

WATER RESOURCES COMPLIANCE PLAN 2024-25

⚙️ ACTIONS TARGETS

Regulating the use of water is critical as water is a key component and driver of economic growth in the Territory. The misuse of water can have implications on the economy, the environment and culture.

The role of the Water Regulation team is to administer the *Water Act 1992* and support the Minister for Water Resources along with the Controller of Water Resources by providing evidence based scientific and regulatory advice for their decision-making.

This compliance plan lists our key objectives to achieve over the 2024/2025 financial year.

MEASURING AND REPORTING WATER USE

- ⚙️ Conduct audits of:
 - meter reading submissions
 - water usage
 - compliance with special conditions
- ⚙️ Review and update the Northern Territory non-urban water metering code of practice

As of 1 July 2024 there are 615 granted Water extraction licences throughout the NT

- 90% of licensed bores are metered
- 95% of licence holders are reporting their water use
- Annual audit of compliance with special conditions

There are presently 51 licences with Special Conditions throughout the NT

REGISTERING BORES AND STATEMENT OF BORES

- ⚙️ Disseminate a public facing document concerning the obligations of a bore work permit holder
- ⚙️ Audit the correct completion and submission timeframes of statement of bores
- ⚙️ Carry out site inspections of constructed bores in a water control district

- 90% of statement or bores are submitted within 28 days
- Inspect the construction of 10 completed bores to ensure compliance with bore work permits

UNLAWFUL WATER EXTRACTION

- ⚙️ Commence evidence gathering of locations where suspected unlawful water extraction is occurring in the Darwin Rural area
- ⚙️ Update the Department website to include and explain evidence gathering methods used by Water Regulation Officers to assess unlawful water extraction

RECOVERY OF UNUSED WATER

- ⚙️ Run 2 regional campaigns to apply the recovery of unused water policy to the selected area
- ⚙️ Update the Department website with recovery campaigns completed and the resultant volume of water recovered
- ⚙️ Include recovery of unused water discussions with licence holders during regional site inspections

- Assess 10 water extraction licences to apply the recovery of unused water policy

INTERFERENCE WITH A WATERWAY

- ⚙️ Complete public facing documents to:
 - increase clarity concerning available exemptions to interfere with a waterway
 - increase public awareness of dam construction requirements on rural properties
- ⚙️ Release an improved interference with a waterway application form

- Undertake 5 proactive inspections of permitted interferences with waterways

PROACTIVE SITE INSPECTIONS

Water regulations officers aim to complete **123** proactive site inspections over the 2024/2025 financial year with continued regional trips planned. The majority of licence inspections are targeted on a risk based approach as shown in the table below however some inspections are arranged whilst regulation officers are in area.

RISK LEVEL	CRITERIA
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • previous non-compliance with licence conditions such as exceeding extraction limit, unmetered extraction points and not reporting water use • the licence is for the beneficial use of mining and petroleum • the licence has staging conditions • a new licence holder • the licence was granted for less than the applied extraction volume • an application was declined.
MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the licence has not had an inspection • the licence has been surrendered • the licence requires an amendment • the licence is due for renewal in the next 2-5 years • the licence has special conditions • the licence holder is reporting water use infrequently • water use is less than the entitlement for consecutive periods.
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a licence has had an inspection • the licence holder has not exceeded the entitlement • water is being used in accordance with a development plan • the licence holder maintains regular contact and notifies of any change to circumstance • water meters are fit for purpose • water use is reported as required.