

Legislative Council



MEDIA RELEASE

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Inquiry into Recreation Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas

The Legislative Council Standing Committee on Public Administration has completed an inquiry into whether recreational activities should continue to be allowed near drinking water sources and catchments.

The Committee found that protection of public health was the most important factor in deciding whether to allow recreation access. Allowing greater public access to catchments significantly increases the risk to public health in WA. For these reasons, the Committee could not support an increase in recreational access to drinking water dams and catchments.

The Committee received 193 written submissions, made 14 findings and 11 recommendations. The principle finding is that the use of public drinking water source areas for both recreation and drinking water is untenable as a result of:

- the risk of human pathogens being introduced to drinking water;
- the cumulative effect of human presence in the catchments having potentially adverse ecological impacts affecting water quality; and
- the need to protect surplus desalinated water which is being stored in various catchment reservoirs.

Part of the impetus for this inquiry was the closure of Logue Brooke dam. The Water Corporation planned to close recreational access to the dam so the water could be used for drinking water supply. Community resentment and a change of Government saw that plan cancelled. The Legislative Council then asked the Committee to recommend what policy should be taken with regard to recreation access to catchment areas from the Perth hills to the south-west of the State.

The report has now been tabled in the House. The Government has four months to respond to the Committee's recommendations. The Committee's findings and recommendations are now available for consideration in determining future government policy.

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