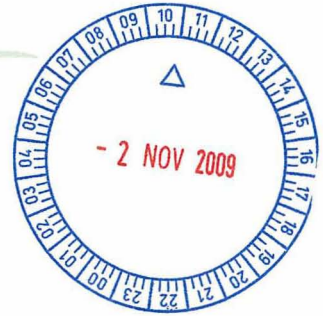




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**Our Ref:** GOV37, GH/GH  
**Enquiries:** Gregg Harwood

**PUBLIC**

30 October 2009

Standing Committee on Public Administration  
Parliament House  
Perth WA 6000

Attn: Cassandra Stephenson

Dear Ms Stephenson

**Re: Inquiry Into Recreational Activities in Public Drinking Water Areas**

*I am writing to thank the Standing Committee on Public Administration for providing the opportunity to comment on recreational activities in public drinking water areas.*

*My comments on this issue are as follows:*

*The debate to date on this issue has been focused whether the public should have access to what on one hand are perceived to be "wasted recreational resources" but on the other hand are "protected public drinking water areas. A far more progressive discussion would be to ask if public drinking water areas could be more actively managed in a manner that would allow but regulate the recreational usage of these water bodies at lower risk times of the year.*

*Traditionally water supply providers have for good public health reasons sought to acquire large passively managed catchments and to limit or preferably stop altogether any recreational activities that occur within them. While this conservative approach has been highly effective in securing water supplies with minimal resources inputs and was appropriate when population densities were smaller it is now locking up significant areas land next to urban centres. A better pattern of management for drinking water sources would be as follows:*

- 1) Water supplies should be classified into three groups, critical usage, regular usage and reserve. Critical usage would be sole water supply sources, regular would be supplies that are used most of the time but where there are alternatives that can be used immediately and the reserve classification would be irrigation dams at Harvey and the like.*

All communications to:

Chief Executive Officer, PO Box 183, Denmark WA 6333  
Email: [admin@denmark.wa.gov.au](mailto:admin@denmark.wa.gov.au)  
[www.denmark.wa.gov.au](http://www.denmark.wa.gov.au)

- 2) *Based on a risk management approach recreation would be excluded from critical supplies, permitted at certain times of year on a case by case basis and subject to active management in regular supplies and permitted in reserve supplies but controlled when they are used as regular supplies.*
- 3) *Governments should be investing in the future water supply capacity so that no one supply is classed as a critical sole supply that needs to be tightly controlled.*
- 4) *In considering recreational usage of critical water supply areas it should be noted that one of the risks to Australian communities is that their water supply could become polluted or poisoned with chemicals. This risk is compounded by the fact that sole water supplies being critical public infrastructure water supplies are a potential target for terrorist attack and that public access to supplies increases these risks.*

*In closing I thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this issue.*

*Should you have any queries regarding this advice please do not hesitate to contact Gregg Harwood of Council's Director of Community and Regulatory Services on 98480300 or [dcrs@denmark.wa.gov.au](mailto:dcrs@denmark.wa.gov.au) .*

*Yours faithfully*



**Gregg Harwood**  
**Director of Community and Regulatory Services**