

Key messages: Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2024-2026

These key messages have been prepared to assist people to easily understand the key features of the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer water allocation plan 2024–2026 and answer questions.

Key messages:

The Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer water allocation plan 2019-2024 is set to expire on 15 August 2024.

The Minister has declared the Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer water allocation plan 2024-2026 (the plan) to maintain the existing water management arrangements while a new 10 year plan is developed.

The plan applies to an area covering nearly 6,000 square kilometres and about 10,000 people, including Katherine, Rockhole and Binjarii. The plan manages the Tindall Limestone Aquifer, which supports important agricultural development in the region and maintains flows in the Katherine River during the dry season.

The plan will, in effect, extend the previous plan for 18 months providing continuity for water management and enable water trade, while protecting water for the environment and prioritising water for drinking.

This means that the maximum amount of water than can be taken from the Tindall Limestone Aquifer, or the estimated sustainable yield, will remain the same until February 2026.

Residents who want to get involved in water management can nominate to be on the water advisory committee, attend regional information and stakeholder sessions or participate in the public comment periods.

Will the estimated sustainable yield change?

The estimated sustainable yield of 38,391 mega litres (ML) per year will remain unchanged in new Katherine Tindall Limestone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2024-2026.

This will be reviewed for the next iteration of the plan.

What has changed in the plan?

The changes are primarily administrative to meet statutory obligations in the Water Act 1992, particularly the Aboriginal water reserve amendment that have occurred since the previous plan was declared in 2019.

- The amount of water that can be taken for development (estimated sustainable yield) has not been changed.
- Water management arrangements have not been changed, except for the Aboriginal water reserve.

An information paper that summarises the changes from the 2019-2024 plan to the 2024-2026 plan is available on the website: <https://nt.gov.au/environment/water/management-security/water-control-districts/daly-roper-beetaloo/katherine-water-allocation-plan>

Why is plan only in force for 18 months?

The plan is only in force for 18 months to provide sufficient time for a water advisory committee to be established, and the broader community to be effectively engaged in the development of a new plan, by February 2026.

Residents who want to get involved in water management can nominate to be on the water advisory committee, attend regional information and stakeholder sessions or participate during the public comment periods over the coming months.

Further information on how to be involved will be on the website:

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

Why was there no consultation on the new plan?

As the changes are primarily administrative, the department is committed to genuine and thorough consultation that started in 2024 and will continue on an ongoing basis to improve communication and understanding of the water management arrangements.

The department and the Northern Land Council will continue to consult in relation to the determining eligible land and process for the Aboriginal Water Reserve allocations in the plan.

When will a new plan be declared?

The next plan will be declared on or before 16 February 2026 when this plan expires.

The process to review and prepare the new plan commenced in 2024.

Residents who want to get involved in water management can nominate to be on the water advisory committee, attend regional information and stakeholder sessions or participate during the public comment periods over the coming months.

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