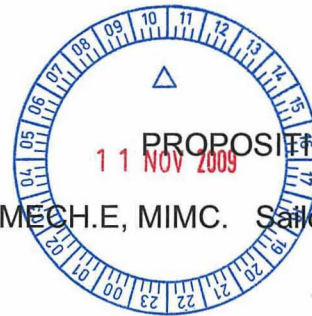


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on



PROPOSITION 13

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Comments aligned with the Terms of Reference

1 The water treatment costs of access for kayaking in drinking water catchments would be negligible. Public access in total has not caused water quality problems at source. They have all arisen "downstream" in swimming pools, fountains, spas, bad plumbing, etc. This includes the big Sydney Water scare a few years ago. There seems to be a false choice emerging- "don't allow access OR fully treat the water". There is no evidence validating this. Kayakers are very environmentally responsible, as witnessed by the pristine state of the Avon River, which must get 5-6000 trips p.a. connected to the Avon Descent alone. (entrants paddle it repeatedly to learn the rapids and to train for fitness, as well as training elsewhere). The sport is controlled through Australian Canoeing, and club trips must have qualified leaders, whose training includes environmental care. They seldom need to pass this on to new members, as the kayak culture is extremely environmentally conscious. (one kayaker once disposed of a banana skin in a NP, on the basis that "it would quickly rot". The group made him recover it, because the rule is- "take out everything".

Kayaking in WA is already restricted by limited access, few rivers, and seasonal flows. Greater access would increase the following social, economic and environmental values:-

- social life for the steady flow of new people trying the sport
- social aspects of all the group activities
- \$ spending in country towns en route, eg food and meeting in café's, shopping for home use
- introduction of a succession of children (and their parents) to kayaking, based partly on white water slalom. Not all stay, but they all develop confidence and social skills, interest in nature, and alternatives to hanging out in Northbridge
- more Olympic and World class competitors from WA, to follow Robin Bell, (first Australian to win World slalom Gold medal), and several others .

2 The UK encourages recreation in catchment areas and on drinking water reservoirs. Bolton Water Corporation has allowed a sailing club on their Delph reservoir since about 1964, with no problems. Sailing dinghies only, plus rescue boat with inboard engine. Currently "Natural England" is advising the UK govt and both the private and public water companies to manage their catchments for broad public benefits, including recreation, carbon absorption, better water retention and collection, etc.

This follows the principle of the very popular CROW (countryside and rights of way Act), which allows access for walkers to not only footpaths but whole mapped areas of "mountain, moor, heath..." This includes a great deal of drinking water catchment

Some UK rivers must by law be open to canoeing because of historic use for navigation. ? could the same law apply in WA?, e.g. to a river with a canoe use history ?

Within Australia, recreational use of catchments is widespread, but varies with circumstances. Some Water companies seem to pursue "zero risk to water catchments" via "zero access". This is clearly a fallacy. The main catchment threats are from farming, mining, and wildlife including ferals, and the cost of preventing all of these would be prohibitive.

It may well be that permitted public access actually reduces any risks, because the responsible public will provide free "security," because they want to protect their environment and water, and they want to retain access.

3 The Australian public seems to have very "conservative" views on water recycling, which is common and long established practice elsewhere. They may need education on the realities of water catchment access

4 As above, access may cost little or nothing. Water monitoring may help to determine access risks and counter them. One also wonders whether research might usefully and economically focus on the sources of possible risk, ie test the users for undesirable bugs and the ability of these bugs to harm the water supply. Research into the impact of wild camping (specifically, burying the poo) was done on location, and has been reported. (I think I read it in the New Scientist)

5 The northern rivers are paddled in the summer rains, but only by the cognoscenti and adventurous. Some runs are very demanding, with limited egress. They may well have tourist potential-added to the Avon descent as a summer attraction. Improved access and facilities would attract locals as well. Helicopters have already been rented to take canoes and paddlers to the start of their trip. A day trip is around 15-30 kms, and kayaks weigh less than 20 kg, so a helicopter for 4 is quite viable if it's already close by.