



Media Statement

19 June, 2008

Local government focus on efficient use of Gnamptara groundwater

Local government in Perth is firmly behind ways to increase its water use efficiency, according to the Department of Water.

The department's Director of Water Resource Use, Rob Hammond, said there was almost a 100 per cent response by metropolitan councils to progress Water Conservation Plans.

"It is impressive that 29 of 31 Perth regional councils attended workshops to assist them to develop customised plans with innovative software provided by the department.

"In order to develop the action plans to make efficiency improvements over time, each council needed to work with its own current bore water usage data.

"To achieve major efficiency gains, councils need to prioritise budgets to upgrade public open space irrigation infrastructure, and to include more local and water wise plants.

"More needs to be done to reduce high water demand areas, and to reintroduce local plants to areas such as median strips, verges and sports ground surrounds.

"Introducing local water wise plants offers other advantages such as attracting birdlife and other biodiversity; and requires less maintenance as well as less water."

Mr Hammond said other ways for local government to reduce groundwater use was to irrigate with recycled waste water - as had been successfully demonstrated at McGillivray Oval, Floreat. This was a common approach in many West Australian country towns where groundwater was often not available.

The example of the Town of Cottesloe project to remove stormwater ocean outfalls and install underground stormwater treatment, storage and recharge tanks was another water efficiency consideration for other councils. The project part funded by the Australian Government – Water Smart Australia program, would replenish the aquifer through roadside soak pits.

Mr Hammond said in order to help reach the State Water Plan 2007 target, the Water Conservation Planning software would also be adapted to improve agricultural water use efficiency by 20 per cent in 2011. Many agricultural water licensees with large allocations of water from bores on Gnamptara Mound had meters installed by the Department of Water over the past few years. Information from these would assist them to prepare water conservation plans to help improve water use efficiency.

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