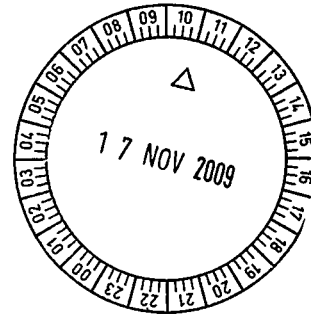


Date: 15 / 11 / 2009 .

PUBLIC

Cassandra Stephenson
Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Ms Stephenson,

RE: Inquiry into Recreation Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas

As a member of the Western Walking Club Inc and a keen bushwalker I wish to make a submission to your inquiry.

Whilst I support sensible policies and regulations in relation public drinking water sources I believe that the restriction on all recreational activity within 2 km of the high water mark in our reservoirs is unnecessarily restrictive especially in relation to bushwalking. I offer the following comments which I respectfully ask you to take into account in your deliberations:

1. Bushwalking by members of registered walking clubs require their members to follow agreed principles for responsible bushwalking and thus cause minimal, if any, damage to water catchment areas whilst at the same time conferring considerable health benefits to individual members.
2. Bushwalkers do not require any additional facilities in order to carry out their activities.
3. Bushwalking clubs provide an ideal social environment for it's members to enjoy thru their common interest in their shared recreational activity
4. Bushwalkers can be of assistance in reporting on activities such as illegal dumping of household rubbish, car bodies and garden plants in the catchment areas and giving exact locations with GPS co-ordinates.
5. Bushwalkers from overseas visitors can see some of our unique flora in its natural environment in the catchment areas.
6. Walking is a simple, basic form of exercise. As bushwalkers we benefit from participating in, at times, strenuous exercise. This is important in a country with a significant overweight and obesity problem. We also gain team building skills, navigation and map reading skills.
7. The environmental awareness of our members is increased through shared knowledge of flora and fauna along the walk routes.
8. The 2km Reservoir Protection Zone is excessive and encourages reasonable people to break unreasonable laws.
9. The Water Commission needs the support of reasonable people because it is unlikely that they will ever have sufficient enforcement personnel to cover the areas in

question. They are unlikely to have that support if the regulations are seen to be unreasonable

10. There is no evidence that responsible bushwalking activities would necessitate any additional costs to the treatment of water in our reservoirs. Members of a responsible club would have no more impact than the native fauna that inhabit the restricted areas.
11. Our geographic location and the housing sprawl along the coastal plain means that there are no opportunities for bushwalking, hiking and camping other than in the catchment area and this too is restricted by areas set aside for mining. East of the catchment areas private land and farming properties which preclude bushwalking.
12. We don't want to drive long distances for recreational opportunities – more fuel use, more carbon emissions. Reduced travel costs means more participation. More participation means more people are exercising. More people exercising leads to healthier people and healthier communities as stated by the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce literature and therefore a small reduction in the health budget.
13. We know that there are other jurisdictions in the world that actively encourage recreation adjacent and on reservoirs.

In the light of the above I urge you to change the Policy to allow bushwalking on and off-track, and day and overnight backpacking (and associated 'wild' camping) within a significantly reduced buffer zone in the catchment areas.

Yours sincerely,



Name: Laurie Ralston