

# Summary of changes between the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plans: 2019-2024 and 2024-2026

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## 1. Introduction

The Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2024-2026 (the 2024-2026 plan) will replace the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2024, which is due to expire on 15 August 2024.

The 2024-2026 plan declared by the Minister for Environment will be effective from the 16 August 2024 for a period of 18 months, to allow continuity of water management arrangements while a new 10-year plan is developed for the region.

This summary report has been prepared to facilitate transparency and understanding of the changes made between the expiring Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2024 and the new 2024-2026 plan.

## 2. Criteria for changes to the water allocation plan

Water allocation plans are declared under section 22B(1) of the *Water Act 1992* (Act) and must be compliant with all current Northern Territory legislation.

Since the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2024 was declared on 15 August 2019 there have been a number of amendments to the Act. The main amendments affecting the declaration of a water allocation plan are:

- a requirement to allocate water to an Aboriginal water reserve if there is eligible land within the water allocation plan area – section 22B(7)
- a requirement to consult with the relevant land council on the land proposed to be designated in a water allocation plan as land to which an Aboriginal water reserve applied - section 22C(2).

Content in the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2024 was updated to ensure the new 2024-2026 plan was compliant with these legislative amendments. Other minor changes were made in order to contemporise the contextual setting of the new 2024-2026 plan.

No changes were made to the water allocation plan concerning scientific understanding and condition of water resources; the estimated sustainable yield or other water management arrangements; understanding and management of groundwater dependent ecosystems; nor the values associated with water.

Copies of the two water allocation plans can be found on the department's website:

<https://nt.gov.au/environment/water/management-security/water-control-districts/daly-roper-beetaloo/katherine-water-allocation-plan>

### 3. Summary of changes by section of the water allocation plan

Changes made in the 2024-2026 plan	Reason for change
Entire plan – department name	
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is changed to the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security	Change of Department name in 2020
Entire plan – plan title	
Where relevant, the title <i>Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2024</i> is changed to <i>Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2024-2026</i>	The Minister will declare the water allocation plan for an 18 month period, expiring 16 February 2026
Entire plan – Aboriginal Water Reserve terminology	
All references to ‘Strategic Aboriginal Water Reserve’ are updated to ‘Aboriginal Water Reserve’	Consistency with terminology established by section 4(1) of the Act
Entire plan – NT government policy updates	
All references to ‘Management of Unused Licensed Water Entitlements Policy’ are updated to ‘Recovery of Unused Licensed Water Entitlements Policy’ All references to ‘draft Trading Licensed Water Entitlements Policy’ are updated to ‘Trading Licensed Water Entitlements Policy’ Added reference to ‘Interference with the Waterway Guideline 2024’	To reflect latest NT government policy
Entire plan – web links	
Redundant, superseded and broken web links updated and fixed	To ensure access to online information via web links is maintained
Inside cover	
Citation, report no., ISBN, attribution and copyright details	NTG record management protocols
Contents and page numbering	
Updated to reflect text changes, layout and formatting within body of plan	Maintain navigability for readers

Changes made in the 2024-2026 plan	Reason for change
<b>Key Points</b>	
Updated changes to security levels in licences Updated announced allocations considerations Updated reference to over allocation Updated water management arrangements	Reflect removal of security levels for licence renewals Reflect current announced allocations process Reflect current licensed water entitlements in the plan area Reflect more clearly the effect of the plan
<b>Summary</b>	
New plan dates (2024-2026) and updated timeline of previously declared plans Clarification that the scientific basis for the plan remains unchanged Explanation of the interim nature of the plan Updated changes to security levels in licences Updated announced allocations considerations Updated volume of water extraction licences and actual water use	Ensure compliance of the Plan with the legislative amendments occurred since 2019  Reflect removal of security levels for licence renewals Reflect current announced allocations process Reflect current volumes as at 29 July 2024
<b>Section 1 Introduction</b>	
Update of gazette details for Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District Update of period of effect	Most recent water control district Gazette Clarify the period of time the Plan is in effect
<b>Section 2 Plan Context</b>	
Description of legislative amendments since 2019 relevant to the water allocation plan added to this section Update of Gazette details for Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District Update of plan scope Update to refer to previous Water Advisory Committee Update to current Daly Roper Beetaloo water control district map	Most recent water control district gazette with beneficial uses of Aboriginal economic development and environment automatically established for a water control district Reflect changes to the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer, and Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer water allocation plan dates Clarify past stakeholder engagement activities The Daly Roper Beetaloo water control district area was changed and declared by gazettal notice on 19 October 2022
<b>Section 3.2.2 Population and employment</b>	
Update of population statistics	Reflect 2021 census

Changes made in the 2024-2026 plan	Reason for change
Section 3.2.3 Land tenure	
Update of native title claim	Relevant considerations for the calculation of the Aboriginal water reserve
Section 4 Water Resources	
No changes made to the information in this section	
Section 5 Water requirements	
Added an overview, listing all of the beneficial uses of water under the Act and their definition	To improve clarity and understanding of the section
Section 5.2.1 Environmental water requirements	
Contemporise sentence regarding research findings for the Daly River	Research results will be included in the future plan
Section 5.3.1 Water extraction licences	
Updated figures in Table 2	Water extraction licensed volumes and rural stock and domestic water requirements in the Katherine plan area updated as at 29 July 2024
Section 5.3.4 Consumptive water requirements	
Updated figures in Table 3	Reported water use across surface and groundwater licences updated to 2018/19 – 2023/24
Section 5.3.5 Onshore petroleum	
Update to consumptive water requirements for onshore petroleum Update to Water Act provisions for petroleum activities	Strategic Regional Environmental and Baseline Assessment report released in 2020 with baseline studies for onshore gas Ensure compliance of the Plan with the legislative amendments occurred since 2019
Section 6 Objectives, outcomes and plan strategies	
Updated ongoing community and stakeholder engagement Updated Table 4, Objective 5	Reflect ongoing engagement as part of the new plan development Reflect removal of security levels for licence renewals
Section 7 Estimated sustainable yield	

Changes made in the 2024-2026 plan	Reason for change
Wording regarding the statutory requirement to allocate water to the beneficial uses of environment and Aboriginal water reserve within the estimated sustainable yield has been added	Ensure compliance of the Plan with the legislative amendments occurred since 2019
Section 7.3 Water extraction limits	
Updated figures in Table 5	Total water extraction limit in accordance with current licences and water use not requiring licensing as at 29 July 2024
Section 7.4 Water availability	
Removed context and calculations from 2019	Licensed allocations are subject to change and this context was no longer an accurate reflection of current water availability
Section 7.5 Allocations to beneficial uses	
<p>Description added regarding new legislative requirements for the declaration of beneficial uses</p> <p>Removed duplication of beneficial use definitions</p> <p>Provided an overview of the Aboriginal water reserve estimate available and next steps for a future plan</p> <p>Removed water entitlements at 15 July 2019 column in Table 6</p> <p>Added a row for Aboriginal water reserve</p>	<p>Ensure compliance of the Plan with the legislative amendments occurred since 2019</p> <p>For clarity in understanding the document</p> <p>To provide a snapshot in time of the implementation of the Aboriginal water reserve process</p> <p>Reflect current licence entitlements as at 29 July 2024</p> <p>Reflect water set aside for the beneficial use of Aboriginal economic development</p>
Section 8.1 Allocations to beneficial uses	
Updated Step 3: Annual announced allocations	Reflect current announced allocations process
Section 8.2 Licence security levels	
Updated references to licence security levels	Reflect removal of security levels for licence renewals
Section 8.8 Recharge licensing	
Updated recharge licensing	Reflect Act provisions related to hydraulic fracturing waste
Section 9.3 Plan review	

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Changes made in the 2024-2026 plan	Reason for change
Updated reference to the section of the Act requiring 5 year review	Correct referencing of the Act
Schedule 1 Declaration of the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 20192024	
Updated the copy of the notice in the Gazette declaring the water allocation plan	Clarify the period of time the Plan is in effect
Schedule 4 Gazettal of Daly Roper Beetaloo water control district and beneficial uses	
Replaced the revoked declaration of the water control district and beneficial uses with the declaration which occurred on 19 October 2022	Updated to reflect expanded area and the current beneficial uses declared for the water control district
Glossary	
<p>Removed reference to Strategic Water Reserve as it is replaced by Aboriginal water reserve</p> <p>Removed reference to notional allocation</p>	<p>Aboriginal water reserve is the legal terminology following amendments to the Act in 2019</p> <p>Returned water is only provisioned to the Aboriginal water reserve until the plan is reviewed.</p>
Abbreviations	
<p>Added Aboriginal water reserve</p> <p>Removed reference to SWR as it is replaced by Aboriginal water reserve</p>	Aboriginal water reserve is the legal terminology following amendments to the Act in 2019
References	
<p>Removed 'Draft' for the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2029</p> <p>Changed the date for the Draft Mataranka Water Allocation Plan</p> <p>Removed Recovery of Unused Licensed Water Entitlements Policy</p> <p>Removed Policy – Trading Licensed Water Entitlements</p>	<p>Reflect changes to the legislative status of the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer water allocation plan and Mataranka water allocation plan</p> <p>Current policies are available on water resources website</p>