

2020 Announced Allocation Decision

Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District - Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer

Water extraction licences within the Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer in the Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District are granted subject to annual announced allocation conditions. These conditions allow me, as the Controller of Water Resources, to reduce licensed water entitlements annually, to protect the environmental, cultural and social values associated with water resources.

In determining whether to make an announced allocation, resulting in a reduction of licensed entitlements for the 2020 Water Accounting year, I considered the following matters.

1. *Modelling of dry season flows*

The Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer discharges into the Roper River. Therefore, it is reasonable to use river flows when determining the amount of water available for licensed extraction in the 2020 Water Accounting year.

There is no declared water allocation plan for the resource. The contingent allocation rules for Top End Rivers in the *NT Water Allocation Planning Framework* (the **Framework**) stipulates that in the absence of directly related research, at least 80 per cent of flow at any time in any part of the river is allocated as water for environmental and other public benefit water provision, and extraction for consumptive purposes will not exceed a 20 per cent threshold level of flow at any time in any part of the river.

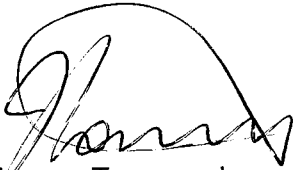
The Roper Model predicts river flows at five gauging stations: Mataranka Homestead (downstream), Elsey Station, Moroak, Judy Crossing and Red Rock. Of these, Mataranka Homestead and Elsey Station provide the most reliable indication of river flows due to hydrological constraints at the other gauging sites. Elsey Station is located downstream of licensed groundwater extraction, comprising 99 per cent of all licensed extraction.

Modelling of maximum licensed extraction showed that daily flows at Mataranka Homestead and Elsey Station would be reduced by 15 per cent. This is within the 20 per cent change to natural flow allowed under the Framework. The model showed a maximum change at Red Rock Change of 29 per cent (or 0.19 cumecs). Although this is more than allowed under the Framework, it is within the error margin of the model and, as noted above, this site is not considered reliable due to the hydrological conditions at the site.

2. *Other factors*

In the 2019 Water Accounting year, licensed extraction was less than 50 per cent of the total licensed entitlements. It is unlikely that licensed extraction in the 2020 Water Accounting year will be significantly higher than 2019 levels due limited development and technical capacity to extract maximum licensed entitlements.

Accordingly, I have determined not to reduce licensed water entitlements through the annual announced allocation licence condition. Therefore, all water extraction licence holders for the Mataranka Tindall Limestone Aquifer in the Daly Roper Beetaloo Water Control District are permitted to extract 100 per cent of their maximum licensed entitlement for the 2020 Water Accounting year, which commences on 1 May 2020.



Joanne Townsend
Controller of Water Resources

30 /4/2020