

Stephenson, Cassandra

From: Haydee Adel
Sent: Monday, 9 November 2009 10:07 AM
To: Stephenson, Cassandra
Subject: Recreation in public drinking water catchments in Western Australia



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

PUBLIC

RE: Recreation in public drinking water catchments in Western Australia

Dear Ms Stephenson,

I wish to submit some points into this enquiry:

- Bushwalking is a very benign and environmentally safe activity.
- Bushwalking is perfectly compatible with drinking water catchments. There has never been a recorded case, anywhere in the World, of bushwalkers being the cause of water quality problems.
- Our members are trained in minimal impact bushwalking techniques and leave no trace to their presence. We dig catholes well away from water bodies and streams to bury our wastes.
- Claims from various Government Departments that the good cleanliness of our water is a result of a policy of exclusion is actually a vindication of our free access for most of the history of the Water supply. Our members and predecessors have been walking and backpacking in the catchments for many decades. Water quality has not been affected.
- Regulation that keeps bushwalkers out continues to leave catchments open to people who do not care about the law - and some of them may not care about water quality, and may even intend to damage it.
- Water Department Rangers have much smaller ranges than do bushwalkers. (They are very small in number, in vehicles on roads - we are on foot off roads.). We could be eyes and ears for the water quality, but how can we be if we are not allowed to be there.
- Bushwalkers walk for recreation, for relaxation and leisure, for a stimulating challenge, and while doing so keep fit and healthy and socially connected. We all know of someone who will tell you bushwalking has saved their life.
- Hippocrates, Greek physician (460 to 377 BC) said, "Walking is man's best medicine". His is probably the earliest professional thought on the issue.
- The Government wants us all to walk more, to get fit, to get socially connected and to lose weight- Bushwalking should be encouraged - closing catchments is not encouraging!
- Elsewhere in Australia, overnights are also permitted in catchments for all bushwalkers with no effect on water quality.
- We ought be able to walk anywhere in catchments except in the very small number of places where there is an environmental or some cultural reason for not doing so
- These catchments aren't just valuable for recreation - to bushwalkers they are priceless

Haydee Adel,