



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

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SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr John Cosgrove
Presiding Commissioner
Productivity Commission
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BELCONNEN ACT 2616

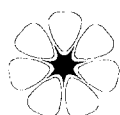
Dear Mr Cosgrove

I write in response to your Commission's invitation to interested parties to comment on the draft report, *Impact of Competition Policy Reforms on Rural and Regional Australia*, released in May 1999, and am pleased to provide the following comments, with a view to their inclusion in the final report where appropriate.

The Territory Government's formal submission to the Inquiry raised concerns about the effects of the National Access Regime on the proposed Adelaide to Darwin railway project. In particular, the submission noted that:

“the existing arrangements for access are motivated around existing infrastructure and take no account of the pioneering nature and special risks associated with new infrastructure. This is likely to have an adverse effect on the development of regional Australia.”

The Territory considers that the higher risk of developing infrastructure in remote areas also needs to be taken into account by the National Competition Council (NCC), and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, in considering access issues for **existing** infrastructure. For example, the risk associated with the construction of the Amadeus Basin (near Alice Springs) to Darwin gas transmission pipeline in the mid 1980s was likely to have been considerably higher than that for transmission pipelines in Victoria and New South Wales. Accordingly, the allowable rate of return factored into access prices should be correspondingly higher.



Northern Territory Government

Similarly, it is important for the NCC to recognise and take into account in its assessments, the differences between jurisdictions in terms of priorities that should be placed on the various elements of the COAG water reform agenda. For example, in the Territory, the demands placed on water resources are generally low relative to their availability. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, the demand for water trading is unlikely to be significant. Accordingly, the priority that should be placed on developing an overall framework for water trading is lower than in other jurisdictions, where irrigation is significant and rivers are under stress.

Comments on specific parts of the draft report follow.

Recommendation 8 requires clarification. The determination of what change constitutes 'necessary change' is subjective and may be incompatible with wider regional development policies. This gives rise to the concern that the NCP may limit the policy options of government.

On page 118 there is a statement with regard to the implementation of gas reforms, that private sector gas utilities in the Northern Territory have not completed 'ring fencing' of their transmission and distribution activities. The Northern Territory has implemented the National Gas Access Code through the *Gas Pipelines Access (Northern Territory) Act*. Please find attached for your further information, section 3.2 of the Northern 1998 Annual Report to the National Competition Council which sets out the Northern Territory's position in relation to gas reforms.

On page 131, there is a summary of jurisdictional progress in implementing urban and rural water reforms. Please find attached for your further information section 3.3 of the Northern Territory's 1998 Annual Report to the National Competition Council which sets out the Northern Territory's position in relation to water reform. Your attention is particularly drawn to the information relating to trading in water allocations or entitlements on page 48.

On page 144 the Commission states "...charging systems, such as registration fees, bear little relationship to the costs of road damage from large vehicles ...". This statement is incorrect. The National Road Transport Commission (NRTC) has established a methodology for determining charges from road maintenance costs (PAYGO) and clearly links charges for heavy vehicles to road damage.

On page 145, the Commission states "...the requirement to progress road use charging reforms has been set aside." This statement is incorrect. After the first set of heavy vehicle charges were determined using PAYGO, the NRTC began to work on an updated set of charges. However, there was strong criticism of the results obtained from PAYGO (including comments from the Northern Territory) and the NRTC has recently indicated that it intends developing a new charging mechanism in 2000.

On page 227, there is a statement that the Northern Territory requires liquor stores, certain food stores, florists, hairdressers and tobacconists to close between midnight and 4.00am. This is incorrect, there are no restrictions on 'certain food stores, florists, hairdressers and tobacconists'. With regard to liquor sales, liquor may only be sold during permitted hours for reasons of public health and community attitudes.

On page 27 of the Supplement to the draft report, *Infrastructure Reforms: Agreements and Details of the Reform Initiatives By Jurisdiction*, the entry for the Northern Territory for 1997-98 states "Private generators are able to access the PAWA network and compete for electricity for customers." As the Northern Territory is currently developing its electricity access regime, this comment is misleading and should be deleted.

The Commission sought additional information and comment on inter alia the current and potential impacts of road transport reforms on country Australia. The reforms have increased the productivity of road transport, allowing lower per unit transport costs for rural and remote areas. The reforms may also strengthen the viability of rural and remote operators as these are likely to be able to make more intensive use of the higher payloads allowable than their city based competitors.

Yours sincerely



PAUL TYRRELL

28 August 1999

**PART 3:
THE INFRASTRUCTURE REFORMS
ELECTRICITY, GAS, WATER AND ROAD TRANSPORT**

The *Agreement to Implement the National Competition Policy and Related Reforms* specifies that satisfactory progress against reform outcomes agreed by COAG and Heads of Governments for the electricity, gas, water and road transport industries be a condition for continuing receipt of NCP payments.

3.1 ELECTRICITY

REFORM COMMITMENT

Under the *Agreement to Implement the National Competition Policy and Related Reforms*, the second tranche obligation is for 'relevant jurisdictions' (New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and the ACT) to complete the transition to a 'fully competitive national electricity market' by 1 July 1999. Queensland is committed to participating in the national market interconnection with New South Wales in 2000-01.

STATUS OF REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

As the NT is not part of the National Electricity Market, there are no electricity reform obligations arising under Part 3 of the assessment framework for the NT.

3.2 GAS

REFORM COMMITMENT: THE NATIONAL GAS ACCESS CODE

The full implementation of free and fair trading in gas between and within the States including the phasing out of transitional arrangements in accordance with the schedule to be agreed between the parties.

The Territory has introduced the national framework for third party access to natural gas pipelines. This occurred through the *Gas Pipelines Access (Northern Territory) Act*, which was passed in April 1998 and commenced on 2 September 1998. In addition, consequential amendments were required to the *Energy Pipelines Act* and *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act*. The amendments to the legislation were included in the *Statute Law Revision Act*. The Act was passed during November 1998, while the consequential amendments commenced on 13 January 1999.

The Northern Territory will seek endorsement for its Third Party Access Regime via a written application to the National Competition Council. The application is in its final stages of preparation, before being formally submitted.

In addition, the Territory is in the process of refining its regulatory regime. In particular, negotiations are continuing on the terms of agreement for the appointment of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission ("ACCC") as the Northern Territory regulator for the local gas distribution system. The ACCC is already the regulator of the transmission system. It is anticipated that the appointment of the ACCC as the NT Regulator of the distribution system will commence on 1 July 1999.

REFORM COMMITMENT: COAG AGREEMENT ON FREE AND FAIR TRADE IN GAS – CLAUSE 10

Agreed that where publicly-owned transmission and distribution activities are at present vertically integrated, they be separated, and legislation introduced to 'ring fence' transmission and distribution activities in the private sector by 1 July 1996 [date subsequently varied].

The NCC has sought information regarding the Territory's compliance with clause 10 of the 1994 COAG Agreement on free and fair trade in gas.

As advised in the Northern Territory's 1996 Annual Report on the Implementation of NCP, there are no publicly owned natural gas distribution systems in the Territory.

In addition, with respect to private sector natural gas systems, the National Gas Access Code requires separation or ring fencing of transmission and distribution activities. As noted above, the Territory has implemented the Code through the *Gas Pipelines Access (Northern Territory) Act*.

3.2.1 NORTHERN TERRITORY - SPECIFIC ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE "FRAMEWORK FOR SECOND TRANCHE ASSESSMENT (NCC, NOVEMBER 1998)

Privatisation and structural reform activity has seen full separation of most vertically integrated transmission and distribution activities in the public sector, in accordance with the commitments set out in the 1994 COAG agreement on gas reform. Ring fencing of gas transmission and distribution activities in the private sector has been completed in most jurisdictions.

The Council is aware of two exceptions in South Australia and the Northern Territory. South Australia's Riverland Pipeline System (transmission) is owned by Envestra Ltd and operated by Epic Energy Ltd. Envestra Ltd also owns and operates the State's gas distribution networks. In the Northern Territory, NT Gas Pty Ltd (AGL owned) operates both gas transmission services and gas distribution services to Darwin. The company's gas distribution role commenced in 1996.

The Council seeks information from South Australia and the Northern Territory with the objective of determining whether the pipeline systems in those jurisdictions satisfy COAG commitments on structural reform.

STATUS OF REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

- see previous page

3.3 WATER

REFORM COMMITMENT

The Agreement to Implement the National Competition Policy and Related Reforms sets out the framework of water reform. By June 1999, jurisdictions must have implemented the requirements specified in the strategic framework for the efficient and sustainable reform of the Australian water industry and the future processes as endorsed at the February 1994 COAG meeting and embodied in the Report of the Expert Group on Asset Valuation Methods and Cost Recovery Definitions, February 1995.

STATUS OF REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

The specific obligations arising from the NCP agreements on water reform have been the subject of considerable discussion between the Council and all governments, principally through the SCARM Water Reform Taskforce. The agreed commitments for the June 1999 assessment, together with the outcomes which the Council will look for to determine that obligations have been met, are outlined in the following tables.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

3 In relation to pricing:-

(a) In general:-

- (i) The adoption of pricing regimes based on the principles of consumption-based pricing, full-cost recovery and desirably the removal of cross-subsidies which are not consistent with efficient and effective service, use and provision. Where cross-subsidies continue to exist, they must be made transparent.
- (ii) That where service deliverers are required to provide water services to classes of customer at less than full cost, the cost of this be fully disclosed and ideally be paid to the service deliverer as a community service obligation.

(b) Urban water services:-

- (i) The adoption by no later than 1998 of charging arrangements for water services comprising an access or connection component together with an additional component or components to reflect usage where this is cost-effective.
- (ii) That in order to assist jurisdictions to adopt the aforementioned pricing arrangements, an expert group, on which all jurisdictions are to be represented, report to COAG at its first meeting in 1995 on asset valuation methods and cost-recovery methods and cost-recovery definitions, *and*

- Since 1995, the Power & Water Authority has significantly increased the volumetric charges for water; by 15% for government customers and 30% for non-government customers.
- Marsden-Jacob cross subsidy report is being examined for application in the Northern Territory.
- Community service obligations for combined water supply, sewerage and electricity operations are disclosed in the annual reports of the Power & Water Authority to be \$47.1M in 1997; rising to \$51.4M in 1998 (Annual Report 1997-98, p. 43).
- The Power & Water Authority introduced two-part tariffs for water supply with effect from 1 July 1998. (*NT Government Gazette No G25 of 1 July 1998*)
- The Power & Water Authority contributed to the report of the expert group.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

(b) Urban water services continued:-

- (iii) that supplying organisations, where they are publicly owned, aiming to earn a real rate of return on the written-down replacement cost of their assets, commensurate with the equity arrangements of their public ownership.

- The Power & Water Authority asset valuation project is expected to be completed by the end of April 1999.
- With the introduction of two-part tariffs for water supply, the Power & Water Authority is moving to a position of obtaining a positive Rate of Return.
- WSAAs Facts show an increasing Rate of Return for combined water and sewerage operations.

(c) Metropolitan bulk-water suppliers :-

- (i) To charge on a volumetric basis to recover all costs and earn a positive real rate of return on the written-down replacement cost of their assets.

- Metropolitan bulk-water suppliers do not operate in the Northern Territory.

(d) Rural water supply:-

- (i) That where charges do not currently fully cover the costs of supplying water to users, agree that charges and costs be progressively reviewed so that no later than 2001 they comply with the principles of full-cost recovery with any subsidies made transparent consistent with 3(a)(ii) above.

- In 2001 it is expected that there will be continued funding and transparent reporting of community service obligations for provision of Aboriginal Essential Services, comprising in 1998: water supply to 85 rural and remote communities, water supply support to 400 outstations.

- (ii) To achieve positive real rates of return on the written-down replacement costs of assets in rural water supply by 2001, wherever practicable.

- The test of practicability may limit the achievement of positive real rates of return for the majority of rural community water supplies which are supported as community service obligations.

- (iii) That future investment in new schemes or extensions to existing schemes be undertaken only after appraisal indicates it is economically viable and ecologically sustainable.

- Economic viability for the majority of cases will remain dependent on community service obligation funding.
- Ecological sustainability is assessed for all water supply developments and extensions.

ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR WATER REFORM	NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION
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(d) Rural water supply continued:-

(iv) Where trading in water could occur across State borders, that pricing and asset valuation arrangements be consistent.

(v) Where it is not currently the case, to the setting aside of funds for future asset refurbishment and/or upgrading of government-supplied water infrastructure, *and*

(vi) In the case of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission, to the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council putting in place arrangements so that out of charges for water funds for the future maintenance, refurbishment and/or upgrading of the headworks and other structures under the Commission's control be provided.

(e) **Groundwater**

That management arrangements relating to groundwater be considered by ARMCANZ by early 1995 and advice from such consideration be provided to individual jurisdictions and the report provided to COAG.

- No instances of cross-border trading are envisaged.

- Established process of 3 year forward budgeting for Capital Works Programming suits the type and scale of public water infrastructure in the Northern Territory.

- Not applicable.

- Assistance was given to preparation of the report to ARMCANZ and work continues through the National Groundwater Committee to develop implementation strategies for groundwater management.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

4 In relation to water allocations or entitlements:-

(a) The State government members of the Council would implement comprehensive systems of water allocations or entitlements backed by separation of water property rights from land title and clear specification of entitlements in terms of ownership, volume, reliability, transferability and, if appropriate, quality.

- Water allocation systems are provided at regional scale in the form of declared allocation (or share) of assessed water resources to sectors of beneficial use - with beneficial use sectors being identical to the environmental value categories currently used in the National Water Quality Management Strategy.
- Regional water allocation plans have been in place for the greater Darwin region, Katherine local area and Ti Tree Basin since the early 1990s.
- Review of the Ti Tree Basin allocation plan will be completed in May 1999; review of the greater Darwin regional plan will be completed in 1999; extension of Katherine local area plan to wider regional scale will be completed in 1999; allocation planning for the Alice Springs region will be completed in 2000.
- Entitlements are provided in the form of licences under the Water Act to take surface water or groundwater.
- All (non riparian right) surface water extraction must be licensed; all bore extractions exceeding 15 L/sec must be licensed and all bores in declared groundwater management areas must be licensed.
- Surface water and groundwater extraction licences are granted within assessed sustainable yield of water resources as set by regional allocation plans.
- All licences specify ownership and limits to extraction volume but do not separate entitlement from land nor specify reliability, transferability or quality.
- Amendments to Regulations under the Water Act are under consideration to allow trading of licences.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

4 In relation to water allocations or entitlements continued:-

- (b) Where they have not already done so, States would give priority to formally determining allocations or entitlements to water, including allocations to the environment as a legitimate user of water.
- (c) In allocating water to the environment, member governments would have regard to the work undertaken by ARMCANZ and ANZECC in this area.
- (d) That the environmental requirements, wherever possible, will be determined on the best scientific information available and have regard to the inter-temporal and inter-spatial water needs required to maintain the health and viability of river systems and groundwater basins. In cases where river systems have been over-allocated, or are deemed to be stressed, arrangements will be instituted and substantial progress made by 1998 to provide a better balance in water resource use including appropriate allocations to the environment in order to enhance/restore the health of river systems.
- The Water Act is expected to be amended later in 1999 to allow formal declaration of regional water allocation plans.
 - The administrative arrangements and consultative processes to support formal declaration of water allocations have been trialed successfully in the Ti Tree Basin.
 - Trials will continue during 1999 in the Darwin and Katherine areas, leading to formal declaration of water allocations.
 - The Northern Territory was heavily involved in the work initially undertaken by ARMCANZ and ANZECC and is working to implement the National Principles for Providing Water for Aquatic Ecosystems; both through the formulation of regional water allocation plans and in research to establish scientific methods to determine environmental water requirements.
 - Scientific information based on Northern Territory conditions is not currently available. However, research has commenced and is expected to expand significantly in the next 5 years.
 - There are no over-allocated or stressed systems - rivers and groundwaters - in the Northern Territory. However, the areas of most likely future (5-10 years) development pressure are the research targets.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

4 In relation to water allocations or entitlements continued:-

- (e) In undertaking this work, jurisdictions would consider establishing environmental contingency allocations which provide for a review of the allocations 5 years after they have been determined.
- (f) Where significant future irrigation activity or dam construction is contemplated, appropriate assessments would be undertaken to, inter alia, allow natural resource managers to satisfy themselves that the environmental requirements of the river systems would be adequately met before any harvesting of the water resource occurs.
- The water allocation planning trial nearing completion in the Ti Tree Basin sets aside 20% of assessed water resources as an environmental contingency allocation, within a 10 year plan, matched by capped licensing, to be reviewed after 5 years.
 - Reviews of the greater Darwin regional plan and extension of the Katherine area plan in 1999 will incorporate environmental contingency allocations in a similar manner to that trialed in the Ti Tree Basin.
 - The principle of adequately meeting environmental water requirements of river systems is accepted but will be subject to the outcomes of consultatively based regional water allocation planning which may result in environmental water provisions not always meeting environmental water requirements.
 - Significant future irrigation with Ord Stage 2 carries no environmental water allocation issues for Northern Territory rivers.
 - The only planned significant dam construction may occur in 2025 for Darwin water supply; the appropriate assessments for environmental water requirements will be undertaken as part of ongoing regional water allocation planning.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

5 In relation to trading in water allocations or entitlements:-

- (a) That water be used to maximise its contribution to national income and welfare, within the social, physical and ecological constraints of catchments.
- (b) Where it is not already the case, trading arrangements in water allocations or entitlements be instituted once the entitlement arrangements have been settled. This should occur no later than 1998.
- (c) Where cross-border trading is possible, that the trading arrangements be consistent and facilitate cross-border sales where this is socially, physically and ecologically sustainable.
- The central planning and management vehicles are regional water resource strategies (e.g. Ti Tree) which are completely in keeping with the principles of ESD.
 - Water allocations will not be tradable in the Northern Territory since they will take the form of formally declared regional plans.
 - Trading arrangements for licences (entitlements) are currently being developed in consultation with water users and, following minor changes to Regulations under the Water Act expected in 1999, will result in trade being possible.
 - There are, however, very limited markets in the Northern Territory for trading in water licences, with no competition for access to water due to widely dispersed, small scale, privately owned and operated irrigation developments, the vast majority of which draw on groundwater and all of which are licensed within sustainable yield limits of the water resource.
 - There is no need for trading in the Northern Territory from a water resource management perspective, since no systems are over-allocated.
 - No cross-border developments exist.
 - Ord Stage 2 should establish a totally privately operated cross-border irrigation scheme after year 2000 - work is in progress with the Western Australian Government to ensure consistent arrangements.

ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR WATER REFORM

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

5 In relation to trading in water allocations or entitlements:-

- (d) That individual jurisdictions would develop, where they do not already exist, the necessary institutional arrangements, from a natural resource management perspective, to facilitate trade in water, with the proviso that in the Murray-Darling Basin the MDBC be satisfied as to the sustainability of proposed trading transactions.

- All aspects of water resource management are provided through a single statute - the Water Act - which is administered solely by the Natural Resources Division of the Department of Lands, Planning & Environment.
- Amendments expected in 1999 to Regulations under the Water Act for surface water and groundwater extraction licences will facilitate trade in water.

6 In relation to institutional reform:-

- (a) That where they have not already done so, governments would develop administrative arrangements and decision-making processes to ensure an integrated approach to natural resource management.

- Natural Resources Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment was established in 1998 to ensure an integrated approach to natural resource management for sustainable development.
- Land Resources Coordination Group at CEO level integrates planning between the Department of Lands, Planning & Environment, Department of Primary Industry & Fisheries and the Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory.
- Regional Natural Resource Strategies (e.g. Ti Tree) and Integrated Catchment Management Plans (e.g. Mary River) are developed and implemented with full landholder and government agency participation.

- (b) To the adoption, where this is not already practised, of an integrated catchment approach to water resource management and set in place arrangements to consult with the representatives of local government and the wider community in individual catchments.

- Mary River ICM Plan and Ti Tree Regional Water Resource Strategy are best practice approaches.
- Advisory Committees representative of catchment community and industry oversight the development, implementation and review of plans and strategies.

ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR WATER REFORM

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

6 In relation to institutional reform:-

- (c) To the principle that, as far as possible, the roles of water resource management, standard setting and regulatory enforcement and service provision be separated institutionally.
- (d) That this occur, where appropriate, as soon as practicable, but certainly no later than 1998.
- (e) The need for water services to be delivered as efficiently as possible and that ARMCANZ, in conjunction with the Steering Committee on National Performance Monitoring of Government Trading Enterprises, further develop its comparisons of inter-agency performance, with service providers seeking to achieve international best practice.
- (f) That the arrangements in respect of service delivery organisations in metropolitan areas in particular should have a commercial focus, and whether achieved by contracting-out, corporatised entities or privatised bodies this be a matter for each jurisdiction to determine in the light of its own circumstances.
- (g) To the principle that constituents be given a greater degree of responsibility in the management of irrigation areas, for example, through operational responsibility being devolved to local bodies, subject to appropriate regulatory frameworks being established.
- Power & Water Authority is the sole service provider; the Department of Lands, Planning & Environment is the resource manager and regulator; there is Ministerial separation between the agencies.
 - Some further regulatory functions may be established with the possible introduction of a new Regulator for pricing, competition, standards, etc.
 - Separation of resource manager/regulator and service provider has been in place since 1997.
 - Power & Water Authority uses WSAA Facts as a performance measure for Darwin-based metropolitan services.
 - This will be extended to include Alice Springs non-metropolitan services.
 - Power & Water Authority has set targets over the next three years based on the recent Scoping Study by Merrill Lynch Fay Richwhite which highlighted the issues for commercial focus.
 - Reform Implementation Working Group now in place with the specific objective of improving working practices to achieve efficiencies.
 - There are no (publicly funded/operated) irrigation areas in the Northern Territory and none are likely in the foreseeable future.
 - Private investment is expected to continue as the sole agent of irrigation development.

**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

7 In relation to consultation and public education:-

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| <p>(a) To the principle of public consultation by government agencies and service deliverers where change and/or new initiatives are contemplated involving water resources.</p> <p>(b) That where public consultation processes are not already in train in relation to recommendations (3)(b), (3)(d), (4) and (5) in particular, such processes will be embarked upon.</p> <p>(c) That jurisdictions individually and jointly develop public education programs in relation to water use and the need for, and benefits from, reform.</p> <p>(d) That responsible water agencies work with education authorities to develop a more extensive range of resource materials on water resources for use in schools.</p> <p>(e) That water agencies should develop, individually and jointly, public education programs illustrating the cause and effect relationship between infrastructure performance, standards of service and related costs, with a view to promoting levels of service that represent the best value for money to the community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The principle is positively accepted and acted upon through direct consultation by Department of Lands, Planning & Environment with industry groups such as NT Horticulture Association, NT Irrigation, Grain & Fodder Growers Association as well as through public meetings in Katherine and Ti Tree.• Alice Springs Water Committee, a community-based environmental consultative group, on which the Power & Water Authority is a member, has been active in water conservation and demand management for over 5 years.• Power & Water Authority is active in setting curricula in relation to water issues for primary and junior secondary students.• The annual focus of effort for the Department of Lands, Planning & Environment has been National Waterweek for the past 5 years.• Power & Water Authority participates in the annual Rural Shows circuit (Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin) with displays and information regarding water use. |
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**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

8 In relation to the environment:-

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| <p>(a) That ARMCANZ, ANZECC and the Ministerial Council for Planning, Housing & Local Government examine the management and ramifications of making greater use of wastewater in urban areas and strategies for handling stormwater, including its use, and report to the first Council of Australian Government meeting in 1995 on progress.</p> <p>(b) To support ARMCANZ and ANZECC in their development of the National Water Quality Management Strategy, through the adoption of a package of market-based and regulatory measures including the establishment of appropriate water quality monitoring and catchment management policies and community consultation and awareness.</p> <p>(c) To support consideration being given to establishment of landcare practices that protect areas of river which have high environmental value or are sensitive for other reasons.</p> <p>(d) To request ARMCANZ and ANZECC, in their development of the National Water Quality Management Strategy, to undertake an early review of current approaches to town wastewater and sewage disposal to sensitive environments, noting that action is underway to reduce accessions to water courses from key centres on the Darling River system.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Northern Territory participated in the ARMCANZ review of the CSIRO wastewater and stormwater management report.• Watching brief maintained on the more detailed work now in train with CSIRO on urban water cycle.
• Beneficial Use Declarations Program continues under the Water Act in accordance with the National Water Quality Management Strategy.• Extensive community involvement is central to the Beneficial Use declaration program.• Waste discharge licensing, monitoring programs and development of catchment management strategies proceed from Beneficial Use declarations.
• Landcare and Waterwatch groups are expanding throughout the Northern Territory and are associated in many cases with river and stream protection.
• No comment. |
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**ELEMENT OF STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR WATER REFORM**

NORTHERN TERRITORY POSITION

**9 In relation to water and related research,
member governments would:-**

- (a) Give higher priority to the research necessary to progress implementation of the strategic framework, including consistent methodologies for determining environmental flow requirements.
 - (b) To greater coordination and liaison between research agencies to more effectively utilise the expertise of bodies such as LWRDC, MDBC and other State and Commonwealth organisations.
- 11 research proposals for the Daly River Catchment are currently under development for commencement in 1999 - increasing agricultural development is expected in this catchment over the next 5 to 10 years.
 - 5 research proposals for the Darwin Rural Area are under development for commencement in 1999 - this area is under increasing development pressure for horticulture and rural residential use, all based on private bore supplies with potential in aggregate to impact on groundwater sustained ecosystems in the next 5 to 10 years.
 - Effective research links have been established with local research agencies including the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist and the CRC for Tropical Savannas.