

WATER FORUM

Subiaco

SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSIONS

25 August 2002



Office of
Water Regulation



Water and Rivers
Commission



Context

The Subiaco Water Forum involving approximately 35 participants was held on 25 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 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 important 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 / Question raised</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1. Is the water industry involved in the debate on climate change? In particular, to lobby Federal Government on the importance of the linkage between climate and water resources?	
2. Need urgent action to greenhouse and climate change.	8
3. Given the changes to recharge and climate why does the Water Corporation continue to promote private bores. With falling rainfall what is the impact on garden bores? (diminishing returns)	
4. What incentives and policies will encourage home owners to install water efficient devices? And should more incentives be put in place? Currently there is very little incentive for owners of rental properties or shared dwellings to invest in the installation of water efficient devices.	7
5. Irrigated agriculture - What encouragement (incentives) is there to move agricultural activities to areas where more sustainable water resources are available to reduce competing demands for urban water?	1
6. Process of privatisation of water resources is a global issue – This Water Forum has missed this perspective and importantly the issue of trading water that was previously considered a public resource. If the policies do not work will the government change legislation and the COAG agreement?	3
7. These Water Forums should be aimed at strategic decisions. The Water industry structure since 1996 is not the best approach and should be reviewed at a government level.	
8. What drives the Water Corporation’s desire to pursue conservation and what is the obligation placed on the Corporation to meet any future demand?	4
9. Given the future costs associated with future resources – how do future generations contribute to ongoing development?	
10. These Water Forums should focus on freshwater resources. Statistics showing use of hyper saline water in mining can confuse actual use of ‘fresh’ water resources.	
11. Funding – consideration needs to be given to cash-cow mentality placed on water industry (\$120M/year). Given the current crisis it is in time for government to invest money back into industry/business.	4
12. Has the decision to not ban water use on gardens been the result of pressure from high income earners? (ie a political rather than practical decision making process)	
13. Future demand projections – have efforts to recycle wastewater been factored-in to meeting this demand?	
14. Why do we not collect rainwater, store and use it for water supply?	1



Second Plenary Session

<i>Issue / Question raised</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1. What can be done in relation to protecting our current and future water resources? - Current tariffs do not fully cover the cost associated with management of water resources.	10
2. Has the Planning Commission given consideration to ring fencing Perth to stop urban sprawl?	
3. What decision process exists for determining environmental values in the future?	1
4. We are not paying enough for water.	
5. What is being done to produce an independent view to balance the current view that the large scale centralised approach is the only viable option for water supply? An independent review of small scale solutions is required.	5
6. Need to better balance the cost of new residential developments to ensure that water efficient appliances and designs can be incorporated in new properties. For example it may be necessary to trade off landscaping, fences etc to free up money to enable this.	1
7. Water prices are high enough but we don't use it well enough – It is important to ensure that revenue into the Water Corporation is used to manage the resource.	7



Third Plenary Session

<i>Issue / Question raised</i>	<i>Votes</i>
1. There should be a sprinkler ban in winter.	2
2. No sprinkler use at any time on verges.	4
3. What guarantee is there that there are no contaminants in reclaimed water?	
4. In the context of the State Water Conservation Strategy has the government proposed a mechanism to subsidise the cost of reclaimed water use for industry, market gardens, agriculture etc?	1
5. Do we know at what point reclaimed water becomes cost competitive against underground water for irrigation, parks and garden? What is the cost of pumping for self sourced irrigation water and how does this compare to reclaimed water?	4
6. At a Federal level there is a lack of research and development funds for water. Can we take the initiative as a State to drive for greater R&D effort locally and nationally?	5
7. Can we make reclaimed water into potable water using natural systems – plants etc?	
8. What avenues are the housing industry pursuing to remove Government taxes and charges on water products?	5
9. What is being done for people who install grey water and wastewater treatment units and are then punished by being forced to connect to deep sewer and in many cases remove the system?	
10. Housing design needs to incorporate all water efficiency features. For example short pipe runs for hot water, water efficient shower heads etc.	1

