

Statewaterplan - State Water Plan submission

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Subject: State Water Plan submission

To whom it may concern,

The Wetlands Program of the Department of Environment provides the following submission on the *State Water Plan - Draft Water Policy Framework Discussion Paper* (Government of Western Australia 2006). It should be noted that the Wetlands Program has not reviewed the *State Water Plan* in detail, however, we provide clarification of the definition of 'wetland' presented in the document.

The definition of 'wetland' provided in the Environmental Protection Act 1986 is below:

“wetland” means an area of seasonally, intermittently or permanently waterlogged or inundated land, whether natural or otherwise, and includes a lake, swamp, marsh, spring, dampland, tidal flat or estuary.

The definition provided in the *State Water Plan* only recognises the wetland types that experience inundation (i.e. lakes and sumplands). Seasonally waterlogged wetlands (i.e. palusplains and damplands) are being lost at a faster rate than other wetland types due to their less conspicuous wetland profile and the traditional approach to land development. In 1996, less than 6% of the total area of palusplain on the Swan Coastal Plain was identified as Conservation category (Hill et al. 1996).

It is recommended that the definition provided for 'wetland' is modified to reflect all wetland types, whether seasonally or permanently inundated or waterlogged. In addition, it should be recognised that some wetlands are 'perched' with an impervious layer and are therefore dependent upon surface water flow rather than groundwater.

Thankyou for the opportunity to provide comment on the State Water Plan. Please contact Jennifer Higbid on 6364 6619 if you require further information on the above.

Kind regards,
Jennifer

Reference

Hill AL, Semeniuk CA, Semeniuk V and Del Marco A 1996, *Wetlands of the Swan Coastal Plain Volume 2A Wetland Mapping, Classification and Evaluation*, Water and Rivers Commission and Department of Environmental Protection, Perth.

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