

# WATER FORUM

## Mundaring

### SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSIONS

26 August 2002



Office of  
Water Regulation



Water and Rivers  
Commission



## Context

The Mundaring Water Forum involving approximately 40 participants was held on 26 August 2002.

The purpose of the water forums that have been arranged across the State is to:

- Provide the community with information relevant to the area or region on issues such as; climate change and its impacts, water supply and wastewater management, future demand, and water conservation, re-use and supply options.
- Develop greater community awareness of the current research and other work being undertaken on sustainable use and management of water resources.
- Provide an opportunity for people to identify issues, give feedback and contribute ideas to the Water Symposium to be held at Parliament House in October 2002.

## Key Issues Raised by the Community

Throughout the day a number of plenary sessions were held to provide community members with the opportunity to raise issues and ask questions from the various presentations. The issues and questions raised by the community in each session are summarised in the following tables.

Following the plenary sessions, participants were asked to identify the issue of greatest importance to them by placing a dot (vote) on the recorded flipcharts.

This document summarises the issues and questions raised and the voting priority of the people present at the forum.



## First Plenary Session

| <i>Issue / Questions raised</i>   | <i>Votes</i> |
|---|--------------|
| 1. The Water Corporation's requirement to meet Government / industry requirements is contradictory to the issue of water resource management and consideration of environmental and social elements.<br>- Driven by profit and not sustainability imperatives.<br>- Structure of industry needs to be reconsidered to remove this conflict. | 3            |
| 2. Needs a stronger commitment to openness between Government agencies to manage salinity – salt needs to be considered as a constraint to urban development in future planning and water protection – North Eastern Pattern Plan – Must acknowledge salinity as a development constraint in the future.                                    | 2            |
| 3. Will Water and Rivers Commission be supportive of CALM proposal to clear fell the Mundaring catchment? What considerations have been made for silting etc?   | 2            |
| 4. Lack of budget for catchment protection - should more funding be available?  | 3            |
| 5. What scientific peer review has been made with respect to forest management?   |              |
| 6. Is desalination an option for both Perth and country water supply?   | 1            |
| 7. Has a timeframe for desalination been established or is it triggered by dam inflow?  |              |
| 8. What replenishes groundwater resources? ie with declining rainfall what will the impact on recharge be?  | 4            |
| 9. No mention of link of deforestation to climate change or the possibility of buying cleared land and replanting with native vegetation in response to climate change.   | 5            |
| 10. Groundwater – forward projections do not look far enough. If we take a conservative view and assume even further drying trends this will significantly impact on the ability of groundwater to provide sustainable supply – has such a view been considered in forward projections?   |              |
| 11. Water Corporation submission for new Mundaring treatment plant = 20ha of catchment clearing<br>- How is it that just declining rainfall is causing the 'water crisis'?  |              |
| 12. Are you aware that the majority of the Perth coastal plain used to be largely wetlands and why is the water discharged from Herdsman Lake not used to recharge other wetlands?  |              |

| <i>Issue / Questions raised</i>   | <i>Votes</i> |
|---|--------------|
| 13. Why hasn't the Water Corporation considered transportation of water from the Kimberley using 'super tankers'?<br>- The tankers could be leased or alternatively purchased and scuttled for dive wrecks when they are too old. |              |
| 14. Privatisation of water supply is not appropriate and water supply must remain in the hands of Government.   | 2            |
| 15. We need a holistic approach across Government, to all water and catchment issues. For example managing all needs such as water needs and forestry needs.  | 5            |
| 16. Desalination will result in increased greenhouse emissions and therefore further climate change resulting in even less water. Has this been considered in a national and international context?                               | 3            |
| 17. Do we know how much salt precipitation (kg/ha) results in the hills?  |              |
| 18. Efficient use of water is an important issue. Why have there been delays in tackling water use in the mining sector?  |              |
| 19. What are the costs associated with agricultural water use? Effort needs to be made to distribute costs more equitably.  | 1            |
| 20. With respect to the 40% of water used for agriculture – Currently water use for dairy has been cut by around 50%, is this just for one year, or are people (consumers) willing to pay more for farm produce?                  |              |
| 21. Water in Harvey Dam – levels shown in the media are misleading.   |              |
| 22. General Agreement on Trades and Services (GATS) to which we are a signatory states that every service run by Government will have to be put out to international tender. What does this mean for Western Australia?           | 4            |

## Second Plenary Session

| <i>Issue / Questions raised</i>  | <i>Votes</i> |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Water Corporation needs to consider social aspects before increasing water prices.  | 1            |
| 2. Downgrading future priority water use and catchment areas for urban development – must acknowledge development by stealth and stop it. Vision of the WRC and DEP should be on the environment and must not be diluted by economics.   | 4            |
| 3. Water Costs – The proposed \$65M water treatment plant has not included environmental costs – such as clearing of 22ha of land. The 80ha of land purchased for rehab cannot be replanted due to salinity and low rainfall. Catchments should not be developed and the area must be preserved. | 8            |
| 4. Billing – Sending rates bills in winter does not encourage water conservation. If we have higher prices then we need more frequent billing.   |              |
| 5. True cost of water not included in price of water. Irrigators pay nominal amounts. Is there a Conservation Council view on how costs could be built in to change this type of water use?  | 1            |
| 6. Block sizes are decreasing to the point where rainwater tanks are not possible. What can be done to encourage such ideas? Can we pipe out stormwater and reuse it or store it in reservoirs?  | 2            |
| 7. Price elasticity - If price goes up high users may reduce use but how can you stop people moving to self-supply and potentially using the same or more water? How can private supply be regulated?  |              |
| 8. How much treated wastewater is used for irrigation? We need to consider Subterranean irrigation or reuse in systems such as Werribee in Victoria?   | 2            |
| 9. Wastewater Reuse - Will future systems adequately address nutrient issues for example high nitrogen and phosphorous discharge.  | 1            |
| 10. We should be using native plants and grasses in preference to other plant types. Move away from water-thirsty roll-on turf. Please take this back to the Urban Development Institute and act on it.  | 6            |

**Third Plenary Session**

| <i>Issue / Questions raised</i>  | <i>Votes</i> |
|--|--------------|
| 1. Forum did not address Mundaring Wastewater Treatment Plant – currently not working and a small % of reuse and most discharged to waterways. Need better health research and treatment options. The problems of health associated with the use of reclaimed water in the hills and issue of treatment plants not being effective in ‘hills’ locations needs to be addressed. | 1            |
| 2. How many inner city ovals are using treated effluent?   |              |
| 3. There appears to be greater concern for reclaimed water quality to industry than the environment.   | 1            |
| 4. Rainwater tanks – need greater support from Local Government. Currently building approval and application process does not help to have alternatives installed.   | 8            |
| 5. 50°C temperature restriction (tempering valves) breaks the Health Act and local by-laws – these need to change.   |              |
| 6. Why have we not considered wood lots and artificial wetlands as a reuse option for reclaimed water in the Perth region?   | 1            |
| 7. Grey water systems look complex and expensive – what do they cost?  |              |
| 8. Mundaring wastewater treatment plant issue with disinfection – if this tertiary treatment plant doesn’t work why are secondary plants being considered for other hills locations – need holistic responses for all new infill areas.  | 4            |
| 9. Need to reconsider small block subdivisions that require off-site treatment of waste specifically in Hills area.  | 9            |
| 10. Have there been any studies completed that look at reuse of grey-water in large quantities in areas with soils similar to ours and above valuable groundwater resources?   | 3            |
| 11. In Berlin tap water includes reclaimed water. Are we aware of such opportunities for reuse – these need to be considered.  | 3            |