

State Water Planning Review Panel Meeting

19 February 2007

Members

- Mr David Hatt, Chief Policy Officer, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Chair)
- Prof Robert Harvey, Pro Vice-Chancellor Equity and Indigenous and Executive Dean, Faculty of Business & Law, ECU
- Prof Greg Ivey, Head, School of Environmental Systems Engineering, UWA
- Dr Geoff Syme, Research Director, CSIRO Land and Water

Attendees

- Ms Helen Forte, Senior Policy Officer, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Apologies

- Ms Barbara Wiese, Chair, Sustainability Assessment Panel, SW Yarragadee
- Ms Meredith Blais, Principal Policy Officer, Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Mr Ed Hauck, A/Manager Strategic Water Planning, Department of Water

Meeting Synopsis

Mr David Hatt introduced the Minister for Water Resources, Hon John Kobelke MLA. The Minister thanked the Review Panel members for their contribution in the development of strategic water plans, in particular the State Water Plan. The Minister and Review Panel discussed current initiatives within the Water Resources Portfolio, including the release of Government's decisions in regards to Water Reform and progress on the legislative reform program. The Minister again acknowledged the important role of the Review Panel in finalising the State Water Plan.

State Water Plan

Ms Helen Forte provided an update on the development of the State Water Plan since the last Review Panel meeting, including the release of the Draft State Water Plan in October 2006. Ms Forte specifically addressed the public consultation process undertaken and the main issues that emerged through written submissions and the proposed response.

The Review Panel discussed the specific issues and noted that water conservation and recycling targets are very important and should be realistic in their achievement. The Panel also mentioned that the "Security through Diversity" approach was important for balancing recycling and conservation with decisions for new sources. Mr Hatt mentioned that water recycling and conservation is a priority for Government.

The integration of land and water planning was discussed along with the further integration of environmental policy in the State Water Plan. The Review Panel supported the proposed approach to these two issues, being the inclusion of a priority action to address the alignment of land and water planning and linkages with relevant environmental policies at an international, national and state level.

Pricing and private sector participation were raised as issues through the public consultation process, with information on the current approach and direction suggested for inclusion in the final State Water Plan. The Review Panel supported this proposal.

The Panel acknowledged that a strength of the State Water Plan is the long-term strategic direction it provides to the overall management of water resources and that it is an important tool for future planning. The Panel was very supportive of the Plan, its content and policy and planning frameworks.

South West Water Plan

In the absence of the Department of Water, Ms Forte provided a brief update on the development of the South West Water Plan. "An Invitation to Participate" will soon be released, inviting community members to attend workshops and register their interest in the development of the South West Water Plan.

Clarification was sought on the timeframe for completion of the South West Water Plan and the commencement of other regional water plans. Ms Forte advised that this information would be available in the final State Water Plan.

Mr Hatt thanked members for their time and contribution in the development of the State Water Plan, acknowledging that was the last meeting of the Panel.