



Department of Water

Government of Western Australia

Media Statement

28 May, 2007

Water planning for the future in the Pilbara

Latest studies reveal that water use by the booming mining industry in the Pilbara region is expected to triple in the next 25 years.

Department of Water, Strategic Water Planning Manager Ed Hauck said rapid growth in the mining industry and the associated increase in population growth would see a very significant increase in the demand for water in the region.

“Recent projections indicate that we need to act to address scheme water supply security in Port Hedland, the West Pilbara and Onslow within the next five years,” Mr Hauck said.

“Because of this increasing demand for water and the region’s vital economic significance to the State, the Department of Water is developing the Pilbara Regional Water Plan to guide water resource management in the region.

“Representatives from environment and Indigenous groups, the mining sector, non-mining industries and pastoralists and graziers will take part in an important workshop in Karratha today marking the first formal milestone towards developing the Pilbara Regional Water Plan.

“In releasing its State Water Plan in May this year to guide water resources management in Western Australia over the next 23 years, the State Government recognised that different regions within the State face different water resources issues.

“To implement the State Water Plan and water reform, it needs to be regionally relevant, to improve certainty for the environment, the community and all water users,” Mr Hauck said.

“To do this, the Department of Water is working with regional stakeholders to prepare Regional Water Plans for all regions of the State, with the Pilbara Regional Water Plan to be one of the first to be commenced.

“The Pilbara Regional Water Plan will provide policy direction to statutory water planning at the detailed level.

“Stakeholder input and support for the Plan is essential to its success.

“This workshop and a recent successful Pilbara Regional Water Symposium attended by more than 60 people, consolidates previous steps by the Department of Water in building partnerships with the community for sustainable water management in the Pilbara.

“The workshop will consider new research completed by the Department of Water examining water demand, supply and environmental water issues in the region.

“It also aims to outline the issues, challenges and the strategic direction for water management in the region and reach agreement on stakeholder engagement for the completion of the Pilbara Regional Water Plan.

“It is planned to hold a series of similar workshops, for example, as mining is the dominant activity in the Pilbara, a workshop will be held to develop a separate Mining and Water Policy for the region.”

All hours media contact: 0434 603 441