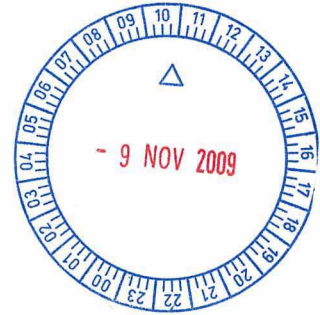


Mr M.J. Lintern

**PUBLIC**



Ms. C. Stephenson  
Committee Clerk  
Standing Committee on Public Administration  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

13<sup>h</sup> November 2009

Dear Ms Stephenson,

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

I am a bushwalker and have been for a number of years. The inquiry into Department of Water Policy 13 is long overdue and it comes as a relief that I am now able to make this submission. The Department of Water appear to be a law unto themselves with regard to access to the catchments whereas I believe the catchments should be managed more fairly and by an independent group that may contain representatives from the DSR, DEC, DoH, DoW and community members. It appears that decisions in DoW are made on an ad hoc basis and only by one or a small group of individuals. The decision making process is appalling and totally opaque.

I have never understood why some activities are allowed in the catchments whilst others are not. It is for good reason why some activities are excluded in the general catchment such as trail bike riding, horse riding and power boats as they cause environmental damage and pollution. Illegal trail bikers are causing untold damage to the bush most weekends. Other activities such as logging, mining and farming are allowed but they apparently have management policies in place that can allow them to continue. Still others are mysteriously allowed or disallowed.

Rogaining, orienteering and walking on the Bibbulmun Track are allowed. However, recent DWSPPs have forbidden bushwalking off track for some curious reason that has not been fully explained. Most serious bushwalkers like to walk off track and some like to backpack for an overnight experience. I do not understand the difference between the allowable activities (whose participants can enter the tens of thousands) and the unallowable bushwalking activities (whose participants would be well under a 1000). It seems to me that a small minority is being bullied away by an unsympathetic DoW for no justifiable reason.

The DoW may say that if we let one group in we have to allow the others - the floodgates will be opened. This is not so and even if it were, each proposed activity should be treated on its merit. As an absolute minimum, allow managed bushwalking (off track and overnight) whereby an environmental management plan is *invited* and commented on and bushwalking can be allowed subject to certain conditions. Other activities requiring access would have to do the same. If they can show that they do not pollute, damage or disturb others then they should be allowed controlled access too.

Do bushwalkers pollute the water supply? To test this question/hypothesis we need to undertake a scientific experiment e.g. allow bushwalkers into the catchment and monitor the water supply for pollutants. Well this experiment has already been undertaken and the results are clear! Bushwalkers have had historical and permitted access to the catchments for decades and there has been no change in water quality attributable to them. We have, and never will, pollute the catchments.

Yours sincerely,

Melvyn Lintern