



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

NLC calls for urgent action on water security for our mob

22 April 2021

The Northern Land Council welcomes the announcement by the NT Government today that \$28 million will be invested to improve water security in Aboriginal communities in the NT.

However, while it's good to see progress, as always the NT Government has remained silent on water security across all rural and remote communities.

In July 2020 the four NT Aboriginal land councils called for urgent legislation to ensure that all Territorians have access to safe drinking water.

Having access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right. For Aboriginal people living in remote communities and homelands, water supply is often neither clean nor secure.

In December 2019 the NT Government's Power and Water Corporation issued water supply status ratings for more than 60 Aboriginal communities.

NLC CEO Marion Scrymgour said more than 30 communities in the NLC's area were assessed by Power and Water Corporation as being at high, very high or extreme risk of water stress.

"The NT's proposal for \$28 million spent across 10 projects - with the majority focused on the southern region of the NT - will not even touch the surface of this crisis," said Ms Scrymgour.

"I'm disappointed in these ad-hoc statements from the NT Government. More action should have been taken by now to tackle poor water security in our communities. Where is the strategy to work with land councils in co-investment to ensure this can be tackled in a more sustainable program rollout?"

"Water use out bush is mostly unregulated and our mob are very worried. Major towns have legal protections under the NT's Water Act and other laws but the drinking water in most of our communities is not protected.

"This needs to change. We want urgent action to protect water supply and water quality for all Territorians."