

2022 Announced Allocation Decision

Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District – Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2029

Water extraction licences in the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer (ODA), in the Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District, are granted subject to annual announced allocation conditions. These conditions allow me, as the Controller of Water Resources, to reduce licensed water entitlements annually, to protect the environmental, cultural and social values associated with water resources.

In determining whether to make an announced allocation, resulting in a reduction of licensed water entitlements for the 2022-23 water accounting year, I have considered the following matters;

1. The Plan

The Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2029 provides that the combined effect of all groundwater and surface water extractions should not reduce the natural flows in the Daly River beyond the specified acceptable limits at three key monitoring sites: Dorisvale, Ooloo Crossing and Mount Nancarrow gauging stations. The plan identifies the percentage of modelled natural river flow that should be maintained based on natural flows at the three sites.

2. Modelling of 2022 dry season flows

Modelling of the ODA was conducted using the Daly River catchment Integrated Hydrologic Model, which predicts the impact of water extraction on river flows across a number of water resources within the Katherine–Daly region.

Modelled predictions indicate a natural flow rate at Dorisvale of 8.55 m³/s, Ooloo Crossing of 13.25 m³/s and Mount Nancarrow 20.00 m³/s on 1 November 2022 (assuming zero rainfall for the remainder of 2022). Modelled scenarios including 100 per cent allocations for rural stock and domestic and licensed allocations predict reductions in flow at each of these locations of 10.3, 7.7 and 6.3 per cent respectively.

Reductions in flow are predicted to meet the criteria in the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer Water Allocation Plan 2019-2029 which requires 80 per cent of the annual groundwater discharge to be maintained for non-consumptive use and the remaining 20 per cent is available for extraction.

3. Water use information

It is a condition of water extraction licences that water meter readings are provided at the end of each month. Reported extraction across all licences was approximately 35 per cent of the total volume of licensed entitlements within the ODA in the 2021-22 water accounting year.

On the basis of reported water use, there is low likelihood the maximum extraction of licensed entitlements will occur in the 2022-23 water year due to the slow nature of development and water extraction infrastructure to utilise full licensed entitlements.

Conclusion

I have determined that no reduction of licensed entitlements within the ODA is required to maintain the environmental, cultural and social values of the water resource. Therefore, all licence holders within the Ooloo Dolostone Aquifer, in the Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District are permitted to extract 100 per cent of their licensed entitlements for the 2022-23 water accounting year commencing 1 May 2022.



Joanne Townsend

Controller of Water Resources

7 April 2022