


NOTICE OF DECISION

Regulation 104(3) of the Environment Protection Regulations 2020 (EP Regulations) – Decision on terms of reference for an environmental impact statement (EIS)

Proposed action	Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS)
Proponent	Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI)
NT EPA reference	EP2024/039
Description of proposed action	<p>The Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) is proposing to construct and operate the Adelaide River Off-stream Water Storage (AROWS), a water reservoir (maximum 250 gegalitre capacity) adjacent to the Adelaide River in the Coomalie and Litchfield shires, approximately 55 km southeast of Darwin and 5 km north of Lake Bennett.</p> <p>The proposal comprises construction and operation of five major infrastructure components including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• basin infrastructure (the reservoir)• intake infrastructure (includes all associated infrastructure for river water extraction along the Adelaide River, transfer and release into the reservoir (pumps, pipelines)• outlet and delivery infrastructure to facilitate water transfer from AROWS to connecting infrastructure (e.g. pump station)• connecting infrastructure (pumps, pipeline, balance tank etc.) to facilitate the transfer of water from the delivery infrastructure pipeline to the Strauss Water Treatment Plant, and• supporting infrastructure to support construction and operation of AROWS (e.g. coffer dams, access tracks, laydown areas, site facilities). <p>The reservoir is proposed to be filled by water extracted from the Adelaide River during the wet season at times of high flow and is anticipated to operate for 100 years.</p>
Decision	In accordance with EP regulation 104(3)(b), the terms of reference for an EIS are approved with changes the NT EPA considers appropriate.
Person authorised to make decision	Dr Paul Vogel AM Chairperson of the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)
Signature	
Date of decision	13 May 2025

Matters considered under EP Regulation 100, 102 and 103

The NT EPA has considered the following:

- the accepted referral (including the referral form, referral report and appendices, statement of reasons and draft terms of reference)
- submissions received during the public consultation period in relation to the published referral information, and
- consultation with government authorities

No additional information was requested by the NT EPA under EP regulation 40.

Consultation

NT EPA consultation

Submission period:

- 13 January 2025 to 25 February 2025

Submissions received:

- public submissions received: 55
- government authority submissions received: 10

Public and government authority submissions received by the NT EPA identified potentially significant impacts, including cumulative impacts, and risks to environmental factors identified by the proponent in the referral information. Key themes raised in submissions received during the public consultation period include:

- consideration of potential impacts to the morphology of the Adelaide River and conservation areas, a requirement for additional terrestrial and aquatic ecological surveys, and protection of conservation listed species including threatened species
- potential for significant impacts to hydrological processes e.g. seasonal flooding, impacts to floodplains and wetlands, the estuary and fisheries, and recommendations to include the sea factors (coastal processes, marine environmental quality and marine ecosystems)
- a requirement for baseline surveys, surface and groundwater monitoring and assessment, greater understanding of floodplain hydrology, the influence of tides, and incursion of seawater further upstream
- the viability and sustainability of the proposed extraction of water from the Adelaide River system to an off-stream storage
- the need for stakeholder engagement and review of potential impacts to social, economic and cultural (and heritage) values.

The issues raised in submissions have been considered by the NT EPA and are addressed in the terms of reference for an EIS. There will be future opportunities for consultation following submission of the draft EIS and the supplement to the draft EIS.
