



Media Statement

8 December 2008

Water licence applications welcome

The Department of Water is encouraging surface water users in the Whicher area to apply for a water licence.

The department has now completed surface water licensing in the Willyabrup catchment and believes it can accelerate licensing of landholders who used surface water before September 2007 across the wider Whicher area.

The Department of Water's South West regional manager Wayne Tingey said the new approach recognised recent consultation and feedback following the release of the *Whicher area surface water management plan – allocation* for public comment.

“As the plan identified, we are aiming to ensure landholders using water before proclamation in September 2007 are provided security through licences before any new use is considered,” Mr Tingey said.

“We're speeding up assessment and processing of historic applications as quickly as possible, particularly in high use areas.”

Mr Tingey said as well as the time taken to license, a major topic in submissions on the Whicher plan was consultation and community and industry engagement in water planning and management.

He said the department planned to update its Whicher planning web site to provide an outline of upcoming consultation, and opportunities for community and industry engagement in the next phase of planning.

“Consultation will include a series of science presentations in the region to provide an opportunity for the community to learn about the science that drives planning decisions. The first was on how rivers run and measuring flow in rivers and was hosted by the Cape to Cape Catchments Group at Margaret River.”

Mr Tingey said that the Whicher plan established a baseline for management and was only the first step in dealing with complex issues such as climate change. The next phase of planning would answer many more questions for surface water users, including resource sharing, rules-based allocation, water trading, surface water-groundwater interaction, impacts and regulation of plantations and dealing with climate change.

The Department of Water is currently preparing a statement of response, summarising comments received on the Whicher plan.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water**

The statement of response and the final allocation plan are expected to be released by April 2009.

More information on allocation planning and licensing in the Whicher area can be found on the department's website at <http://www.water.wa.gov.au/allocationplanning/Whicher>.

For licensing information, please contact the Department of Water's South West Regional office on 08 9726 4111.

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