

Dear Sir/Madam,

I hereby provide a submission to the above inquiry.

On the issue of Demand Management, the Issues Paper states: "A key factor in the estimation of demand is the assumptions regarding the level of future water restrictions (e.g. sprinkler bans), which are determined by Government." I submit that the ERA should not unquestioningly accept government determinations on water restrictions but should advise the state government that:

1. water restrictions should only be imposed where the need for such restrictions can be justified on economic, environmental, resource availability or other important grounds.

2. where such justification cannot be provided, for example, in communities such as Peppermint Grove Beach, Capel, Busselton and Dunsborough which are accessing the Yarragadee aquifer for their water supplies via the Water Corporation and Busselton Water Board and where the available water supply is significantly higher (at least 100% higher) than current demand, then water restrictions in such communities should not apply. Although lacking detailed knowledge, I believe that a similar situation currently exists in Kununurra where the town's water supply comes from the Ord River and where current demand is a very small proportion of the available supply.

3. in such situations, existing water restrictions should be lifted and not reapplied until water usage exceeds 50% of potential water supply.

To summarise my submission, I believe that communities should be allowed to enjoy and exploit their natural advantages such as the presence of a large and significantly under-utilised resource, including water. In turn, local government, tourism bureaus and other local groups should be able to use these natural advantages to market their communities as desirable places to live, holiday or recreate in part because of the natural advantages they enjoy as a consequence of a large and under-utilised natural resource. At present, unused water within the Yarragadee aquifer passes beneath the towns and communities mentioned above and mixes with seawater within Geographe Bay some distance offshore. This water could be used by residents and visitors to better enjoy living or holidaying in those fortunate towns and communities.

An alternative way of considering this issue is to submit that the principle of 'one size fits all' is a very inefficient way to manage a natural resource and, if water restrictions are being applied solely for political or cosmetic reasons, then they should be removed.

Regards

Bernie Masters