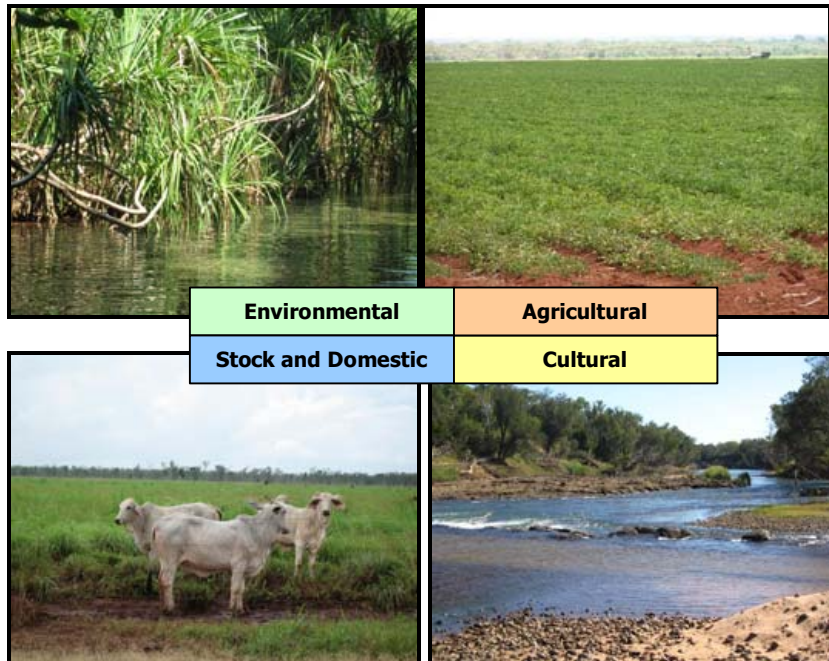
Licensed Operations- Sorghum, Katherine

Water Control Districts and Water Allocation Plans

Water Control Districts can be declared in areas where there is a need for closer management to avoid stressing of groundwater reserves, river flows or wetlands. Districts declared include the Darwin Rural Area, Gove Peninsula, and the Katherine, Tennant Creek, Ti Tree and Alice Springs regions.

Water Allocation Plans can be declared under the NT *Water Act* for Water Control Districts to manage water extraction to sustainable levels. The plans will allocate water resources to the types of Beneficial Uses declared for the water resource. Beneficial Uses are the uses for water as declared under the Act. These Beneficial Uses are the basis for waste discharge licences, water allocation planning and water quality planning, and include:

- Agriculture;
- Aquaculture;
- Public water supply;
- Environment;
- Cultural;
- Manufacturing industry; and
- Riparian Stock & Domestic.



Waste Management

There are strict controls over the underground disposal of waste, changes in the use of a bore, and artificial recharging of aquifers. Specific licensing may apply, but only where justification is provided.

Bore Construction

Water bore drilling must be undertaken by a driller licensed under the *Water Act*. A licensed driller must meet qualification requirements set by the Australian Drilling Industry Association. A permit is required for any bore constructed in a Water Control District. There should be at least 70 metres between bores (including your neighbours), and all bores must be at least 100 metres from any septic trenches.

Water Resources Branch

Our Branch has offices in Palmerston, Katherine and Alice Springs. We can help you with applications for permits and licenses, as well as a list of licensed drillers.

For assistance, contact the Water Resources Branch:

Palmerston

3rd Floor Goyder Building, PO Box 496 Palmerston NT 0831 Ph: 89 993678

Katherine

32 Giles St, Katherine NT 0852, PMB 123 Katherine NT 0852 Ph: 89 738831

Alice Springs

1st Floor Alice Plaza, Todd Mall, PO Box 1120 Alice Springs NT 0871, Ph: 89 519215

Internet Site: www.nt.gov.au/nretas/natres