

MINUTES

SOUTH WEST WATER FORUM

10.45 am – 3.00 pm
29th June 2006

Collie Ridge Motel
Throssell Street, Collie

Attendees:

Gary Hallsworth	Aqwest
Keith White	Busselton Water Board
Cara Babb	Chamber of Mineral and Energy
Riasat Ali	CSIRO
Bob Pearce	Forest Industries Federation of WA
Adrian Nicholas	Irrigation Association of Australia
Rod Whittle	Leeuwin Environment Centre
Sue Walker	PGA
Rosemary Taylor	Shire of Augusta-Margaret River
Barbara Dunnett	Shire of Nannup
Damien Hills	SW Catchment Council
Jan Star	D/Chair: SWCC (Peel- Harvey Catchment Council)
Leonie Offer	Trees South West
Steve Dilley	WAFF
Di Fry	Warren Water Advisory Committee
Chris Elliot	Water Corporation

Other attendees:

Meredith Blais	Office of Water Strategy (OWS)
Kelly Hudson –	Office of Water Strategy (OWS)
John Loney	Department of Water (DoW) – Interim Chair
Wayne Tingey	Department of Water (DoW)
Fionnuala Hannon	Department of Water (DoW)
Mick Owens	Department of Water (DoW)
Will Varey	Forsyth Consulting Group - Facilitator

Apologies

David Hatt	Chair, South West Water Forum
Don Punch	South West Development Commission
Tom Busher	Executive Officer, South West Water Forum

Welcome and Introductions – John Loney (DoW)

- Welcome to members
- Introduction of new members : Leonie Offer (Trees South West), Keith White (Busselton Water Board) and Steve Dilley (WAFF)
- Housekeeping
- Agenda Review

Update on NWI and Water Reform – John Loney (DoW)

Power Point Presentation

Update on State Water Plan – Meredith Blais (OWS)

Power Point Presentation

Update on South West Water Plan – Kelly Hudson (OWS)

Power Point Presentation

Questions from Forum Members

Q1. What is the future of Premiers Water Foundation now that WA has signed NWI?

A1. – Department of Water

Current funding is committed for Round 2 of the PWF. No further funding has yet been committed for future rounds. Water Resources Cabinet Sub-Committee has to make a decision on future of PWF.

Q2. When can we see a copy of WA submissions to NWI?

A2 – Department of Water

Available now on request. First round submissions very rushed due to timeframes. In next round DoW will have a process to help community and government in submitting applications and ensure coordination.

Q3. Comment – pleased to see better integration with Land planning especially in regards to agricultural areas. We need water allocated to Priority One Agricultural areas.

Q4. What does drainage & floodplain management mean? Does it include surface, subsurface, wheat-belt, and in what areas? Would like some elaboration on these.

A4 – Department of Water

Flood plain management (FPM) occurs mainly under Planning Act. FPM, flood warning etc are undertaken by DoW. In 2006/07 DoW was given responsibility for drainage planning but not implementation. Funds available from next year in 3 key areas – urban drainage (not just Perth, this includes regional urban centres), wheatbelt drainage, and coastal/rural drainage. This recognises the different issues affecting these types of drainage schemes. Opportunity for a

new modern approach and will need better hydrology to understand complex relationships between surface and groundwater drainage. Most drains are primarily for groundwater but some drain surface water as well.

Q5: Comment – it's very important that the SWW Plan addresses drainage and flood protection, issues that urban developers won't solve. It's important the plan recognises that drainage water is also a resource , what could be done with it, how much is there, and also water quality issues for receiving water sources.

A5: DoW

Drainage and FPM will be an important part of the plan, at the moment we have a 'black hole' of information. But drainage has been mentioned to us many times as an issue and now DoW is taking a new focus on it.

Q6. Mortified at lack of information available on drainage. Urban developments will create more water quality issues for drainage. Peel-Harvey catchment council has struggled to get anyone to listen to the problem.

A6. DoW

This issue hasn't been well addressed in the past. Needs a lot more emphasis now at all levels of planning.

Q7. Work done in past shouldn't be lost e.g. draft white paper. Very difficult to get information. Water corporation should know something.

A7. Water Corporation

Water Corporation is prepared to feed information into the SWWF. Recognise issue of drainage and water quality in Peel-Harvey area, the south west water plan is a chance to progress work on these areas. Most drains in south west end up in Leschenault estuary and Geographe bay. 40,000 lots being held up in Perth alone because of drainage problems.

Q8. Wouldn't it be more reasonable to say that 40,000 lots are held up due to lack of water rather than flooding? Comment – council trying to make Witchcliffe a sustainable development because of water constraints. Maybe housing development should look at whether water is available before proceeding. Water plans should highlight alternatives for water use/water sensitive urban design.

A8. DoW

This points to the need for better integration of land and water management planning. The SW Water Plan will need to deliver and provide a big picture perspective to bring all types of water sources together so nothing gets lost or dominates.

Q9. Starting to talk about specific issues rather than having broad brush approach. Wants to see something more forward looking in the Plan. Feel that

we have gone backwards and need to start doing better. Comments on Water Resources overview:

- *Resources need to be evaluated locally, approach at moment is so broad brush, it ignores smaller water sources.*
- *All water resource options need to be acknowledged especially recycling such as desalination.*
- *Efficiency also needs to be mentioned when talking about potable options.*
- *Need to look at local issues e.g. where water corporation uses it's waste water, perhaps this water is not being used to best value.*
- *Plans are needed now to take action*

A9. DoW

Next stage will take a future forecasting approach, these papers have only examined what currently is in the region. Recycling isn't occurring in a very widespread manner at moment and the overview reflects that. All keen to start addressing issues but felt it was important to lay all information on table first so that all stakeholders have same starting point, and that no issues get missed.

Q10. Comment- congratulations on pulling this information all together, really good to have it all together. We need to know where we are at the moment, the detail is very useful. Looking forward to getting to the meat of the issues.

Two comments:

- *Page 6 – graph on population growth figure is for 2001-2005. questions relevance given rapid growth in past few years.*
- *Always see the same graph on state resources showing 40% of water being used by agriculture. The huge amount of water in Ord is responsible for this percentage and distorts the figure.*

A10. Dept. Premiers & Cabinet (DPC)

The population figures are from 2005, there will be some interest in future forecast figures. Ord figures are large and in future growth projections the Ord stage 2 is responsible for a doubling of agriculture water figures. Whether this will actually progress is yet to be seen. In showing those figures, it's all about providing some context at a broad level. More refined figures are shown for regional water.

Q11. Comment – three impediments to plan moving forward:

- *Health department – standards slow down moving into recycling;*
- *DPI – fitting into planning schemes and developments;*
- *Water corporation – future water sources for Perth metro are being considered but re-use and recycling is not a priority and it should be top of the list.*

A11: DoW

Re-use and recycling group has been convened by the DoW and key issues do include dept of health. Will be bringing out a re-use strategy. Raises the earlier point about water use efficiency, need to get action on re-use, comes up at every water forum.

Q12. 20% by 20112 is the recycling target. Needs an enormous leap upwards.

A12 DoW

That target was set a few years back. Water Corporation is confident of meeting that and there is a need to move forward.

DPC

That target was mostly set towards scheme water use. We also need to expand scope across all sectors, establish benchmarks in all areas. SW Plan will put more emphasis on these issues. All sectors need to contribute and report. Much info we currently have on recycling and re-use is anecdotal.

Q13. Comment – grey water re-use in metro areas should be compulsory.

Lunch Break

Facilitated Workshop Discussion on Objectives

Issues Survey And Workshop Evaluation Form

- Members asked to priorities their top ten issues from a list. Also able to add additional issues if desired. Ranked list of top twenty issues attached to Minutes.

Meeting closed at 3.05pm.

Next meeting to be held at Manjimup/Pemberton (depending on venue availability), Thursday Sept 28th.