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Telephone: (08) 9842 5760

www.water.wa.gov.au



Department of Water

Managing Western Australia's
most precious resource

> Water information, monitoring and measuring

We operate numerous surface water and groundwater monitoring sites throughout Western Australia and collect data on the quality and quantity of the State's water resources.

The information, which includes surface water levels, flows and quality, and groundwater levels and quality, contributes to our understanding of the nature of the State's water resources, its fluctuations, and responses to changing climate and human pressures. This understanding allows us to make informed decisions, provide useful advice, manage, model and plan effectively for safe and sustainable water supplies.

> Water quality

We provide the information and understanding needed to guide planning and decisions for the best management of the State's water resources.

To do this we monitor stream flow and water quality in the State's rivers, and provide advice on the availability, distribution and quality of groundwater. We use this information to assess the development of water sources and to prepare water source protection plans. Monitoring our water resources also provides us with the information to ensure they are not being unacceptably affected by human activity.

> Rural water planning

We manage the operation and delivery of the Rural Water Planning Program which implements the initiatives under the State's Rural Water Plan.

The focus of the plan is to encourage self-sufficiency in water supply; improve the reliability, continuity and quality of on-property water supply; and provide rural communities with reliable emergency water supply arrangements.

The plan also delivers farm water planning and technical support, water deficiency arrangements, strategic public water supplies in dryland agricultural areas, and assistance schemes.

> Regional information

We have a strong regional focus, with most services delivered to customers through eight regions: • Kimberley • Pilbara • Midwest Gascoyne • Goldfields • Swan-Avon • Kwinana-Peel • South West • South Coast. These offices are your first point of contact around the State. The services they provide include: advice on the allocation of water and the protection of groundwater; measurement of water flows, groundwater levels and water quality; the identification of water bodies or catchments that require monitoring, investigation or research into water quality or quantity; and supporting community involvement in Integrated Catchment Management and water resource protection and management.



Copies of this document are also available in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audio tape and Macintosh or IBM compatible disc.

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Looking after Western Australia's water needs and ensuring that they are met, both now and in the future, is critical

The economic, environmental and social well-being of future generations depends on the responsible decisions we make about the State's water needs today.

Our role as the Department of State within the water resources portfolio carries with it enormous responsibility and includes making sound decisions based on sound scientific evidence and information.

We provide comprehensive information to industry, expert technical support, and professional guidance to Government on the status of water and the viability of new source development.

We collect and analyse water resources information, issue licences, regulate water use, protect the quality of our water, and prepare policies and plans critical to the future development of Western Australia.

> Water allocation and conservation

We identify the water resources and regimes to be protected in specific areas and define the licensing policy for water use.

Allocation plans vary in size, from regional areas that might include several river basins and geographical provinces, to plans that cover individual surface water or groundwater management areas. We make sure that all water allocated for water supplies is used efficiently and take into consideration the economic, environmental and social consequences through regular consultation with the community and stakeholders.

> Drinking water

We protect and manage public and private drinking water supplies in Western Australia.

Our goal is to ensure that everyone has access to safe, good quality drinking water.

To do this we develop assessments and plans for new and existing drinking water sources, develop and promote policies and strategies for the protection of these resources, and develop guidelines on best environmental practice for specific land-use activities that could harm water resource quality.



> Licensing and regulation

There are 52 groundwater and 22 surface water management areas proclaimed under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act (1914)*. These cover the major water resources of the State.

Licences are required for all artesian groundwater wells throughout the State. New licences are issued only if the total number issued in an area will not exceed the allocation limits for the resources. In this way we protect the interests of existing users and the environment.

In areas proclaimed under the Act, we ensure that water use is within sustainable limits.

> Total water cycle management

The work we do is based on good science and sound information. We provide expertise and advice to industry, Government and the community.

This advice includes implementing water reform through total water cycle management.

> Water industry services

Our work in water services planning forms the foundation of our commitment to Government and the community, and is critical to our public accountability.

We provide the Government with assessment, planning and water resources management advice.

We also provide support to the Minister to meet the obligations of existing legislation, including the approval of major works such as water tanks and mains, prices set in by-laws and the appointment of members to the regional water boards.

> Salinity and drainage

Rising levels of salinity and groundwater are among the biggest environmental challenges facing Western Australia.

We work with project partners to implement a broad Salinity Management Program to address dryland salinity through a range of engineering and environmental solutions including drainage and vegetation.

