



DAVID W ROBINSON



30 November 2007

The Principal Research Officer
Economics and Industry Standing Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
PERTH, WA 6000

Dear Madam,

Re: INQUIRY INTO WATER LICENSING AND SERVICES

In response to the abovementioned inquiry I would refer you to my answers to the Terms of Reference as printed in the West Australian on Saturday 9 November 2007.

1. Costs & Benefits

I presently own a 2.1ha property in the GINGIN SHIRE DISTRICT, which I purchased in June of 2002.

Fire proofing my property:

I cleared the property, built a house and shed and moved into the home on 17 December 2002.

At 9.15am on 20 December 2002 **a bushfire came through the property** destroying all vegetation. The front door mat caught fire, burnt the front door which, in turn, set fire to the carpet inside the house.

Being aware of the vulnerability of the area to fire, I **purchased a fire fighting unit of my own containing 600 litres of water**. I tried to repel the fire but to no avail. **My 100,000 litre rain water tank** (being on such a new property) only had enough water in it to hold the liner down. So I then went to the Shire water tank, which was just around the corner, only to find the pump's power supply, "which was located in a tree", had been burnt to the ground and therefore no water was available. I obtained 300 litres from a nearby caravan park that was not affected by the fire and returned to extinguish my front door and carpet. **I thus saved my home!** The Shire have replaced the water tank with a concrete tank for fire fighting but if the power is lost only approximately 40,000 litres is available by gravity flow. This fire fighting tank services some 50/60 homes!

I sank a bore which is inside a shed for protection from bushfires. I also **installed another 100,000 litre rainwater tank which is used to grow all of my vegetables in a closed circuit hydroponic shade house**.

To obtain Shire Council approval for the hydroponic shade house they insisted that I license the bore. I purchased a generator to either run the bore, or pump out of the rainwater tanks in the event of another bushfire, which will certainly happen.

To further fire proof the property I cleared all the dead trees after the fire and planted 300 orange trees on the south end of the block, which was a gentle slope to the north. The orange trees are irrigated with flat throw sprinklers which only water one metre circle at each tree, and this turns on automatically at 1.00am three times a week.

On the front of the property I have planted 360 Blue Gum trees **which are not irrigated**, as the water from the orange orchard travels to the north and is then taken up by the up by the Gum trees. There is a band of coffee rock about 2 metres under the ground, which facilitates the movement of the water.

At 71 years old I am a retiree and as the orange trees are four years from production I **derive no income at all from the property**. I have spent over \$30,000 to make this property **environmentally sustainable** with no assistance from anybody. I did apply for the Waterwise Rebate Scheme and the lady I spoke to advised that as this scheme only applied to city people and I was not on "scheme water" anyway, I was not eligible for any rebate.

I STRONGLY OBJECT TO PAYING A LICENCE FEE OF \$325.00 PER YEAR TO USE MY OWN FACILITIES.

I consider that what I have on my property to be of a very high standard as no water leaves the property.

The fact that 81% of bores in Western Australia are licensed for less than 50,000 kilolitres per year, says to me that these bores are either used for hobby or lifestyle properties that derive no income and their usage would be at the lower end of the 5,000 - 50,000 scale, I doubt that they even exceed the 5,000 kilolitres.

I disputed the assessment conducted by Yolande Brooks in June 2007 a follows:

Water & River Estimate

.45 ha for vegetables - 7,200kl
rainfall

from

.4 ha for citrus trees - 5,600kl
based
2,400ltrs
per tree
sprinklers).

.45ha for lawns/gardens - 2,250kl
bore water - based
bore output

Household purposes - 150kl
(the
human

TOTALS

15,050kl

My Estimate

50sqmtr for vegetable - zero kl as watered **only** by

200sqmtr shade house - zero kl as all on dripper
rainwater tank

300sqmtr citrus trees - 500kl per year bore water -
planted in .4 ha on 180 days watering @
per day (as only **1sqmtr**
irrigated by flat spray

900sqmtr lawns/gardens - 250kl per year
on time and

Household - rainwater only used in house
bore water is not suitable for
usage)

750kl

The amount of electricity I use to pump both bore and rainwater, averages 6 units per day throughout the entire year, which obviously does not equate to the pumping of 15,050kl per year!

The large users of water - ie the other 19% - can either write their costs off due to the tax system or make such a profit in their industry that the cost of water is miniscule.

I realise that a water license is worth a lot of money on properties in this district and I would say that some people with monitored bores just pump water on to the ground, or sell it to neighbours, to show that they are using their allocations. This should be stopped.

Where there are agricultural tax schemes for tree farms and massive olive orchards, sandalwood plantations, almond orchards or any scheme which is tax rebate funded, they should all pay a license fee because they use a lot of water and not always wisely.

2. Costs incurred by Department.....

The cost incurred by the department in monitoring licensed bores **cannot be established by me or any one else** outside the Department.

3 & 4. cannot be responded to because **the NWI information is deemed confidential.**

5. Unconfined aquifers

Does not apply to this area encompassing Gingin Shire. My bore is located in the Gingin Deep Water Lagoon sub-area.

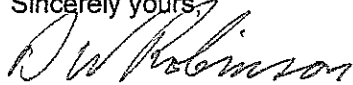
6. Recognition given to costs incurred by landowners in harvesting water

See paragraph 9 under question 1. ie \$30,000 spent by one owner of 2.1ha property

7. Range of different licensing systems by NWI.

Cannot be responded to because **the NWI information is deemed confidential.**

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D W Robinson', written in a cursive style.

David W Robinson