

# Darwin Region Water Security Update

Update as of August 2025

## ➔ Background

The Darwin Region Water Supply Strategy details our plan to manage the balance between water supply and demand over time.

Up to 95% of Darwin's water comes from Darwin River Dam, with the rest sourced from groundwater. The strategy describes our water security objectives and how we are working with supply and demand management initiatives to achieve them.

Our water supply relies heavily on rainfall and any restrictions are a direct response to varying weather conditions. For example, a series of below-average rainfall wet seasons.

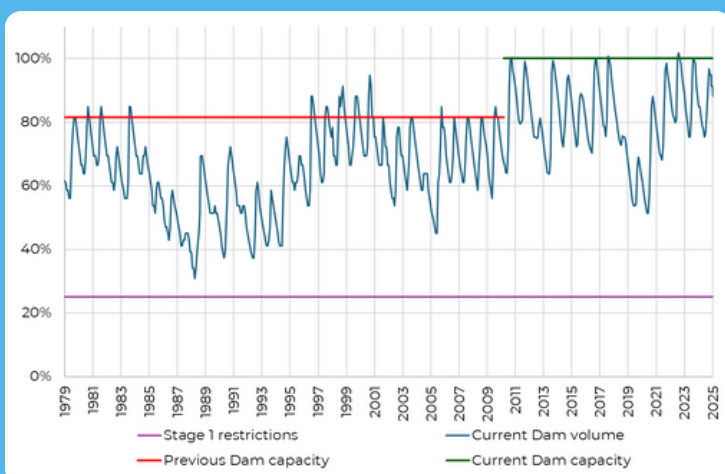
## ➔ Water storage

Darwin's water supply depends heavily on good wet seasons. When the wet season is poor, the reservoir doesn't refill as much, and this can lead to lower water levels over time.

Back in the 1980s and 1990s, Darwin River Dam went 13 years without filling or overflowing. More recently, just two bad wet seasons in a row (2018–20) saw the reservoir level drop to 50%, showing how growing demand is putting more pressure on our water supply.

The reservoir reached 97% capacity during the 2024/25 wet season, meaning we are unlikely to have water restrictions for the coming year. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't save water where we can.

*Darwin River Dam water level fluctuation:*

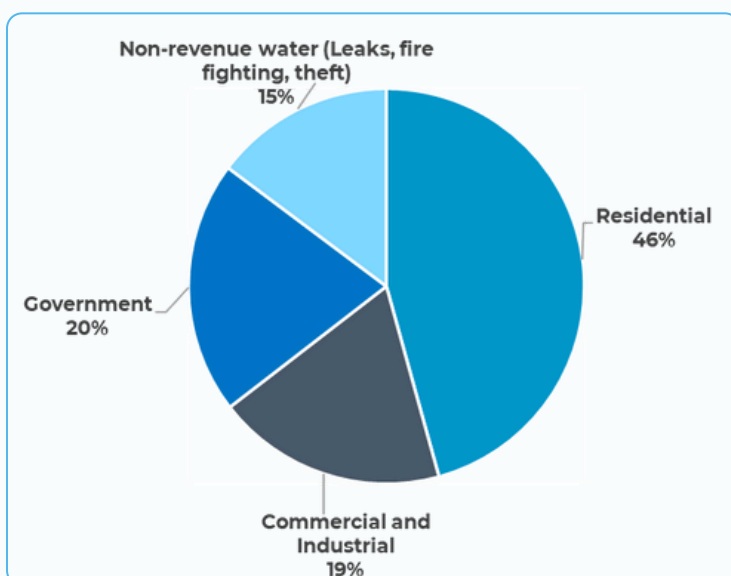


## ➔ Water demand 2025/2026

Water demand: 42,038 ML  
(down 9% from the previous year.)  
Sourced from:

- 83% surface water (34,956 ML)
- 17% groundwater (7,082 ML)

*Where is our water going?*



## ➔ Water demand management

Living Water Smart is our Territory-wide water demand management program, which helps protect water for our families, our environment and our future.

The program does this by helping the community use water more wisely.

From smart water meters to fixing leaks, every drop saved helps support the sustainability of our water resources.

Want to know more?

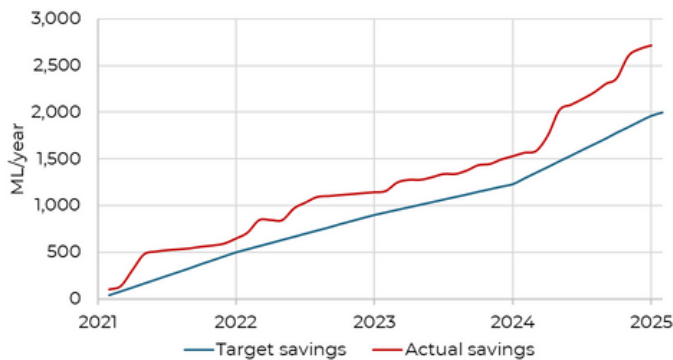
Scan this QR code to download the Darwin Region Water Supply Strategy





## Water demand management continued...

Living Water Smart savings:



In the Darwin region we have already achieved our Living Water Smart target to save 2,400ML per year by 2026.

This proves we work better by working together and as a community - we have saved the equivalent of 2,462 Olympic-sized swimming pools since the program began in 2021!

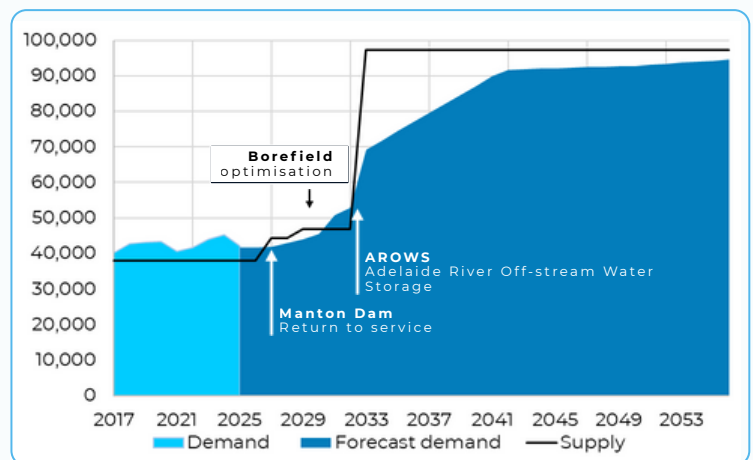
## Water supply planning

The graph opposite shows the water demand in Darwin is higher than what our water supply system can deliver over the long term.

This means we are putting pressure on our ability to provide a secure and reliable water supply for our growing region, that could result in future water restrictions.

Additionally, there is significant forecast growth in water demand associated with population growth and industrial development to support our region.

Forecast demand:



We are actively working to manage water demand and undertaking a series of projects to support our growing demand for water, including returning Manton Dam to service as an operational water source for Darwin by mid-2026.

This will support short-term demand while we progress towards the proposed Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS) project, an exciting water supply solution that will help meet our future water supply needs.

## Key project details

### Manton Dam Return to Service

Providing an additional 7,300 ML per year

- A new pump station and pipeline.
- Stage 1 of the Strauss Water Treatment Plant.

### Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS)

Estimated to provide an additional 60,000 ML per year

- To be delivered under the Darwin Region Water Supply Infrastructure Program.
- Stage 2 of the Strauss Water Treatment Plant.

Want to know more?

Scan this QR code to explore the Territory's water security projects

