The Northern Territory Government manages and protects water in the Northern Territory for everyone.

The government reserves water for:

* the environment
* culture and
* drinking.

Before any other use is allowed.

Water can be used for:

* public water supply
* farming
* industry
* mining, and
* petroleum (oil and gas).

People regularly ask questions about oil and gas activities. Such as: how much water is used? Or, will fracking pollute the water?

Oil and gas has been found deep underground in the Northern Territory.

Fracking is where oil and gas companies drill a very deep hole, called a well, to a layer of rock containing gas.

The well is put under very high pressure, using water, sand, and small amounts of chemicals, which fractures cracks into the rock.

The gas flows through the cracks into the well where it is captured, transported and sold.

The government requires that fracking can only happen if it is more than 600m from groundwater layers.

This process can raise further questions such as, how much water will be taken for fracking?

The water laws do not allow companies to use surface water from rivers, creeks, lakes, billabongs, springs or soaks.

Companies must get a licence for groundwater to use in any oil and gas activities including fracking.

The amount of water and which aquifer the water can come from is managed under a water licence.

Water licence conditions also require companies to report the amount of water they use, and to monitor and report water levels and water quality.

When drilling and fracking happens, can gas or chemicals mix with water that people, plants and animals need to survive?

There are strict rules in place around drilling through underground water. No chemicals are allowed to be used when drilling through the groundwater layers that might pollute the water.

During the process of fracking, a mix of water, sand and chemicals is used. When fracking is completed this mix becomes a product called wastewater.

Groundwater is safeguarded from fracking chemicals, wastewater and gas by 3 protective layers on the well. Wastewater that comes out of the well is pumped into big storage tanks where it may be reused, for more fracking, reducing the need for more water.

Companies are not allowed to mix or release wastewater onto the ground or into surface waters.

The government checks that there is no pollution to the water by going to site regularly and making sure companies are complying with their licence conditions.

Both water and gas are valuable resources.

The government protects water for people, animals and the environment.

No surface water can be used for oil and gas activities.

Groundwater licences set the amount of water that can be taken.

Companies must report the amount of water they use, check water levels and quality and report pollution events.

Wastewater can only be reused for fracking, which reduces the amount of water needed.

Wastewater is not allowed to be mixed or released into surface waters.