

PUBLIC

The Committee Clerk,
Public Administration Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House,
Perth, WA 6000.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Recreation Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas

As a member of the WA Trout and Freshwater Angling Association (WATFAA) I wish to respond to the Media Statement of 16th September 2009 regarding “Greater Access to Water Catchments to be Explored”.

Over a number of years, several waters have been closed to fishing, and also parts of their catchment areas have been closed to public access, including Samson Brook Dam, Stirling and the Serpentine Pipehead Dams, the Harvey River above Stirling Dam. Recently, stretches of Lefroy Brook above the Town Dam have also been closed to fishing. So also was Logue Brook Dam for a short period. This has significantly restricted fishing and marroning activities of all WATFAA members and other holders of Recreational Southwest Freshwater Fishing and Marron licences.

As a WATFAA member, I request that the above waters be reopened to fishing, along with others mentioned below, as well being opened to other low-impact activities.

WATFAA members are very environmentally conscious (we share the bushwalkers’ ethic of leaving nothing but footprints) and support the concept of allowing environmentally low-impact activities within water supply catchment areas which are consistent with the aim of preserving water quality. With this concept in mind, I suggest that certain activities should be allowed, both on the water and within the catchment areas.

A. I suggest that such allowable activities should include

- Fishing – **using artificial lures only** (both off-the-bank fishing and boat fishing, including use of kayaks, float tubes, rowing boats or electric-powered boats).
- Marroning – using snares only
- Kayaking, rowing, sailing
- Bushwalking
- Birdwatching
- Cycling/Mountain bike riding
- Walk-in overnight camping (eg by bush-walkers)

Trout and marron fishing would be subject to the relevant rules (including seasonal restrictions) of the WA Department of Fisheries.

B I suggest that any potentially polluting activities should be excluded, for example

- * Fishing using non-artificial baits
- * Power boat use – other than those with electric motors only.
- * Motor bikes/trail-bikes
- * Use of motor vehicles on the banks of the dams and within the general catchment area – other than at approved access points/parking areas close to the dams.

Access should be restricted to licensed individuals only (eg there should be a low-cost annual permit available - a **Permit to Enter a Restricted Access Area** - similar to that for entry to National Parks) and there should be some form of access control – eg sign-in and regular permit checks by Rangers.

There should also be significant penalties for entry without a permit, and for breaches of such regulations as are imposed (eg regulations which ban the leaving of rubbish or the use of power boats, or which restrict fishing to artificial lures only)

Vehicle access (eg at individual dam sites) should be restricted to a few specific access points with parking , toilets, rubbish bins, boat access tracks (non-power boats (other than electric) only therefore concrete ramps not necessary).

I believe that such low-impact activities would be a valuable step in allowing recreational access to several selected areas without compromising water quality. **I drink the water too!**

Dams which should be considered for access for fishing and other restricted activities could include:

Churchmans Brook Reservoir
Serpentine Pipehead Dam
South Dandalup Dam

Without doubt, the Lefroy Brook above the Town Dam should be reopened. Logically this should be reopened **without any requirement for a permit** – since it can be accessed by tourists, bushwalkers, etc at present, without any restrictions. However, use of non-artificial bait for fishing and marroning could be banned there in order to preserve water quality.

I look forward to action on these proposals.

Yours faithfully,