



Engineers Australia

Statement on water security in the Northern Territory

Engineers Australia Northern

Vision statement

Water security is essential for drinking water, culture, the environment and economic development.

Engineers Australia Northern acknowledges access to safe and secure supplies of drinking water are critical for human health and the wellbeing of present and future generations. The Northern Territory has unique water supply challenges with a large number of regional and remote communities spanning an area covering one sixth of Australia.

Engineers Australia Northern advocates for sustainable, integrated water resource management that is informed by critical science and stakeholders. We support the adoption of best practice for consumptive use, recognise the unique environment of the Territory and acknowledge climate change impacts.

Principles

The following principles are statements that Engineers Australia Northern acknowledge as key to delivering better **water security** outcomes in the Northern Territory context.

1. Science based approach

Engineers Australia Northern supports a science-based approach to water policy, strategic planning and management for long-term sustainability of water supply. We encourage increased investment by governments and beneficiaries in data collection, knowledge products and community engagement in water management.

Engineers Australia Northern communicates engineering advancements to stakeholders in water literacy, water science and technology, water use, and sustainability.

2. Consideration of climate change impacts to water security

Engineers Australia Northern acknowledges the threats to water security from climate change, and the critical need to consider mitigation measures, resilience and liveability.

We acknowledge many remote Aboriginal communities, which currently have marginal water supplies or limited potable groundwater options, may be impacted by climate change. We understand this could affect water security compromising water quality and, through increased temperatures, require additional water to improve liveability through shade and other cooling.

We acknowledge the impacts climate change may have on ecologically and culturally important areas and features through declining groundwater levels, reduced surface water flows and increased temperatures. We understand these impacts may require implementation of mitigation measures to protect these treasures of the Northern Territory.

3. Access to safe and secure water for all Territorians

Engineers Australia Northern acknowledges water security in the Northern Territory, particularly for remote communities, is complex. The Territory's vast geographic area, harsh climate and strong connection of communities to culture and country require Territorian solutions. Engineers Australia Northern can facilitate sharing knowledge of water supply solutions locally and further afield.

Engineers Australia Northern can play a key role in communicating about access to safe and secure water aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Efficient water use

Engineers Australia Northern acknowledges that the Northern Territory has a higher usage of water compared to other parts of Australia. In all sectors, water can be used more efficiently. Water literacy is critical for efficient water use, water management and planning.

Engineers Australia Northern can facilitate informative sessions to improve water literacy in the community.

5. Understanding of water resources

Engineers Australia Northern acknowledges that understanding of water resources is critical so that informed decisions can be made by stakeholders and the community. The connections between groundwater, surface water and ecology are key components of this understanding.

Engineers Australia Northern can provide leadership in education about water resources and treatment, storage, distribution of water, and wastewater reuse or disposal.

6. Effective water policies

Water security must balance affordability, reliability and sustainability. Engineers Australia Northern will actively participate in the Northern Territory Strategic Water Plan.

Effective water policies must be science and evidence based, be well informed and consider whole of life cost and address environmental, cultural and social impacts.

Engineers Australia Northern advocates for transparent communication of availability of water resources and their allocation.

Engineers Australia Northern supports a clear separation of policy, regulation, service provision and transparent reporting of performance, including drinking water quality.

We advocate for sustainable utilities and service providers, including financial sustainability.

7. Engagement with water industry and community

All water stakeholders have a key role to play in communicating water security strategies to community and other stakeholders. Engineers Australia Northern is part of a national body of subject matter experts, that provides engagement with stakeholders, industries and the public.

Engineers Australia Northern acknowledges the need for regular and on-going engagement within industry and the community for adequate water awareness. Engineers Australia Northern will engage in and lead conversations on water policy.