Emergency farmland water response plan
Shire of Morawa

Looking after all our water needs
Acknowledgements

This *Emergency farmland water response plan* was compiled with assistance and contributions from the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, the Water Corporation and Shire of Morawa. The Department of Water thanks these organisations for their advice and support during the development of this plan.

The plan was also made possible through the support and assistance of landholders in the Shire of Morawa and the Department of Water also wishes to acknowledge their contribution.

Photographs

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Recurrent water supply problems have affected the dryland agricultural region over many years. Future climate variability is likely to increase occurrences of low rainfall, water shortages and demand more efficient use of available water.

Rural water planning recognises the importance of preparing for these events and increasing the opportunities to deliver an assured water supply to farmland communities in dryland agriculture areas.

The *Rural water plan* provides a foundation for an organised and structured approach to maintaining sustainable farmland water supplies in dryland areas. Responsibility for implementing the plan rests with the Department of Water.

Emergency water response planning is one of the key roles under the *Rural water plan*. It aims to ensure that the commercial and lifestyle interests of farming families in dryland areas are safeguarded wherever possible against serious water deficiencies.

It recognises the importance of emergency off-farm water supplies to farming communities in the event of serious on-farm water shortages, particularly in respect to livestock needs.

While landholder self-sufficiency must remain the primary objective, preparing for those times when on-farm supplies fail due to sustained periods of low rainfall, is an essential function of rural water planners.

The responsibility rests on all stakeholders, including farmland communities, local governments and state government agencies to actively participate and cooperate in an integrated approach to water supply planning in rural areas.

This *Emergency farmland water response plan* has been compiled for the Morawa Shire to provide clear instructions and procedures to guide stakeholders should the need arise to access emergency water supplies.

Community water sources that form part of a larger network of strategic off-farm emergency water supplies are identified in the plan, together with a description of the *Water deficiency declaration* process.
Regional and local level rural water planning envisages that emphasis be placed on the planning, development and installation of on-farm water supplies in an endeavour to satisfy the water needs of the farming business and to address any serious water supply deficiency.

The *Rural water plan* aims to address serious ongoing water shortages in dryland farming districts, and to achieve the dual outcomes of on-farm self sufficiency and reliable emergency off-farm water supplies for rural communities. The plan recognises the value of water – particularly in dry landscapes.

Several initiatives have been established under the *Rural water plan* to tackle the problem of on-farm water deficiency while assisting rural communities to facilitate on-the-ground water supply improvements. Importantly, these initiatives are designed to focus attention on the underlying causes of water deficiency, such as poor maintenance practices, lack of attention to demand management and water wastage as well as planning water supply improvements. The delivery of reliable water supplies to secure commercial broadacre farming operators against water shortages resulting from extended periods of low rainfall and poor runoff conditions is also a key objective.

Three of the *Rural water plan* initiatives are the Farm water supply planning scheme, Farm water rebates scheme and the Community water supply program. A brief outline of each scheme is provided below.

**Farm water supply planning scheme**

The principal aim of the *Farm water supply planning scheme* (FWSPS) is to encourage commercial farmers to participate in comprehensive water supply planning that provides the framework for an on-going process of addressing serious water deficiency, improving water resource and demand management and encouraging efficient use and conservation of water.

The maximum aggregated support available under the FWSPS to any one farming business to complete a farm water supply plan is $500 for an initial visit by a Department of Water approved water auditor to a farm and $250 for a follow up visit 18 months after the plan is completed.

**Farm water rebates scheme**

The *Farm water rebates scheme* (FWRS) replaced the *Farm water grants scheme* which had been operating between 1995 and 2008. The FWRS aims to encourage commercial farmers in dryland agricultural areas to invest in on-farm water supply improvements to address identified areas of water deficiency, better manage existing water supplies, reduce water wastage and better prepare them for extended periods of low rainfall.
The scheme assists with the cost of on-farm works programs. Rebates up to $15 000 can be awarded to broadacre farmers in those dryland areas of the agricultural region that receive less than 600mm of average annual rainfall. Rebates for on-farm work are calculated on the basis of the recipient contributing 50 per cent of the cost of approved expenditure (based on accepted industry standards).

**Community water supply program**

The key thrust of the *Community water supply program* (CWSP) is to assist broadacre farming communities that do not have direct access to a reticulated water service and have limited options for improving their on-farm water supplies. The livelihood of these communities is dependent on the availability of supplementary water from off-farm. The program recognises that there are times when extended periods of low rainfall may cause on-farm infrastructure to fail, forcing landholders to travel outside the farm gate to collect water supplies.

Under the program, grants up to $100 000 can be made available to farmland communities to develop off-farm community water sources from which farmers can cart water in times of emergency. Grants are also available for projects designed to augment town and non-farmland community water supplies. All applications will need local government support and coordination.

**Emergency water response planning**

While on-farm water supply self-sufficiency remains the centrepiece of the *Rural water plan*, preparing for extended periods of low rainfall and limited runoff into farm dams and tanks storage also features prominently.

Sustained periods of low runoff conditions will inevitably lead to severe challenges for landholders – even for those considered to be the best water managers. Predicted climate variability raises the urgency for effective planning in preparation for increasingly difficult farming conditions arising out of lower rainfall trends.

Consequently, alternative water supplies must be planned to assist landholders when on-farm water shortages are experienced. Emergency water response planning is an essential part of ensuring an orderly response to a critical deficiency in water supplies, particularly for livestock requirements. Moreover, effective planning can help to minimise the economic and social impact of water shortages on farming businesses and government exposure to the cost of hauling large quantities of water to affected districts.
If failure of on-farm supplies requires landholders to travel outside the farm gate to collect water for livestock purposes, the following steps should be followed.

**Step 1**
Identify and use neighbourhood and local water supplies while available and as water quality permits.

**Step 2**
Identify and access water from the closest strategic non-pipeline community water supplies.

**Step 3**
Access the nearest scheme water pipeline standpipe (after neighbourhood and strategic non-pipeline community water supplies have been exhausted).

**Step 4**
If the nearest available water supply is more than a 40 km radius from the farm gate, a *Water deficiency declaration* may apply. Where significant demand for off-farm water exists, assistance should be sought from the shire council in respect to lodging an application for a *Water deficiency declaration* with the Department of Water. The district office of the Department of Agriculture and Food should be involved in the application. A diagram showing the various phases leading up to the approval of a declaration can be seen at Figure 2.

**Step 5**
Submission of application by the shire to the Department of Water for a *Water deficiency declaration*.

**Step 6**
Water deficiency declaration issued by Minister for Water.

**Step 7**
Activate a *Water deficiency declaration* – implementation and working arrangements.

A diagrammatic representation of the above steps in the emergency water response process is provided at Figure 1.

A more complete description of the process to be followed at each of the above steps is provided in the following pages.
EMERGENCY WATER RESPONSE – PROCESS

Step 1
Identify neighbourhood and local water supplies

Step 2
Identify and access strategic community water supplies

Step 3
Access Scheme Water Pipeline Standpipe/tank

Step 5
"Water Deficiency Declaration" application

Step 6
“Water Deficiency Declaration” issued

Step 7
Water deficiency arrangements implementation

Farmer -
On farm livestock water storage

WATER HAULAGE TO WATER RECEIval POINT

Figure 1 - Emergency water response – Process
Step 1 Neighbourhood supplies

Some farmland communities or individual farmers have access to small localised water supplies (e.g. Agricultural Area dams) that, although unlikely to be holding significant volumes of water, can play an important role in securing farming businesses against serious on-farm water shortages – even if only for short periods.

In terms of activating a Water deficiency declaration that involves the shire and the state government it will need to be demonstrated that any local or neighbourhood supplies have been exhausted, thus requiring travel to more remote sources of water.

The provision of neighbourhood supplies may also be realised through the cooperative efforts of adjoining landholders who may be prepared to share surplus water supplies or work collectively to explore alternative water sources.

Step 2 Access strategic community water supplies

In the event that on-farm, local and neighbourhood water supplies have been fully utilised, farmers are encouraged to draw water from larger strategic community dams, bores and tanks that have been provided for the supply of livestock water under emergency conditions.

This water is not treated and is supplied principally for livestock use. Livestock welfare must be given priority over water for general farm use.

Strategic community dams, bores and tanks are important sources of emergency water for farming communities and should be used sparingly and not be used at times when on-farm or neighbourhood supplies are available.

These community supplies are provided to secure broadacre farming operations in the event of serious on-farm water shortages. They are not intended to be used to satisfy the demand for large quantities of water required by intensive industries such as a feedlot.

However, water users other than broadacre farmers may use the water supplied from strategic community dams, bores and tanks in small quantities – providing that a conservative approach is applied to the use of the water and no landholder is disadvantaged through the excessive use of supplies by one or two landholders.

Should an unreasonable and excessive amount of water be drawn from a strategic community water supply, the offending party/ies (if identified) would be asked to limit their draw. In such cases an alternative arrangement would have to be made.

Strategic community dams, bores and tanks are important sources of emergency livestock water and should be managed carefully. It is essential that a maintenance program is implemented to ensure the dam, bore and tanks and associated infrastructure including catchments, pumps, piping and access and truck turnaround areas are kept in good working order at all times.
The location of strategic community water supplies for the Morawa Shire is shown at Figure 3. Water supply plans to ensure the water supplies provided at strategic sites are used sustainably may also be desirable.

**Step 3 Access scheme water pipeline standpipe/tank**

In those parts of the dryland agricultural area with access to a piped water service, standpipes and storage tanks have been provided as a source of emergency water for those landholders whose properties are not connected to the pipeline.

The use of these standpipes is generally controlled by the local government authority which is charged directly by the Water Corporation for the water used from these sources by landholders. Landholders are expected to record their water consumption rates from standpipes. Water charges incurred will be recovered from landholders at the discretion of local government.

It should be emphasised that water made available from standpipes/tanks linked to a piped water service is intended for **short term emergency** use only, not as a regular source of water to provide for the on-going needs of a farming business.

Unrestricted drawdown from standpipes may compromise the rate of supply to landholders connected directly to the pipeline or townspeople. The Water Corporation aims to limit the daily flow from standpipes to 50kL. Tank storage is encouraged in order to provide reserve capacity and limit drawdown directly from standpipes at peak times.

The location of scheme water standpipes in the Morawa Shire is shown at Figure 4.

The Water Corporation reserves the right to close standpipes should supply to the system be compromised.
Step 4  Contact shire administration

The following process should be read in conjunction with the Water deficiency declaration guidelines at Appendix 1.

1. The shire administration receives a request for assistance from a group of at least five or six landholders in a 20 km radius who are having to travel more than a 40 km radius to collect water for livestock, or are likely to do so in the following 14 days.

2. The shire administration contacts the local Department of Agriculture and Food district or regional office and requests assistance in conducting a survey of landholders in the district to determine the extent of water shortages and demand for water. The Department of Agriculture and Food, state and district response process is represented in the diagram shown at Appendices 2 and 3. A listing of the information provided from the survey of landholders is shown at Appendix 4.

3. The Department of Agriculture and Food carries out the survey of landholders and provides the results of the survey to the shire administration and the Department of Water.

4. If the survey confirms that five or six farmers or more in a localised area are travelling more than a 40 km radius to cart water or are likely to do so within 14 days, then the shire administration can lodge an application for a Water deficiency declaration with the Department of Water.

Step 5  Water deficiency declaration — application process

1. The Department of Water receives a written application for a Water deficiency declaration from the shire administration. The application must include the results of the landholder survey, endorsed by the Department of Agriculture and Food.

2. The Department of Water consults with the Department of Agriculture and Food, shire administration and local landholders to confirm that all possible alternative water supplies in the local area have been accessed and exhausted.

3. Once satisfied that community water supply options have been fully utilised, the Department of Water assesses the application to ensure that the eligibility requirements have been met and that the landholders qualify for consideration of a declaration.

4. The Department of Water confirms support for the declaration from the Minister for Agriculture and Food through the Department of Agriculture and Food Natural Resource Management program.

5. Once all eligibility requirements for a Water deficiency declaration have been satisfied and the declaration is supported by the Department of Water, a recommendation for a declaration is submitted to the Minister for Water.
Step 6  **Water deficiency declaration**

1 Minister for Water in consultation with the Minister for Agriculture and Food approves the *Water deficiency declaration*.

Step 7  **Water deficiency declaration — arrangements**

1 The Department of Water identifies a suitable water receival point after consultation with the shire administration and local farming community and ensures site access is appropriate. Upgrades to access are made as appropriate.

2 The Department of Water then estimates weekly water requirements for livestock needs that are calculated from the landholder survey results provided by the Department of Agriculture and Food.

3 The Department of Water liaises with the Water Corporation and/or other water providers (eg, local landholders) regarding water sources from which emergency livestock water can be hauled. A suitable site is selected.

4 The Department of Water arranges quotes from suitable water haulage contractors to cart water to selected receival points from the water source nominated by the Water Corporation or other water providers.

5 A water haulage contractor is then appointed by the Department of Water to line haul a nominated amount of water into the selected receival point.

6 The water haulage arrangements are then confirmed with the local farming community, shire administration, the haulage contractor, the Water Corporation, other water providers and Department of Agriculture and Food.

7 The Department of Water liaises with the shire administration for signage to be erected at the receival point advising landholders that the water is for emergency livestock purposes only and is not suitable for human consumption. See Appendix 5 for the required wording of the sign.

8 A representative of local landholders is nominated to assist in monitoring water levels at approved receival point/s.

9 The Department of Water instructs the water haulage contractor to commence delivery of water to selected receival point/s.

10 The Department of Water monitors water levels at the receival point in consultation with a landholder representative.
Step 7 Water deficiency declaration — arrangements continued…

11 Delivery of water by the water haulage contractor to be at a level not exceeding that approved in the haulage contract unless otherwise varied by Department of Water.

Step 8 Water deficiency declaration — monitored

1 The Department of Agriculture and Food to continue to monitor the water resource condition and potential demand through community consultation and report to the Department of Water and state Natural Resource Management (NRM) manager.

Step 9 Water deficiency declaration — revoked

1 Water haulage will continue until on-farm supplies are sufficiently replenished and a decision is made by the Department of Water in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and Food, shire administration, Water Corporation, local landholder representative and the haulage contractor to cease operation.

2 Recommendation made by the Department of Water to Minister for Water to withdraw declaration. The haulage contract is then terminated.

3 The shire administration, Water Corporation (or other water provider), Department of Agriculture and Food and landholders’ representative are notified of the decision to withdraw the declaration.

4 A diagrammatic representation of the process that must be followed to gain a Water deficiency declaration is shown at Figure 2.
Figure 2 - Water deficiency declaration - Process

1. FARMERS

2. LOCAL GOVT.

3. DEPARTMENT OF WATER

4. DAFWA WATER SURVEY

5. MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

6. WATER DEFICIENCY DECLARATION ISSUED

7. WATER DEFICIENCY DECLARATION - IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS COORDINATION

8. WATER DEFICIENCY STATUS MONITORED

9. WATER DEFICIENCY DECLARATION REVOKED

- WATER CORPORATION
- WATER HAULAGE CONTRACTORS
- FARMERS
- LOCAL GOVT.
4. Strategic community

Figure 3 - Location of strategic community water supplies — Downs

The Department of Water acknowledges the following datasets and their custodians in the production of this map:

[List of datasets and their custodians]

Morawa Shire - Strategic Community Water Supplies

This map is a product of the Department of Water, Spatial Services and was printed on 28/07/2011. This map was produced with the intent that it be used for display purposes at the scale of 1:550,000 when printing at A4.

While the Department of Water has made all reasonable efforts to ensure the accuracy of this data, the department accepts no responsibility for any inaccuracies and persons relying on this data do so at their own risk.

Datum and Projection Information

Vertical Datum: Australian Height Datum (AHD)
Horizontal Datum: Geocentric Datum of Australia 94
Projection: MGA 94 Zone 50
Spheroid: Australian National Spheroid

Project Information

Client: Martin Revell
Map Author: Savanna Butterworth
Filepath: J:\gisprojects\Project\330\10000_19999\33017100\0013_MorawaShire_WaterSupply\plot
Compilation date: 28/07/2011
Figure 4  Location of strategic water supplies — Standpipes

Legend
- Morawa Standpipes
- Koolanooka Standpipe
- Billiranga Standpipe
- South Bowgada Standpipe

Morawa
Koolanooka
Billiranga
South Bowgada

Scale 1:200000
Approximate when reproduced at A4 size. The map is not drawn to scale.

Geocentric Datum Australia 1994

Note: the data in this map have not been projected. This may result in geometric distortion or measurement inaccuracies.

Prepared by: trumbld
Prepared for:
Date: 15/06/2011 2:31:57 PM

Coordinates provided courtesy of Water Corporation

Information derived from this map should be confirmed with the data custodian acknowledged by the agency acronym in the legend.

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## Appendices

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<td>6</td>
<td>Wording for signage at emergency water supply receipt point</td>
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### Description of community water source

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Location No/address</td>
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<td>Associated reserves</td>
<td>16491</td>
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<td>Vesting</td>
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<td>6802850N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easting</td>
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<td>Catchment area ha</td>
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<td>Yes – from tank</td>
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<td>Turnaround area</td>
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<td>Heavy vehicle access</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tank storage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tank capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pump</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean annual rainfall</td>
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<td>Livestock quality</td>
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### Description of community water source

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<td>Location No/address</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Northing</td>
<td>6792407N</td>
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<td>Standpipe</td>
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<td>Turnaround area</td>
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<td>Tank storage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pump</td>
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<td>Water quality</td>
<td>Livestock quality</td>
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- **Dam roof**
- **Concrete lined dam and roof**
- **Overhead storage tank and windmill**
- **Drainage channel from CBH grain bin**
Location – Aerial photo of Gutha Community Dam
**Description of Community water source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Associated reserve</td>
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<td>Vesting</td>
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<td>Easting</td>
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<td>Heavy vehicle access</td>
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<td>Tank capacity</td>
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**Images:**
- Dam roof
- View of drain from rock catchment (war rock) and silt trap
- Overhead storage tank, windmill, standpipe and turnaround area
- View of war rock catchment, collection wall and gnamma water hole
Objective

Declaration of ‘water deficiency’ is a Government response to safeguard the commercial interests of those farmers who do not have reasonable access to permanent water carting points, such as standpipes served by a Water Corporation piped water scheme.

‘Reasonable Access’ is defined as being within a 40 km radius of a suitable water source.

Guidelines for a Water deficiency declaration

Approved by the Ministers for Water Resources and Agriculture – 1 October 2001.

- A Water deficiency declaration process will be available in rural water zones 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, as shown in the map on the opposite page, and a declaration will require the state government to provide livestock quality water to within a 40 km radius of the declared properties.

- A shire council should make application for a Water deficiency declaration to the Department of Water after consultation with local representatives of the Department of Agriculture and Food. The application should indicate the extent of the water deficiency and a preferred method of providing water to the area.

- Criteria for declaration will be that a localised group of farmers are carting water (or plan to cart water within 14 days) from an off-farm source for a significant number of livestock, as a result of unusual seasonal conditions. (A localised group will usually consist of five or more commercial farmers within a 20 km radius, but may consist of a single farmer under special circumstances).

- Water provided under water deficiency arrangements will be charged for at existing rates; that is, at the local authority standpipe rate if sourced from a standpipe or free-of-charge from sources for which charges are not currently made.

- Carting water for domestic (household) use will not be a criterion for a Water deficiency declaration although, in some circumstances, the provision of domestic (household) water in declared areas may be recommended.

- Shire councils wishing to apply for a Water deficiency declaration should contact:

Manager Rural Water Planning
Department of Water
168 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
Telephone: 6364 6916
Freecall: 1800 780 300
Fax: 6364 6525
Figure A1 - Rural water zones

RURAL WATER ZONES

Zone 1. Northern Sandplain/Northern Wheatbelt
Zone 2. Reticulated Scheme Area
Zone 3. Midlands and Upper Great Southern
Zone 4. Great Southern
Zone 5. North-eastern & Eastern Wheatbelt
Zone 6. South-eastern Wheatbelt & Salmon Gums
Zone 7. South Coast Sandplains

Map source is the Department of Water
**Resource condition**
Low rainfall year with limited runoff; low storage available in on-farm dams; below average rainfall forecast.

**Action trigger**
Landholders required to cart water from an off-farm water source more than a 40km radius from farm gate.

**Shire response**
Landholders carting water to contact the local shire office. Shire office to contact the District Office of Department of Agriculture and Food to request on-farm water supply surveys.

**Assess water deficiency and demand**
District Office of Department of Agriculture and Food to conduct on-farm water supply surveys. District Office of Department of Agriculture and Food to assess condition of off-farm water resources (i.e. Agricultural Area dams; community supplies). Survey results collated and provided to Regional Manager and Department of Water.

**Reporting**
Recommendation made to shire from Department of Agriculture & Food.

**Request for declaration**
If recommended, a letter requesting declaration sent to Department of Water by shire.

**Recommendation**
Based on survey data and letters of support, a recommendation for declaration of water deficiency within the shire is made by Minister for Agriculture and Food to the Minister for Water for approval.

**Monitoring**
District Office of Department of Agriculture and Food to continue to monitor the water resource situation and provide feedback to landholders, state NRM manager and Department of Water until declaration is rescinded.
Environmental Trigger
Low rainfall/low runoff event in years proceeding
Low/no runoff rain in the last 6 months.

Action Trigger
Farmers notify district office of Department of Agriculture
and Food on water shortages, water carting,
lineups at standpipes etc.

Official shire Request
Shire Council requests the Department of Agriculture
and Food to undertake Water Deficiency Survey in the
shire or mailing areas of shire.

Water deficiency surveys
Department of Agriculture and Food completes a one page survey mailout with fax back and mailing address.
Ensure a clear cut off date for surveys, of less than 2 weeks from the request for information from the shire.

Collation of data & mapping
Collate and interpret the information (spreadsheet) and provide maps of affected area identifying properties
affected and condition of local water resources (i.e. Agricultural Area dams & standpipe access).

Letter of support
Write a formal letter to the shire that requested the survey or the survey outcomes and Department of
Agriculture and Food’s position either does or does not support a Water Deficiency Declaration and on what
grounds. Include the spreadsheet of support data and any GIS mapping for the area.

Monitor situation
Monitor the situation and work with the shires if more surveys are needed the district officer of the Department of
Agriculture and Food may be requested to survey dam levels of Agricultural Area dams and Community Water
Supplies. Establish good communications with the local Water Corporation representatives to ascertain when
and where standpipe restrictons are being applied or where standpipes may be closed. Try to estimate demand
at each standpipe if possible. The Department of Agriculture and Food interpret data at a local level
and provide feed back from local intelligence.

Notification
Notify the manager Rural Water Planning, Department of Water, manager of Farm Business Development, manager
Farmwater (NRM) of the impending request for Declaration and the current situation and provide feedback on
on-going declarations and seasonal conditions.

Appendix 4
Department of Agriculture and Food water deficiency response process – district level
Headings/questions to appear in landholder survey

1. District name
2. Landholder name
3. Address
4. Phone number
5. Contact person
6. Location numbers
7. AgPacs number
8. Do you anticipate running short of water for stock?
9. What month will you commence carting livestock water?
10. Number of livestock for which you will be carting water?
11. Stock type – sheep, cattle, pigs?
12. Number of livestock for which you will be carting water after planned sales or purchases?
13. Do you anticipate running short of water for houses?
14. What month will you commence carting house water?
15. Number of people in house/s?
16. How many gardens do you maintain?
17. Do you anticipate running short of spray water?
18. What month will you commence carting spray water?
19. Distance to key community dam or standpipe?
20. Location of key community dam or standpipe?
21. How much water can you carry at one time?
22. Is your property connected to a piped water service?
The water stored in this dam has been provided by the Department of Water as a source of emergency farm water only under a Water deficiency declaration issued by the Minister for Water on xx xx 20xx.

The water is suitable for all classes of livestock, but is not suitable for human consumption.

Persons using water from this source do so at their own risk.

The State of Western Australia, its agents, authorities, instrumentalities and their agents or servants accept no liability for any loss of or damage to property or machinery or for death or injury to any person in any way arising out of the use of this water supply point or the consumption or use of this water.