

Water for all, forever

Margaret River



Planning Update, April 2011

With the help of your community, Water Corporation is working to secure long-term drinking water supply to the Margaret River Region, and manage future wastewater flows from the Margaret River township. The following update is provided for your information.

Water Efficiency

The State's most comprehensive water efficiency program is starting to show results in your community. Despite experiencing one of the driest periods on record, and ever-growing tourism, water use in the Margaret River Regional Water Supply Scheme (MRRWSS) has reduced by more than 10 per cent per service since the program commenced in 2009. So far, this represents a saving of more than 150 million litres of water.

We are grateful to the 1000 residents, 20 accommodation providers, schools, developers, garden centres, plumbers and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River for taking part in the various water efficient appliance retrofits, water audits, events and educational campaigns.

With one of the driest periods on record occurring during 2010, drinking water storage for your area is stretched. So, it is more important than ever to save water and use what you need wisely. Meanwhile, we are working with the community to ensure visitors to our region adopt the same responsible water habits as our local customers.

Secure, high quality supply

Since 2009, groundwater investigations have been under way to determine whether groundwater from a bore site east of Margaret River can be used, in conjunction with surface water from Ten Mile Brook Dam, to secure your long-term drinking water volume and quality needs. These investigations, including drilling and pump-testing are now complete. Data has been provided to Department of Water to enable them to assess our application for an abstraction license. As part of their process, the Department is inviting public comment until 20 April.

The Corporation undertook the highest level of assessment available under Department of Water's abstraction application process. The results of these investigations have been submitted to the Department to support our application to access 1.6 Gigalitres per annum of the (approximately) 10 gigalitres per annum of groundwater currently reserved for future public water supply in the Department's South West Groundwater Areas Allocation Plan.

If approved, the licence allocation of 1.6 Gigalitres per annum, which includes a 10% contingency as per Department of Water requirements, is forecast to meet the needs of Margaret River, Cowaramup, Prevelly Beach and Gnarabup until at least 2015. During that period, monitoring would be undertaken to further ensure sustainability, with future requirements sought as needed to service growth. We estimate that, by 2040, up to 3.0 Gigalitres of groundwater could be required during a very dry year, with less needed during 'normal' and wet years.

Water Corporation has also referred the project to the Environmental Protection Authority to make a determination regarding the need for assessment.

Subject to all necessary approvals, construction of necessary infrastructure, including a pipeline, will begin in mid-2011, enabling groundwater supplementation of the local supply during the 2011/12 summer.

Wastewater Management

To manage projected flows and cater for growth out to 2040, the Margaret River Wastewater Treatment Plant will need to be upgraded before 2014. The upgrade would double the plant's treatment capacity.

We expect that all treated wastewater leaving the plant out to 2035 will be reused during the summer months. Existing storage facilities and irrigation arrangements are sufficient to manage current disposal requirements; however, winter woodlot irrigation will be increased as the town grows until further winter reuse opportunities are identified. The Corporation is working with the Department of Environment and Conservation to ensure that woodlot expansion and irrigation arrangements are suitable.

Further Information

If you wish to receive copies of the referral documentation provided to the Environmental Protection Authority, phone Mick Irving on 9791 0409, or send an email to mick.irving@watercorporation.com.au.