

The Daly River Management Advisory Committee

The Daly River Management Advisory Committee (DRMAC) has accepted the role of a Water Advisory Committee for the development of the Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan. DRMAC was established to develop options for sustainable use and conservation of natural resources in the Daly River Catchment.

DRMAC members represent various community interests within the Daly region, including pastoral landowners, horticulture, tourism, Indigenous landowners, recreational fishing and conservation.

DRMAC will advise NRETAS in determining a suitable extraction regime from the Ooloo aquifer for irrigated agriculture and other industries.

DRMAC also work closely with the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group to ensure Indigenous water use and development opportunities are recognised in the Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan.

Having a water allocation plan for the Ooloo aquifer will:

- Protect environmental and human interests through a transparent and stakeholder driven management framework.
- Protect dry season flows in the Daly River and other groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- Recognise and protect cultural values.
- Recognise and provide for Indigenous needs.
- Allow the allocation of available water in a practical and equitable way through a regulated licensing process.
- Provide mechanisms to adjust how much water can be extracted each year based on the amount of rainfall and subsequent recharge to the Ooloo aquifer.
- Define licence security and establish a basis for trading licences.

Community Involvement

Community participation is vital in the water planning process. To ensure the Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan is developed in a way that incorporates community values and needs, the DRMAC is encouraging the community to get involved. You can:

- **Attend a community information session**
Community information sessions will be held at the Katherine Training Centre, 19 Second Street, Tuesday 5 May 2009 at 6.00pm and at the Fleming Town Hall on Wednesday 6 May 2009 at 6.00pm. The sessions will provide an overview about the Ooloo aquifer, water allocation planning and how you can get involved.
- **Provide feedback**
You can make suggestions anytime throughout the process using our online feedback form at www.nt.gov.au/drmac.

Before the Plan is finalised a draft version will be publicly released for a formal submission period. This will give everyone the opportunity to review the proposed plan and provide feedback.
- **Stay informed**
Talk to a DRMAC representative, visit the website for the latest information or register your details online so you can be included on the email newsgroup.

More Information

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Goyder Centre, 25 Chung Wah Terrace
PO Box 496, Palmerston NT 0830
Ph: 8999 4613 Email: water.nretas@nt.gov.au

Katherine Regional Office

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport
Randazzo Centre, 16 Katherine Terrace, Katherine
PMB 123, Katherine NT 0852
Ph: 8973 8115 Email: water.nretas@nt.gov.au



Ooloo Crossing, Daly River

Water allocation planning
**Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer
Daly Region**

www.nt.gov.au/drmac

The Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer

The Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer is an underground geologic feature with many large cavities filled with fresh water. It stretches beneath the Daly River from southwest of Katherine and extends northwest to just beyond the Douglas River. The water from the Ooloo aquifer supports vital economic growth in the Katherine and Douglas Daly communities.

The Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer and the Daly River are connected. During the dry season, groundwater from the Ooloo Aquifer discharges into the Daly River through springs and this keeps it flowing all year round.

The amount of water discharged from the Ooloo aquifer into the Daly River is largely dependent upon rainfall and how much water is being extracted. Too much extraction from the aquifer can reduce discharge to the river and this can affect water quality and reduce habitat availability for native fish and aquatic plants.

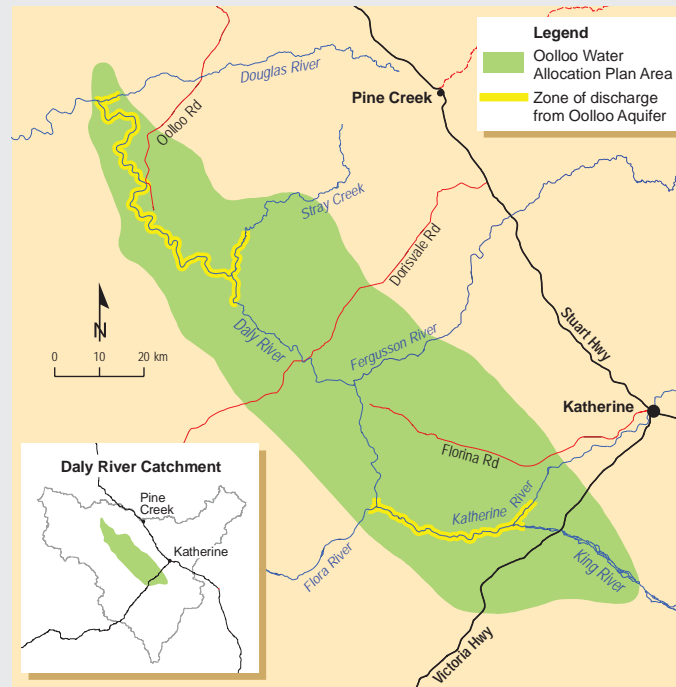
Water Allocation Plans

Water allocation plans are a tool used across Australia to set rules for the sustainable use of water resources. They establish a framework to share water between human and environmental needs.

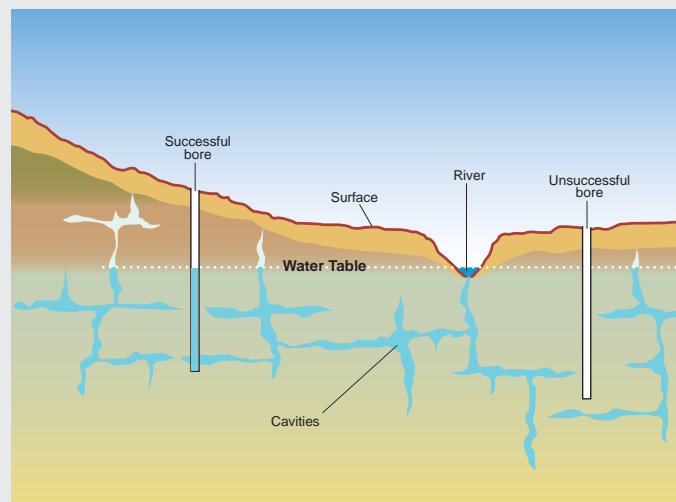
Water allocation plans are legislated under the Northern Territory *Water Act*. The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) is the statutory authority with the responsibility to manage water resources under this Act.

The Northern Territory Government recognises that community values and beliefs are an integral part of the water allocation planning process. Members of the public are encouraged to comment on the process and provide feedback before and after the draft plan is released.

Ooloo Water Allocation Plan Area



Cross Section of a Typical Dolostone Aquifer



Purpose of the Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan

The aim of the Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan is to create a balance between taking groundwater to support agriculture and industry development whilst maintaining the unique ecosystems, Indigenous cultural values and recreational opportunities of the Daly River.

The Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan will share water between various existing and future uses including:

- Environment – ecosystems that depend on groundwater, including the Daly River.
- Cultural – Indigenous living, camping and fishing.
- Agricultural – irrigation of crops or forestry.
- Stock and domestic – rural household use and drinking water for stock.
- Industry – commercial uses other than primary production.
- Aquaculture – commercial production of aquatic animals.
- Public water supply – drinking water through a community supply system.

Area the Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan Will Apply To

The Ooloo Aquifer Water Allocation Plan will apply to all water contained within the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer (see map).

The Daly River depends on water from the Ooloo aquifer to keep it flowing throughout the dry season. As such the needs of plants and animals that rely on water in the Daly River will also influence the way groundwater from the Ooloo aquifer is managed under the plan.