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Site announced for Mundaring water treatment plant

The Water Corporation last night announced that the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) depot site at Mundaring, situated off Mundaring Weir Road, had been selected as the location for a new water treatment plant to serve the Goldfields and Agricultural Water Supply Scheme (G&AWSS).

Water Corporation Chief Executive Officer Jim Gill said that there were more than 100,000 people served by the G&AWSS and a new water treatment plant was needed near the main water source at Mundaring Weir to deliver the high standard of quality water expected in the 21st Century by all towns from Mundaring to Kalgoorlie.

“A water treatment plant for the G&AWSS is a priority and for a number of years the Water Corporation has been consulting with the community on an appropriate location,” Dr Gill said.

“This has been a complex issue and the commitment and constructive input of the Mundaring community, in particular, as well as other key stakeholders, provided vital information that greatly assisted in making a final decision.

“There is broad community and stakeholder support for the DEC depot site, but it was by no means a unanimous choice. However, a decision needed to be made and analysis of the various sites and of the consultation findings indicate that the site chosen is highly satisfactory. The DEC depot site performed well in the key areas of environmental, social and economic considerations.

“Preliminary discussions between DEC (which still occupies and operates the Mundaring depot site) and the Water Corporation have agreed on the proposal in principle, so the way is now clear for these organisations to focus on the finer details.”

Dr Gill said that genuine community consultation by the Water Corporation was crucial to resolving this long-running issue and it involved ‘give and take’ from all parties.

“The decision to build the facility at this location resolves the original concern of many Mundaring community members who did not want the water treatment plant to be located at Sawyers Valley Hill, which was the site first selected by the Water Corporation,” he said.

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Initially, there were some 21 sites considered for the location of the water treatment plant. Through community consultation, this number was trimmed to a short-list of six options. These sites were the focus of a detailed sustainability assessment by the Water Corporation, which used a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) process. In parallel, members of community consultative forums organised by the Water Corporation indicated their preference by voting.

The MCA study, which included consultation with the community as well as key stakeholders, indicated a clear preference for the DEC depot site. The community vote (based on 59 respondents from 212 registered community forum participants) was close between the three top short-listed sites (which received about 75 per cent of the votes in total). The DEC depot site was the community's second choice overall, while its first choice was a pine plantation site situated near the DEC airstrip adjoining Allen Road, Mundaring.

The Mundaring water treatment plant is scheduled to be operating by 2013, but the Water Corporation considered that it was important for a site to be confirmed as soon as possible so the planning and construction of related and dependent facilities could proceed.

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