



NT Water Act

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.

The Minister administers the Act through the Controller of Water Resources.

The Controller directs day-to-day operation of the Act and its Regulation within the department.

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 Community Services

The *NT Water Act* is available at: www.nt.gov.au/nreta/naturalresources/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 a domestic garden of up to 0.5 hectares.

Water extraction licenses are required to take water from any waterway for uses other than stock and domestic purposes. The licenses are normally issued for up to ten years, and can be renewed. A licence will transfer with the title when land changes ownership.

Bores pumping over 15 litres per second require an extraction licence anywhere in the Northern Territory. Bores of lesser pumping capacity do not require an extraction licence unless they are located within a Water Control District.

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 that have been 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 *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 community derived water quality objectives declared under the Act.

These Beneficial Uses are the basis for waste discharge licences, water allocation planning and water quality planning They include:

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

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.

For further information

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