

# Drought battle a long way from won

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Funding ways to retain water will be a big step towards a

# Drought battle a long way from won



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IF YOU are living in the Top End and you are watching the Katherine flood alerts you may not believe this, but the Northern Territory is still in drought.

And the Morrison government's co-ordinating-General Drought and North Queensland Floods, former NT Chief Minister Shane Stone, says there is still along way to go before the situation changes.

Mr Stone and his agency have been working hand-in-hand with communities, all levels of government and agricultural organisations to support farmers and other rural and regional Australians living through the effects of drought and flood.

His work covers the national footprint and he has a direct line to the Prime Minister Scott Morrison who has pledged his government's support and given Mr Stone a \$10bn budget to get the job done.

There are now 34 national regional recovery officers — one in the Top End and one in Central Australia — who are the eyes and ears of the agency in terms of what it needs to do to support drought.

"I know people look out their window and when they see lots of rain and they last thing they think about is drought," Mr Stone said.

"There is no doubt the Territory is having a good wet season, but you cannot go through an extended period of drought and think it is all going to change overnight.

"There are a lot of things that need to happen.

"It needs to be sustained, consistent and more than one season.

"Just because we have had rain doesn't mean the drought is over. It's not that simple.

"At the moment farmers in this nation are dealing with a ferocious locust plague in Central Queensland.

"They did get a bit of rain, the grass did start to grow and then the locusts

Former chief minister Shane Stone and Steve Cadzow at Mt Riddock Station near Alice Springs. Picture: Supplied



