

Our Water is in danger. 'Beetaloo' Water Allocation Plan.

Our big rivers define us.

Rivers like the **Roper** and **Flora** flow all year round and support our land and lifestyle. The mighty flow of these big rivers are sustained by **100 million year old aquifers** filled with fresh groundwater.

Any Territorian living below the Berrimah line knows that groundwater in the Territory is vital.

Ancient and culturally significant aquifers like the **Cambrian Limestone Aquifer**, which covers a large portion of the Territory, support ecosystems in and out of the water. From the **Livastonia palms** lining **Bitter Springs** to the mighty magic stygofauna keeping the water pure underground, many ecosystems depend on groundwater.

Unfortunately the NT Government, missed the **memo** (literally), and are about to release **water allocation plans** that could run the roper dry and alter groundwater flow for hundreds of thousands of years.

Water Policy in the NT

- Only 28% of water licenses fall within a Water Allocation Plan.
- In the absence of a Water Allocation Plan water is allocated based on the Planning Framework which defines two zones.
- In the **top end zone** the amount of water that can be extracted is based on a percentage of annual recharge.
- In the **arid zone** the amount of water that can be extracted is based on the amount of water storage over 100 years.
- An **Estimated Sustainable Yield** is determined on the basis of these rules.

What is a SUSTAINABLE Estimated Sustainable Yield?

Recharge Rate

Discharge Rate

Groundwater
Dependent Values

A cap on extraction based on a volume of water that ensures all of these variables are sustained.

Minimum groundwater levels needed to sustain the values.

'The level of water extraction from a particular system which, if exceeded would compromise key environmental assets or ecosystem functions and the productive base of the resource'

National Water Initiative



The Territory's Nature,
it's worth protecting.

Save the Roper

What's planned?

Double the volume of water extraction allowed under current policy.

3.5% more water than refills over a 100 years.

90% of water is allocated to industry (Cattle, Cotton, Fracking, Mining).

The plan's Estimated Sustainable Yield is 262 billion litres of Water per year.

13x more water than is currently used in the area.

The biggest water allocation in the Territory.

The plan relies on unfinished science and there is no evidence that it will provide secure ecological outcomes, nor that it is based on best scientific and socio-economic assessment.

What's the danger?

Unsustainable development of groundwater, has serious consequences for groundwater dependent ecosystems, cultural values and water users.

Reduce flows of Groundwater to the Roper River, Flora River, Mataranka, Hot Springs and Bitter Springs.

Endanger country and cultural values.

Harm vegetation and entire ecosystems that depends on minimum groundwater thresholds.

Collapse aquifers.

Dangers with an unsustainable Estimated Sustainable Yield.

Reduce water quality.

Interfere with existing water supplies.

Cause Stock/Pastoral bores to loose pressure or run dry.

Run the Roper Dry and leave Ngukurr without water supply.

Is there a better way?

1. Volumetric Extraction Rate Limits that ensure groundwater flows.
2. Clearly defined and well monitored water level triggers/thresholds.
3. A genuine Estimate Sustainable Yield for the Tindall Limestone aquifer.
4. Sustainable management regimes for other management zones.
5. Identify key gaps in the existing science and identify critical requirements for robust water allocation.
6. Understanding what community stakeholders consider to be acceptable risks and impacts, and making public all relevant supporting scientific data and analysis, should also be part of the process of determining yields.