

Community Reference Group Communique



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The Community Reference Group (CRG) keeps the Darwin Region Water Supply Program open and accessible to the community. The committee aims to provide updates, hear your concerns, and make sure projects reflect environmental, cultural, social and economic values. The eighth meeting was held on 13 February 2026. A summary of the meeting is provided below.

Manton Dam Return to Service

Power and Water provided a project update, advising the project is progressing well and is on track for completion in mid-2026. Commissioning will occur after to ensure effective pumping and treatment processing.

The current construction focus is on Strauss Water Treatment Plant. The treatment component of the plant is underway, with the electrical and mechanical fit out of the treatment plant at 25% complete and the two large concrete clean water tanks installed.

Concept design work for stage 2 of the Strauss Water Treatment Plant is also well advanced as part of the planning and design work for the future AROWS project.

Power and Water confirmed recreational use of the reservoir at Manton will continue, advising they are collaborating closely with Parks and Wildlife on a contemporary Recreation Management Plan. The water treatment measures to be implemented at the new Strauss Water Treatment Plant will ensure the water pumped from Manton Dam meets stringent drinking water quality standards.

More information is available on the Power and Water website for www.powerwater.com.au/about/projects/current-projects/mantondam



Adelaide River Water Allocation Plan

A water allocation plan is being developed for the Adelaide River catchment to protect the natural water in the catchment. The plan will identify how water will be shared between the environment and other users, including the community, public water supply, industry and Aboriginal economic development.

The Department of Lands, Planning and Environment is working on a draft plan and will be seeking public consultation in late 2026.

To find out more go to watersecurity.nt.gov/adelaide-river-water-plan

A WATER PLAN IS BEING DEVELOPED FOR THE ADELAIDE RIVER CATCHMENT



The water plan will identify how water will be shared between the environment and other users, including the community, industry and Aboriginal economic development.

- Informed by science
- Developed with the community
- Adelaide River remains free-flowing
- Maintaining environmental and cultural values
- Preserving our Territory lifestyle

Living Water Smart now Territory-wide to help households save

Power and Water's Living Water Smart initiative has now been expanded to include regional communities.

The program was established in 2014 to help households and businesses reduce water use through practical education, water-wise tools and simple actions to cut waste and reduce leaks.

The Living Water Smart program has been updated with new, location-specific information, including a personalised water-saving calculator that provides simple tips to help save water and money.

Territorians can also access a Water Smart Plant Finder to help keep gardens healthy year-round, along with a new Irrigation Guide and practical advice on how to be water wise while still enjoying the outdoors.

Territorians can find out more, use the calculator, and access water-wise tools and guides through the Living Water Smart - www.livingwatersmart.com.au

Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage Update

Early-stage concept designs are due to be released in coming months. This early design phase integrates initial engineering options, with preliminary hydrology, geotechnical insights, environmental and cultural considerations to ensure that the proposed project remains technically viable.

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

The AROWS project team has been conducting targeted geological field investigations, as well as planning and scheduling for the next stage of design.

Development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is continuing with work on river hydraulic and hydrological modelling, aquatic ecology and baseline environmental surveys including flora and fauna surveys.

To understand the baseline groundwater quality and levels as part of the EIS, 17 monitoring bores across 9 locations have been installed in 2025. Drilling of these bores was facilitated by Department of Lands, Planning and Environment. Monitoring will soon commence which will develop temporal and seasonal environmental trends of the existing aquifers.

A strong 2025-2026 wet season is providing further environmental data for the EIS with contractors continuing the flora surveys during February and March 2026. Environmental monitoring will continue throughout 2026.

In relation to drinking water quality, the AROWS inner basin water catchment “first flush” monitoring program produced good results, with water quality parameters within expected limits.

The engagement team continues to reach out to the community to inform and update Territorians on the proposed project. In 2025 there were over 15 community engagement events conducted, and a community newsletter issued in January 2026.

The community is invited to keep updated via the Darwin Region Water Supply community newsletter, go to infrastructure.nt.gov.au/subscribe-for-updates to sign up.





CRG Members

Members present at the CRG meeting included:

- Darryl Day, Chair
- Andrew Bourne, NT Farmers Association
- David Ciaravolo, Amateur Fishermen's Association NT
- Tarizma Kenyon, Custodian of Limilngan-Wulna land
- Kezia Purick, community member
- Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly
- Natasha Chapman (observing on behalf of), Coomalie Community Government Council
- Andrew MacKay MLA, Member for Goyder
- Ruth Palmer, Property Council of Australia and Lake Bennett Community Association Inc

Sign up to receive community updates on the Darwin Region Water Supply Program.



Apologies included:

- Gary Higgins, community member
- Sharon Hillen, CEO Coomalie Community Government Council
- Glen Hingley, NT Chamber of Commerce
- Stephen Hoyne, Litchfield Council

Meeting Schedule

The next CRG meeting is scheduled for May 2026.

Contact information

Community members are encouraged to contact their CRG representatives directly to voice matters related to the program. Alternatively, community members can contact the NT Government project team directly via email or calling 8999 5106.

Stage 1 of the Darwin Region Water Supply Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government, through the National Water Grid Fund, and the Northern Territory Government, delivered in partnership with Power and Water Corporation.