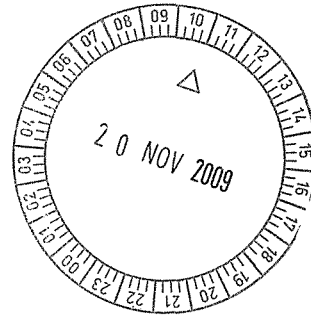


Date: 18/11/2009

**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, particularly by clubs which require their members to adhere to agreed principles for responsible bushwalking, causes very minimal, if any, damage to water catchment areas whilst at the same time conferring considerable health and cultural (one could say spiritual) benefits.
2. Bushwalkers do not require any additional facilities in order to carry out their activities.
3. Likeminded people experience social benefits from sharing a love of the bush and of bushwalking.
4. Towns adjacent to the catchment areas can benefit economically from the activities of bushwalkers.
5. 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.
6. Bushwalkers from overseas visitors can see some of our unique flora in its natural environment in the catchment areas.
7. Walking is a simple, basic form of exercise. As bushwalkers we benefit from participating in a weight bearing (and often strenuous) exercise, so important for our bones. We also gain team building skills, navigation and map reading skills.
8. The environmental awareness of our members is increased through shared knowledge of flora and fauna along the walk routes.
9. The 2km Reservoir Protection Zone is excessive and encourages reasonable people to break unreasonable laws.

10. 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
11. There is no evidence that responsible bushwalking activities would necessitate any additional costs to the treatment of water in our reservoirs.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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,

David C. Smith.

Name: DAVID C. SMITH.

ADDITIONAL POINT:

As a walker of many years I have walked in Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland and Switzerland. I know of water reservoirs that are stocked with fish to encourage anglers and where water sports are encouraged. On Loch Katrine in Scotland, which supplies water for Glasgow, pleasure steamers operate. The policy is to use water reservoirs as an attraction and pleasure facility for the local population - why not in WA?