

WATER RESOURCES COMPLIANCE PLAN 2025-26



Regulating the use of water is critical as water is a key element of economic growth, livelihood, lifestyle and culture in the Territory. The misuse of water has implications on the economy, the environment, cultural sites and other water users.

The role of the Water Regulation team is to administer the *Water Act 1992* and provide evidence based scientific and regulatory advice to the Minister for Water Resources and Controller of Water Resources.

This compliance plan lists the key compliance priorities and targets for the 2025-26 financial year.

PRIORITIES

⚙️ ACTIONS TARGETS

MEASURING AND REPORTING WATER USE

- ⚙️ Conduct audits of:
 - meter reading submissions
 - water usage
 - compliance with special conditions
- ⚙️ Incorporate national uniform guidelines into the Northern Territory Non-urban Water Metering Code of Practice

- 90% of licensed bores are metered
- 95% of licence holders are reporting their water use
- 90% of licences with special conditions are compliant

REGISTERING BORES AND STATEMENTS OF BORES

- ⚙️ Audit the correct completion and submission timeframes of statement of bores
- ⚙️ Carry out site inspections of constructed bores in a water control district
- ⚙️ Undertake an information campaign towards licensed drillers to re-enforce the requirement to submit statement of bore within a 28 day period

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

UNLAWFUL WATER EXTRACTION

- ⚙️ Identify unlicensed water use in the Northern Territory
- ⚙️ Investigate all reports of potential unlawful water extraction across the Northern Territory

- Investigations into reports of unlawful activity to be commenced within 5 business days of receipt

RECOVERY OF UNUSED WATER

- ⚙️ Run a regional campaign 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 the recovery of unused water discussion with licence holders during regional site inspections

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

INTERFERENCE WITH A WATERWAY

- ⚙️ Prepare public facing documents to provide information on exemptions and statutory rights
- ⚙️ Carry out site inspections on active interference with waterway permits

- Conduct site inspections on all active works associated with permits to interfere with waterways
- Website to include prepared documents

OTHER

- ⚙️ Streamline regulation practices of the aquaculture industry

- Review of regulations commenced

Proactive site inspections: There were 638 water extraction licences on 1 July 2025. Water Regulation officers aim to complete 128 site inspections of water extraction licences over the 2025-26 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 the area.

HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
<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. 	<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. 	<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.

