



Darwin Region Water Supply Infrastructure Program

Community Update

September 2026



The Darwin Region Water Supply Infrastructure Program is an innovative and sustainable water supply solution led by the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure. Stage 1 of the Program is being delivered in partnership with the Australian Government and Power and Water.

The Program is a long-term infrastructure initiative that is being delivered in stages to supply safe drinking water for Territorians, now and into the future, to support our growing population and rebuild our economy. Learn more at infrastructure.nt.gov.au/AROWS

Manton Dam return to service construction complete

Construction crews have finished work on the Manton Dam Return to Service project, part of Stage 1 of the Darwin Region Water Supply Infrastructure Program, marking one of the most significant water infrastructure developments in the Northern Territory in the past 50 years.

Delivered on time and under budget by local construction company Exact Contracting and managed by Power and Water Corporation, this project includes the modernisation of the existing reservoir intake tower, construction of the new Strauss Water Treatment Plant, a new pump station and 22 kilometres of pipeline to strengthen Darwin's water security by providing an additional 7,300 ML of water each year.

Funded by the Australian Government through the National Water Grid Fund and in partnership with the Northern Territory Government, the investment and collaboration between both governments supports the expected growth in demand within the Darwin region.

The construction also delivered significant local economic benefits, with more than 111 employees and 500 contractors engaged during the past two years, supporting local businesses and aligning with the Northern Territory Government's Rebuilding the Economy Strategy.

The Manton Dam reservoir will continue to be a recreational resource for the community to enjoy, with Parks and Wildlife managing the reservoir under a new plan to provide optimal use of the recreational facilities, whilst also ensuring a safe operational drinking water supply.



First look at the AROWS concept design!

The vision for the proposed Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) project is coming into focus with an early concept design released in July.

The concept shows the project's proposed key infrastructure components and how they may function together. This early design phase integrates initial engineering with preliminary hydrology, geotechnical insights, environmental and cultural considerations to support further planning and investigations.

The concept helps establish a baseline that can be tested and refined, prior to being finalised. The outputs from this work will inform the next phases of design and assessments that will support future investment decisions.

The proposed AROWS project remains in the planning and approvals phase and is subject to regulatory processes and future investment decisions.

To view the AROWS concept video go to [AROWS early concept design July 2026](#)



Cultural induction

With the site investigation work ramping up, the AROWS team recently participated in cultural induction on country. The group consisted of DLI project staff, key contractors and partners including SMEC, Ecoz, GHD and Power and Water. Conducted by the Limilngan-Wulna Custodian group, the event included a water welcome and smoking ceremony at the AROWS site.

These opportunities enable our teams and contractors to gain valuable cultural insights and firsthand knowledge, whilst also actively engaging with custodians and the project's cultural monitors. This training helps our team and contractors to recognise and respect the cultural significance of the land on which they are carrying out work for the project.

Cultural monitors will remain closely involved as site work continues, and the protection of cultural heritage will be a central consideration throughout the project's assessments and planning.



Community Reference Group

The Community Reference Group (CRG) is made up of 12 community members who have been selected based on their expert knowledge, experience and ability to represent their local community.

The group is made up of members from NT Farmers, Amateur Fishermen's Association NT, Lake Bennett Community Association, local Council's and both current and former local Members of the Legislative Assembly NT.

Meetings are held several times a year to provide project updates to CRG members, who share this information with their communities as well as provide feedback to help inform the project.

The most recent meeting was held on country and was an opportunity for CRG members to hear directly from Custodians of Limilngan-Wulna land. This was an insightful opportunity for the group to hear firsthand about their connection to the land, culture, and values.

For more CRG information, look under the consultation tab on [our project website](#).



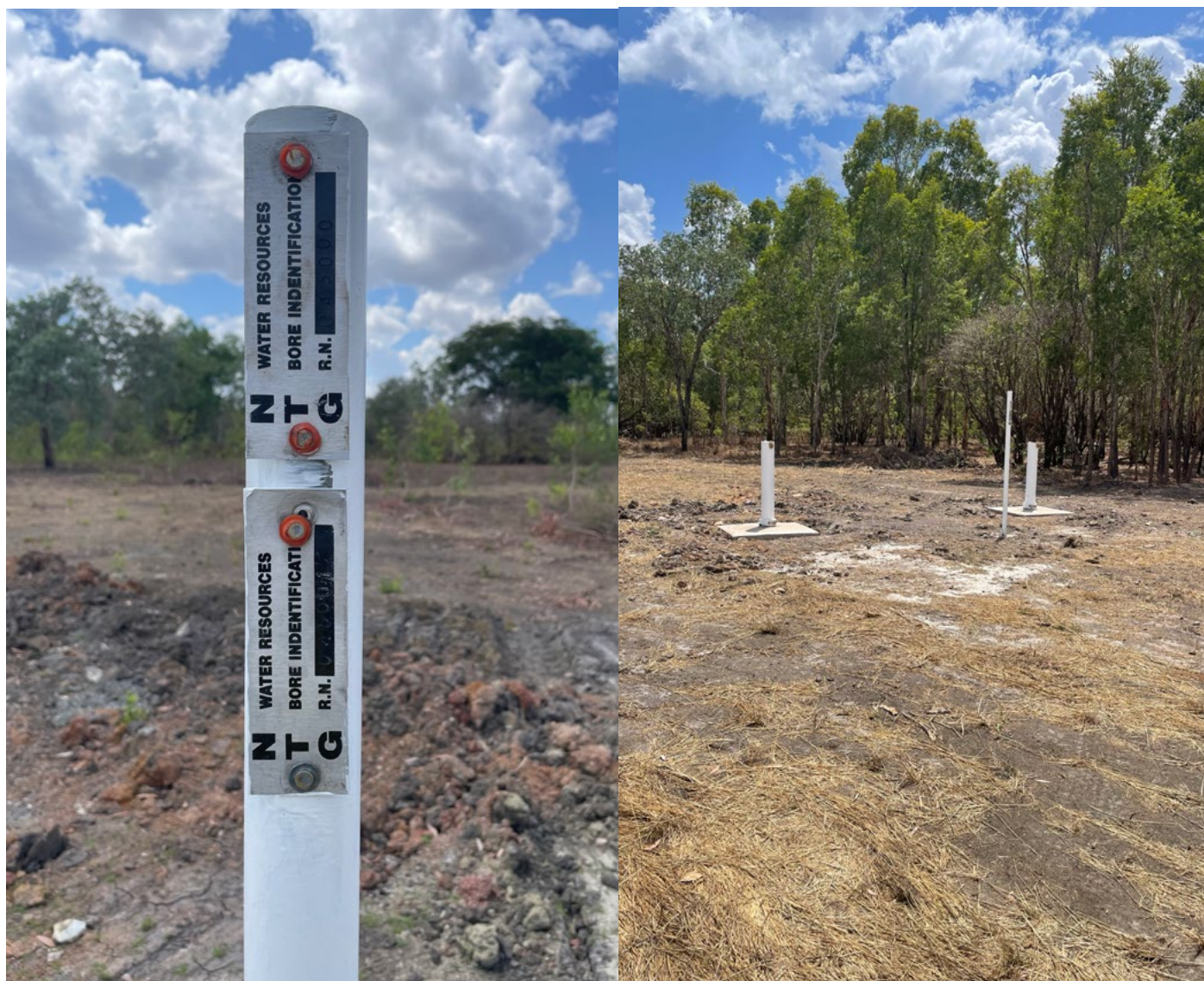
Environment investigation update

Understanding the local environment is essential before any decision is made to construct AROWS. The team have been busy on site conducting detailed environmental investigations to inform the project's environmental impact statement (EIS). This includes surveys for listed threatened flora and fauna, hydrological modelling of river flows, water quality and aquatic ecosystem investigations.

Some of this data is gained from the monitoring bore network of 17 bores across 9 sites. These bores were installed in July 2025, with the project team looking to add to this network as the project progresses.

This network is intended to capture comprehensive baseline groundwater data such as groundwater levels and water quality to establish reference conditions for technical feasibility and impact assessments. This data will also serve as a comparative benchmark once the reservoir is filled, enabling effective monitoring of any potential changes to the regional groundwater regime as a result of the reservoir's operation.

These bores will be used for monitoring and sampling, not for water extraction, with data feeding into the AROWS environmental impact statement and the engineering investigations for the project.



Contact information

For further information, you can also visit our website infrastructure.nt.gov.au/AROWS or send us an email at WaterInfrastructure.DLI@nt.gov.au

Acknowledgement

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