Applying announced allocation licence conditions

# Announced allocations (AA) are an adaptive management tool that allows the volume of licenced extraction to be varied in response to water availability.

An AA is expressed as a percentage and is applied to maximum licensed entitlement defined in a water extraction licence.

Generally, these apply annually to licences that take water from water resources that are classified as Top End and may be applied less frequently in water resources classified as Arid Zone in future.

# When does it apply?

Every year the Department implements AA to facilitate consistency and transparency in decision-making. An announcement is made each year, regardless of whether a decision to reduce allocations is made.

Water resources that meet both the following thresholds are subject to AA:

* consumptive pool allocated under water licences for extraction is 50% or more; and
* actual water take of those licences are at 50%, or are trending towards 50% in the next 3 years.

# What is the process?

AA decisions are based on available scientific data and information such as climate projections, water use, flow models and previous year AA outcomes.

**Stage 1:** At the start of the wet season the department reviews groundwater levels, river flows, water use, and information from the Bureau of Meteorology’s Climate Outlook. A **status update** is prepared, informing licence holders of the likelihood of AA being 100%, for each resource.

**Stage 2:** During the wet season the department monitors the rainfall and makes an assessment of the wet season rainfall to date, combined with the initial data analysis. An **early notice** is prepared, which updates the likelihood of AA being 100% for each resource.

**Stage 3:** Towards the end of the wet season, a final review of the data conducted and used to prepare a recommendation of AA for consideration by the Controller of Water Resources (Controller).

**Stage 4:** The Controller makes a decision, it is communicated to licence holders and announced publicly with a **decision report**.

# How we communicate

We publish reports and releases at key points in the AA process on this webpage [Announced water allocations | NT.GOV.AU](https://nt.gov.au/environment/water/management-security/water-allocation/announced-water-allocations). We also communicate directly with licence holders when a decision is made.

For more information, please contact us at [water.regulation@nt.gov.au](mailto:water.regulation@nt.gov.au) or phone 08 8999 4455.

Quick guide to AA

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| Information collection |  | Assessment and determination |  | Release and application |
| Start of wet season  Department considers latest information including:   * Water use for each resource - actual use, and licensed volumes. * Surface flows and ground water levels, at the end of the dry season, * Outcomes from the previous AA * Climate drivers and forecasts for the coming season * Recorded rainfall to date   This information is used to produce models which demonstrate the potential impact of projected water take on flows throughout the coming dry season. |  | **During wet season**  First, each resource is assessed for eligibility for AA further assessment.  Those not eligible are declared to have 100% AA for the following 12 months.  Those resources that are eligible for AA are assessed in 3 stages using actual and forecasted data.   * The model is updated at each stage, to better predict what impact licenced water extraction may have on each water resource.   Criteria for an AA reduction can differ by resource under either based on:   * water allocation plan or * maintaining 80% of natural river flows |  | **End of wet season**  The model outputs and other information is collated into a report and with a recommendation for the Controller to review.  If the Controller determines that a reduction is necessary, the department will notify all stakeholders.   * Licence holders need to adjust their water entitlement as per the advice provided from the department.   AA provide an effective regulatory to maintain **natural river flows.**  Each year, the department measures the actual flows at the end of the wet season to compare against the predictions at the start. This is used to refine and improve water resource management. |