



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 257

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Water Resources, Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA:

Remote Drinking Water

1. The measure “proportion of days safe drinking water is supplied across the 72 Indigenous essential services communities” is reported in Budget Paper No. 3 under the Indigenous essential services output of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development. Which agency is responsible for the quality of drinking water supplied to those communities, and which for its supply?
2. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 reports, under the Indigenous essential services output of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development, the measure “proportion of days safe drinking water is supplied across the 72 Indigenous essential services communities” at an estimate of 99 per cent for 2025–26 against a target of at least 95 per cent.
 - a. Does that measure record whether the water supplied met the health-based guideline values in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, or only whether a supply was maintained?
 - b. In how many of the 72 communities did drinking water exceed a health-based guideline value in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines at any point in 2025–26? Please provide by community and by parameter or, if a per-community figure cannot be provided, the number of communities and the parameters concerned.
 - c. Is a day on which the water supplied exceeded a health-based guideline value counted as a day on which safe drinking water was supplied?
 - d. Which agency holds the water quality monitoring results for those communities, in which system, and are they published?

- e. What is the current number of communities in which drinking water does not meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, and how does that compare with each of the three preceding years?
- 3. When will a Safe Drinking Water Act be introduced and implemented?
- 4. What immediate steps is the Government taking to improve access to safe drinking water in remote communities?
 - a. For each community in which drinking water does not currently meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, what remedial work is funded in 2026–27, and by what date is it expected to be complete?
 - b. If remedial work is not programmed community by community, at what level is it programmed?
- 5. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 records the water resources output at \$18.884 million revised for 2025–26 and \$13.585 million budgeted for 2026–27, and states at note 7 that the decrease “is mostly due to timing of Commonwealth milestone payments and finalisation of the Territory Water Plan”.
 - a. What amount of the 2026–27 water resources output is allocated to implementing the Territory Water Plan, and what implementation activities does it fund?
 - b. How does finalisation of the Plan reduce the funding required to implement it?
 - c. Note 5 records that “The former water resources and water security outputs have been combined, and figures have been backcast”. What was the water security output in each of the three years to 2025–26 as originally reported?