

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**RECREATION ACTIVITIES WITHIN PUBLIC DRINKING WATER
SOURCE AREAS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 5 MAY 2010**

SESSION ONE

Members

Hon Max Trenorden (Chairman)
Hon Jon Ford (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Ken Baston
Hon Jim Chown
Hon Ed Dermer

Hearing commenced at 10.03 am**MANTLE, MR NIGEL****Manager, Water Source Protection Branch, Department of Water,
sworn and examined:****RUPRECHT, MR JOHN****Director, Water Resource Management, Department of Water,
sworn and examined:****WATSON, MR STEPHEN****Program Manager, Protection Planning, Department of Water,
sworn and examined:**

The CHAIRMAN: Welcome, it is good to see you in again. On behalf of the committee I welcome you to the meeting. Before we begin I ask you to take either an oath or an affirmation. I like to do this one at a time because it is quicker, so if we go through the process with whoever would like to start with the oath or affirmation.

[Witnesses took the oath.]

The CHAIRMAN: Have you all seen the “Information for Witnesses” form and have you read it and understood the document?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you understood that document?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of the evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote in full the title of any document that you use during today’s proceedings, which you just might do, and just be aware of the microphones as it sometimes gets hard for Hansard if they are not in the right direction. I remind you that your transcript will become a matter of public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today’s proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session, which I doubt you will do. If the committee grants your request, any media or public will be evicted from the room, but I am sure we will not get to that. Please note that until such time as your transcript is made public and the evidence is finalised, the evidence itself should not be made public. I advise you that publication or disclosure of the uncorrected transcript of evidence may constitute contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

Thank you for coming in. We have given you the questions before you came for a purpose because this is, unless something remarkable happens, the last time you will appear before the committee. We will be heading off very shortly into deliberation as part of our process. We appreciate that but, as always, I will ask if you have any statement you wish to make—any one of the three of you?

Mr Ruprecht: No, I think we will go straight into the questions and then we can summarise at the end.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not going to go through 1.1 to 1.3, but we will get through all of them I hope. The first one I would like to talk to you about is 1.1. For the people in the gallery, the vast majority of submissions complain about policy 13, and there are a few examples in the questions about policy 13. That is where we would like to start.

Mr Ruprecht: Thanks, Chairman. I will start and then I will hand over to Nigel and Steve to provide further clarification.

Since 2003 the application of policy 13 has been consistent with regard to the water supply catchments for Perth. What has happened is that we have tried to make the catchments that are under the Country Areas Water Supply Act consistent with the metro water supply. So there have been changes to the approach in Mundaring since 2003. There has also been an increased demand for access, but our approach has been consistent with regard to the application of the policy. There have also been the aspects of other dams and the like—whether it is Logue Brook—so the approach has been consistent. But there have been other issues that have come along which have meant the application has broadened to be outside the metro water supply catchments. Policy 2.13 is really based on the by-laws which form the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act, and they were enacted in 1981, so there has been a consistent approach since then. On the more specifics I am happy to hand over to Nigel regarding the application of policy 13, particularly about how it came about.

Mr Mantle: Are you happy to carry on?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, thank you.

Mr Mantle: I will be reading, so I do not miss anything, quite frankly.

In May 2001 the state government released state water quality management strategy 1 as its response to the national water quality management strategy 1995. Both strategies recognise five environmental values of water resources, where the values of raw water for drinking water supply and recreation and aesthetics were identified as two of the five environmental values. With the increasing pressures for recreation around water bodies in WA, policy 13 was prepared to help protect the quality of water in public drinking water source areas from the negative impacts of recreation. The policy considered the existing legislation and the water resource policy, and contains two tables listing the compatibility of land and water-based recreational activities; and these are provided in attachment 2 and 3, which will be provided to the committee.

Policy 13 was publicly consulted and published in 2003 and is subject to a five-year review period. Several studies and draft guidelines that were prepared by leading scientists and government agency working groups were considered during the preparation of policy 13. The titles of those studies and reports are listed in water quality information sheet 12, which has already been provided to the committee, but we can provide full copies as required. Policy 13 is an effective tool for recreation management in public drinking water source areas, albeit not a popular one with all recreators. The policy does not prevent all recreation from occurring within public drinking water source areas, as it provides for passive land-based recreation within the outer catchments. It should be noted that much of policy 13 is also consistent with the Department of Environment and Conservation's policy statement 18 on recreation tourism and visitor services. Despite the ongoing pressure for increased recreation, some alternative sites still exist and some existing sites can still be significantly enhanced. A full review of sites outside public drinking water source areas, even those not currently available due to policy and legislation, may also find new sites. Nonetheless, it is expected that in the mid to long term, both DOW and DEC may need to sacrifice some sites or catchments in order to meet public demand for increased recreational opportunities while maintaining a high level protection of water quality and public health in key public drinking water source areas. This has already been considered as an option by the Water Corporation and the Department of Water in relation to the Bickley and Harvey dam catchments.

The CHAIRMAN: Okay. Can we spend a little bit of time talking about policy 13? It is probably the area with the most representation which, as I say, we should spend a bit of time on. So what is your response, as we said on the second dot point there, to those groups who contend that policy 13 allows for all historical events to be conditionally approved?

Mr Ruprecht: The key point is that it is conditional and it can apply where designated sites have been established, and in some other special circumstances. It does relate to the consideration of other areas that may be available for that activity to occur outside of those catchments. There are some specific historical approvals—and I will pass over to Nigel to talk about those—that relate to rallying and racing and to non-motorised boating and fishing and those sorts of things. But there have been conditional approvals.

Hon JIM CHOWN: This question is to all of you, and it is good to see you, gentlemen: in regard to policy 13, is it a two-kilometre barrier that is exempt from human usage near public water sources?

Mr Ruprecht: The reservoir protection zone, yes.

Hon JIM CHOWN: So my question is, taking into account that cryptosporidium, giardia, hepatitis A and E. coli are all significant pathogens that will inflict considerable damage on the population if they ingest it through their water, would you entertain expanding that area and having recreational facilities take place in catchment areas further out? Bearing in mind that faecal matter is one of the main sources of these diseases, I am just wondering what sort of work has been done on this.

Mr Ruprecht: There has not been a lot of work done on the scientific basis of the two-kilometre zone; there have certainly been investigations regarding the visual barriers and the like. There are a range of reservoir protection zones around Australia and also around the world. I think Sydney Water, or Sydney Catchment Authority, has three-kilometre zones. So it does get to being about a visual, physical barrier rather than a scientific barrier about the transition times of pathogens to enter a water body. So there are certainly some opportunities to look at modifying that boundary. The current two kilometres is set in by-laws, so it is not something that we have got a lot of option currently for changing.

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[10.30 am]

There is certainly some opportunity to look at that and perhaps make a more physically based approach to a reservoir protection zone.

Mr Mantle: We have actually prepared perhaps a more specific answer to that question. Our submission does also suggest that one thing that could be considered is the capacity to vary the two-kay zone depending on the specific catchment characteristics.

The CHAIRMAN: We need to do that. Can we just go back to the whole question of your view that some people are just saying that policy 13 is a brick wall? Can we talk about that? We then need to go through the policy itself and talk about the individual issues.

Mr Ruprecht: I think policy 13 does provide for conditional access, particularly outside of the RPZ—the reservoir protection zone—and that is work that is done in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Water Corporation, so there is conditional access. There is also some access in the RPZ, particularly historical, whether they are roads or trails like Munda Bididi or the Bibbulmun Track, so there is some existing historical access to the RPZ, but outside the PRZ, in the outer catchment, there is conditional access currently available. I am not sure whether Nigel or Steve wants to clarify that a little bit.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we move on to that—because we will move on to that—we have been given the task of looking at this global question. You have probably heard me say before that this is probably the last time it will be done for a while. It is our task to look at policy 13 from all sides. Should there be a different way we look at structuring a process like policy 13? Is the current

process, where you and others play a prominent role and other people play an inquiring role, the appropriate mechanism for the control of policy 13?

Mr Ruprecht: I will start. I think the first point is that we have got very clear legislation that we are responsible for implementing, and that relates to the protection of water quality. So we have a very clear role in that. The aspect of the critical importance of a reservoir protection zone or some sort of zone around the water body is a prime source of protection, given the level of water treatment that we do have, and then looking at what access you may have within the outer catchment. In that regard it can be a more consultative process with regard to what is in the outside, but really the principle of an RPZ or a zone is of very prime importance in protecting a reservoir, and having a very clear direction that that is an important mechanism to provide safe drinking water, given the way the water supply and water sources of Perth have been established.

Hon JIM CHOWN: You are saying it is protection rather than fixing it up later?

Mr Ruprecht: It is about having a multiple barrier and, given the circumstances of the development of our water supply, where we started with protected catchments, so the level of water treatment is minimal, it means that you have got a multiple-barrier approach rather than having very sophisticated, costly water treatment at the bottom end, because of the history of how we have developed our water supplies.

Mr Watson: It is definitely a preventive risk-based approach as per that recommended by the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Hon JIM CHOWN: How does it compare with other places in Australia in regard to this policy 13 being a major form of prevention rather than cure?

Mr Mantle: It varies from Melbourne, which has got totally closed catchments—the majority of them are totally closed —

Hon JIM CHOWN: To all recreation?

Mr Mantle: Yes. New South Wales has a number of totally closed catchments, but they also have, where there is a mixed land use, a large mixed agricultural and forestry catchment, they have got a three-kay RPZ. The Northern Territory has got a closed catchment. The Queensland scenario, which you saw, has got a mixed bag of activities within the catchment areas.

Mr Watson: We sit about halfway in the middle between a closed catchment and an open catchment. We look to control access in the catchment.

Hon JIM CHOWN: In your understanding of these closed catchments, as opposed to open or semi-open catchments, what number of them have actually been compromised in, say, the last 50 years—the semi-open and the open—in regard to the palatability or the disease risk in the water?

Mr Watson: I am not sure that information is really available, because what does “compromise” mean in the sense of water quality, and often you will find that before it gets to a compromised position, the water utilities and the decision-makers, whether it is Health or the water service providers, have already made decisions that they are not going to take the chance and they will use another supply or bring bottled water in, so they do not let it get to that stage, because if they did, there would be lots of statistics and problems. So they often take that precautionary or preventative approach at that point.

Hon JIM CHOWN: So they close the system down to rectify the problem and then open it up for public use and that costs money as well.

Mr Ruprecht: The prime example, I suppose, is Sydney Water, where they had their scare, whether it was a real issue with pathogens and cryptosporidium or whether it was the treatment —

Hon JIM CHOWN: Would you like to expand on that statement, because I am unaware of it?

Mr Ruprecht: I might hand-ball it to Steve.

Mr Watson: The Sydney Water incident did not result in any public health outcomes in the end. However, there were detections of pathogens that caused a significant bored water alert to be issued. That caused significant economic hardship to people and obviously attacked the credibility, I suppose, of people's absolute trust in their drinking water supply. So from that there were lots of economic consequences in terms of proposals to fix things and it certainly led to the preventative risk-based approach being more heavily implemented in those areas.

The CHAIRMAN: And legislation.

Mr Watson: And legislation, integration of better land use planning and water quality matters, and I suppose we have all tried to learn from that. Fortunately, there was no public health consequence in that situation, but the learnings were still there because of the significant financial issue and the integrity, I suppose, of the drinking water system was brought in to challenge and the public were very concerned about that, because generally the public has an absolute trust and expectation that their drinking water is safe 24/7, 365 days of the year.

Hon JIM CHOWN: So was the source of this pathogen outbreak in the water supply identified?

Mr Watson: I think one of the issues was exactly the source of it. I really could not go into the specifics of that.

The CHAIRMAN: Coming back to policy 13, Mr Mantle, in your evidence today you have made two statements. You have talked about site enhancement and sacrificing some sites, which is some of the evidence that this committee has been getting over the months. So there seems to be some movement between the agencies interested policy 13 to do things a little differently. If we do come up with a process where there is an argument about some sites being heavily defended, if I can use that term, and other sites being opened up significantly, and all agencies seem to be saying to us that that is the way it is going to go, or that is the way in which their recommendations to us are going to go, what do we do with policy 13 if that is the case? If you go to Harvey Dam, for example, where there is a shire plan for water use, is policy 13 going to be part of that water use?

Mr Ruprecht: Policy 13 is primarily about drinking water supply catchments, and so we would be arguing with catchments like Harvey Dam, which are solely used for irrigation, it is a different level of risk that you are managing to, so in one regard Harvey would be outside a public drinking water supply.

The CHAIRMAN: We need a little more detail on that. You said "in one regard". Does the Department of Water still have an interest in Harvey Dam if that is the case or any other catchment and that has been open?

Mr Ruprecht: If it is an irrigation catchment, then we would not be applying policy 13.

The CHAIRMAN: It may not be an irrigation catchment and it just may not be prescribed for potable water. We just need to know where you think you stand. Just to make it clear, from where we sit there has been quite a bit of change from the first meetings we have had until now on this question about what should be locked up and what should be open. The arguments I am hearing are right through the spectrum from both recreators and agencies like yours which have the responsibility. We have presumably a situation where this committee may have to look at some water sources definitely having some sort of policy 13 application. Then you are going to have other water sources that are not for irrigation but maybe open to closer activity in terms of the two-kilometre restriction and other matters. Then you might have other catchment areas that are just open.

Mr Watson: The simplicity of it is that if it is a proclaimed drinking water source, so its primary purpose is for the supply of drinking water, then we would be looking to apply policy 13, and that would include the reservoir protection zone in the outer catchment approach. If it is a source that is not proclaimed, then we would not be looking to apply policy 13. So for specific examples, currently Harvey Dam is proclaimed from historical use of the dam. We have however the term that

it can be deproclaimed and there could be more increased recreation on that dam, and policy 13 would not apply because it would no longer be a proclaimed drinking water source.

The CHAIRMAN: But you still have an interesting Harvey Dam?

Mr Watson: The reason we have an interest in Harvey Dam is for allocation purposes, not drinking water protection, so policy 13 does not relate to allocation purposes, and also around some of the dams you may have private land holdings that we have interest in.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us assume that one of the 19 dams is declared as purely a drinking water source. What about then the application of policy 13 to things like the Bibbulmun Track and cycle tracks that wander in and out of the two-kilometre zones and some areas in those catchments that actually do not drain into the dam, which is clearly the case in quite a few places, where people might want to have access for cutting wood, riding horses, riding mountain bikes, riding motorbikes or driving four-wheel-drive vehicles. I am not saying that this is the case, but just say that it is Mundaring.

Mr Watson: We are already doing those things in the context of the Munda Biddi and the Bibbulmun Track. They are icon trails for the state and they are supported, and they always have been, even through reservoir protection zones, which is probably a historical perspective before we had a better understanding of the need to protect the water quality, but we have accepted it at those locations, and our policy is that should the opportunity come to relocate those tracks outside the reservoir protection zone, then we will work with DEC and other agencies to do that. Otherwise we are happy with where they are, but sometimes we get fires that may destroy the campsite and toilet system, and then it may be a good opportunity to move it outside the RPZ. So they are allowed for and supported, and potentially more tracks, not even in the water catchments, but just downstream of the water drinking catchment, because the Munda Biddi occurs for some of its extent outside the drinking water catchments and more on the scarp area.

So opportunities to enhance recreation there, which would actually bring it closer to the town sites on the coastal plains, is useful. In terms of areas you talk about that do not drain into the catchments, if it is a proclaimed drinking water source and we have defined a boundary, the hydrogeology says that the water that falls in that area does drain, if not through surface water, through groundwater into the dam. So if it is a proclaimed catchment, there really are not areas that are not —

[10.30 am]

The CHAIRMAN: I was really talking about surface water.

Mr Watson: Yes, both surface and ground, and seepage through soil will drain into the reservoir; so there are not areas in catchments where you could say, "If you put it in this part of the catchment, that won't be a problem because it doesn't get to the reservoir." That can be. It can get there through ground seepage, as opposed to surface flow.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I give Hon Ed Dermer the call, the other issue is clearly you are only dealing with less than 50 per cent of the people who are on these territories. Over 50 per cent, from the evidence we get, are unauthorised people on your catchments. Do you have a view about that?

Mr Watson: I do not know where that 50 per cent comes in. Substantially there are access provisions in the outer catchment. The legal access, I think, like most things is not a high percentage and is being controlled.

The CHAIRMAN: All this is anecdotal, but people like the CALM officers are out there on the ground strongly indicating to us that the registered cycle clubs, registered walkers et cetera are the smaller group, not the bigger group.

Mr Watson: A smaller group in total number, which tends to do the right thing when it is a registered club.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not arguing that. What I am asking is what do we do about the question of unauthorised access in policy 13?

Mr Watson: In policy 13 unauthorised access is really dealt with through surveillance and enforcement provisions of the act, and it is a matter of being able to control those areas and take the appropriate enforcement action, which may be as simple as warnings or infringement notices all the way through to prosecutions for illegal access.

The CHAIRMAN: Are those issues currently appropriate?

Mr Mantle: At the moment we could see some improvements in the capacity for the rangers, for example, to enforce surveillance and enforcement. For example, if somebody is within a prohibited zone, the maximum fine is \$200; and to be able to achieve that, you have to go to a local court magistrate; whereas beneficially, and this is what DEC arranges, is they can give infringement notices. So it is a more efficient process to enforce the by-laws, if you like.

Mr Watson: And that the higher penalty is more appropriate to the risk.

The CHAIRMAN: We have had a ranger say to us that he has had people say, "I am happy to pay the fine and keep going." So that is an issue.

Mr Watson: Absolutely. The review of the enforcement opportunities in the act is ongoing. We certainly would like to be more consistent with the DEC regulations in terms of penalties. That is certainly part of a review of our act in terms of recommending that that is the direction that it goes so that it does prevent people and gives them a cautionary note before thinking, "I can go and pay my \$40 for being at the catchment because it's a good day out."

Mr Mantle: And it is important to note that some of that enforcement is for the safety of people in the catchment with regard to wildfire et cetera, and also vehicles travelling at speed and so on and so forth.

Mr Watson: Bushwalkers getting in the way and vice versa.

The CHAIRMAN: I can tell you that the committee members also take an interest in the environmental aspects as well, dieback and the like.

Mr Watson: Yes.

Hon ED DERMER: I was interested to consider the comparison with New South Wales where the exclusion zone is three kilometres, if I understand it correctly.

Mr Mantle: Correct.

Hon ED DERMER: I have heard evidence before the committee from bushwalkers talking about their practice of disposing of human waste with their trowels, and explaining that it is a necessary part of a lengthy bushwalk from time to time and that they are doing it responsibly. I have heard other evidence to suggest that if human waste is deposited in that way, if you get a sudden influx of a large quantity of water, pathogens and that could be transmitted quite some distance. I am just interested on what extent you have looked at scientific evidence to establish the adequacy or otherwise of two kilometres as the zone of exclusion.

Mr Watson: Scientifically, whether it is one, two or three kilometres or other distance is extremely difficult to determine. It is a bit like air pollution modelling; you can come through the model with all of these assumptions and end up with a boundary, To absolutely be able to say that that is the right boundary distance is really impossible with the current science, and the cost that it would take, I think, to get there. There are so many factors involved, so it is a combination of what science you have that you are confident of and what good judgement can you apply that is going to provide the best outcome for, in this case, water quality and public safety. So it is not a case of relying on only science; it is that combination of science and judgement that needs to be taken into account. There is a lot of science that talks about survival of those pathogens in the cat holes, as the bushwalkers

call them. There has been some work on what depth you should dig your waste to. It might be difficult to dig your waste in some soils in the hills to that depth. Certainly heavy rains or animals can disturb the cat holds, as they do, and that therefore brings it to the surface from their diggings. So there certainly is not an absolute guarantee that because you are bearing your waste that it will stay buried. There are certainly signs to tell you that the material will contain pathogens that will survive potentially for extended periods of time and that they can transfer quickly into the waterways and into the reservoir.

Hon ED DERMER: I understand the uncertainty principle of science, but what we are really doing is assessing the probabilities of events to occur.

Mr Watson: Qualitatively more than quantitatively.

Hon ED DERMER: The assessment of probability that it might occur.

Mr Watson: A lot of it does on the risk side depend on the probability and the consequence, because in this case the consequence of getting it wrong is a public health outcry. Then obviously the risk factors in terms of probability and then the combination of consequence leads to a high risk for those types of issues where pathogens are concerned, because it is recognised that pathogens are the greatest risk in the drinking water sources. They react very differently to chemicals and are much more difficult to detect. They grow, as opposed to chemicals which tend to dilute, and so you can start off with a very small number of pathogens and end up with a very large number under the right conditions that can be transferred into your source.

Mr Mantle: The other aspect, from my experience of being around some of the recreational facilities and where visitors congregate, is they do not necessarily meet best practice with regard to burying faecal material. You often find it is spread around the surface and people do not necessarily want to use facilities provided. So it is a combination of if everyone did the right thing and buried it a few centimetres and covered it and carried a shovel, but you cannot always rely on that happening.

Hon ED DERMER: Officers like yourselves in New South Wales, presumably, made similar judgements and they concluded that three kilometres is the appropriate exclusion; whereas you have concluded that two is appropriate.

Mr Watson: The conclusion of the two kilometre dates back to the 1977 report prepared for the advisory committee period of water, so it was not actually the Department of Water, which did not exist at that time, or the Water and Rivers Commission, which did not exist until 1996. So the two kilometres is advice from the advisory committee, which government took up in legislation in Water and Rivers, and then the Department of Water has been implementing.

Mr Mantle: That consideration included total closure of some of the smaller catchment areas. They came to the conclusion that two kilometres would do the trick. There is also a parallel with the two kilometres with the Department of Environment and Conservation with regard to what they consider to be the appropriate distance with regard to controlled burns for protection of sensitive areas like human-occupied areas and things like reservoirs.

Hon ED DERMER: So it is a figure you inherited?

Mr Watson: Yes, we inherited the figure. It has been effective in the way that it allows for management of access. We did ask different workshops the source of the three kilometres and the answer is not clear. At least with the two kilometres we can trace it back to a report, but we have not found a similar report on the three kilometres at this stage.

Hon ED DERMER: As in New South Wales?

Mr Watson: Yes, we are not sure where that three kilometres came about.

The CHAIRMAN: We are going to run out of time.

Hon JIM CHOWN: I have just one question, gentlemen. We understand what this inquiry is about, so bearing in mind if—and I say “if”—the status quo could not remain regard to protection of water sources, what would your position be to allow recreational use to take place and still have the same level of safety on the significant areas for potable water?

Mr Ruprecht: The approach that we support is really to have a reservoir protection zone of some sort which provides exclusion, and then look at what sort of access you can have in the outer catchment. There are alternatives with regard to opening up access to all catchment, but then you have got to look at what level of water treatment you would be expecting to do—I am sure the Water Corporation could provide that information—and you are probably increasing your level of risk. So there are trade-offs that can occur, but they come at a cost and potentially increase risk. Our preferred approach is a multiple barrier risk management where you do provide some access in areas but still have the primacy of the reservoir itself and the surrounding area as the key area as part of that water quality treatment train.

Hon JIM CHOWN: So you have obviously looked at these alternatives within your department.

Mr Ruprecht: In very broad terms we have looked at those, not in any detail at all, but certainly looked at those alternatives and what the implications would be.

Hon JIM CHOWN: Would that information be available to this committee in its deliberations going forward?

Mr Ruprecht: That information is more general discussion rather than technical assessment.

Mr Watson: There is information in the original submission that relates to the alternatives to the catchment protection approach, and the Water Corporation has looked at and provided information as it relates to the costs of implementing alternatives. So the information should be before the committee, or I would expect the Water Corporation to have something for you today. We have not made those discussions as part of our advisory submission.

Hon JIM CHOWN: We appreciate that; thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN: We are running out of time quickly. Mr Mantle, I wanted to come back to you to talk about other sections of policy 13. I gather you have a written process which you can take.

Mr Mantle: We do, yes. We have got some advice that we would like to provide in a final version to the committee in due course.

The CHAIRMAN: That is actually important to us.

Mr Mantle: Yes, so we have got almost a final draft here but we would like to polish that and provide it to you.

The CHAIRMAN: If you want to go away and polish it and come back and give it to us, that would be useful because this is the eleventh hour in terms of the inquiry. So, if you could do that and you have got some indication of the evidence from me, I hope, which I will summarise again. The evidence coming to us from all quarters is that there should not be a one-box-fits-all argument here; there should be an argument about classification of dams. We have got a listing, which I am sure you have, of the 19 dams.

Mr Ruprecht: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: We have been to see a selection of those dams, as you know. So the question then becomes: do we take note of that input? It is up to us what we are going to do about that, but even many of the recreators are saying that there are some sites they do not want access to, other than for walking and some of the less intrusive happenings. If you could do that, it would be not just appreciated, but also actually important. So if you want to take that document away and resubmit it, that would be useful to us.

Mr Mantle: Yes.

Hon KEN BASTON: I have just one quick question. You mentioned that policy 13 came in 2003 and it had a five-year review. Did the review take place?

Mr Watson: The review got caught up in the change-of-government process and the final decisions and changes on Logue Brook dam. Then this committee was proposed and is in place, so it is now actually waiting for the outcome of this finding and then the Department of Water would expect to be starting that review process.

Hon KEN BASTON: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I go to the eleventh dot point just quickly? This actually talks about an effective proclaiming of catchments, and that question about probably three different tiers of dam maybe. So if you could give some thought to that without answering 1.11 right now, that would also be appreciated, and that is in terms of us considering recommendations to the appropriate ministers of how a new policy 13 may apply.

Can we go to 1.12? We did go to Kununurra, so what is your response to the attached letter, which was from the Minister for Planning to the committee and which we received on 23 February—you already have that letter, I presume—concerning the P1 status of Kununurra. The P1 status of Kununurra when we were there was of significant interest to most of the community for different reasons, as you would understand. Do you have a comment about that P1 at Kununurra?

Mr Mantle: Yes, and I would like to read that out. The location and shape of the current Kununurra water reserve was subject to a publicly consulted drinking water source protection plan. The plan was published in 2003 as an interim until further groundwater assessment was undertaken by DOW. The assessment was undertaken and confirmed that the eastern part of the proclaimed water reserve should continue to be included in the reserve boundary. The final protection plan for Kununurra is being consulted and is planned to be released by June 2010. No changes to the current water reserve boundary are proposed. The issue of relocating the water reserve to allow for more development is discussed in the 2010 plan and the matters considered have not changed since 2003. That option can be further considered, provided a new reliable, safe, good drinking water supply replaces the current water source before development planning occurs. The work required to locate, assess and develop an acceptable alternative water supply, if one exists at Kununurra, is costly and would need to be funded.

So, we are not against it, but we have got to find an alternative safe water supply.

[10.45 am]

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have a written response to all 13 questions?

Mr Mantle: We do.

The CHAIRMAN: We appreciate that. Policy 13 took up our time today, but it is the core issue. If you would not mind leaving your responses with us and, if we need to, we will write to you or call you, and hopefully not get you back again.

Mr Mantle: The bulk of the document is with regard to providing the best advice to those questions, so that is what we want to polish.

The CHAIRMAN: Feel free to polish it as much as you feel necessary because, as I say, this is the end of the process.

Mr Mantle: Okay. Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: We do not want to cut short of any considered time. Thank you for the input to the inquiry. We are open to points of view right up to the deliberation stage. It is an issue that is strong in the community. It is an issue that does need defining. This is not a self-generating inquiring of the committee, but it was given to us by the Parliament, so we are actually doing this on behalf of a range of ministers, which really is the whole of Parliament—the lower house and the

upper house. We will take our task seriously, and we have taken a lot of hearing time. If you feel, right until the eleventh hour, that you need to give us an input, feel free to do so. But there will be a time soon when the gate will come down. Thank you for your time.

Mr Mantle: Thank you.

Mr Watson: Thank you.

Mr Ruprecht: Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 10.46 am