



Guidance note 4

Resources and support provided by the Department of Water

This note is one in a series that aims to assist people and organisations involved in implementing *Better urban water management* (BUWM), which was developed by the Western Australian Planning Commission in 2008. It explains how the Department of Water provides resources and support to proponents in implementing *Better urban water management*. The note includes details of relevant departmental guidance documents and available data, mapping and water resource information.

Department of Water

The Department of Water is responsible for the management and protection of water resources to support the community, state development and the environment. To protect water resources and improve the management of water resources, the department:

- develops policies to make the best use of the state's water resources
- assesses and advises on water availability and current and future demand options
- encourages water conservation and promotes innovative use of alternative water sources
- manages and regulates the use of water through the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*
- integrates water and land-use planning
- considers the environmental, social and economic values of water in policy development, planning and allocation
- works with industry, government and community to find solutions for better water use
- provides accessible information on water resources.

Our role in the state planning process

The Department of Water provides advice to the Department of Planning and to local government on the adequacy of each water management report as part of the planning referral process.

The department's role in this process is to:

- provide technical water management advice for land planning proponents, consultants and decision making authorities

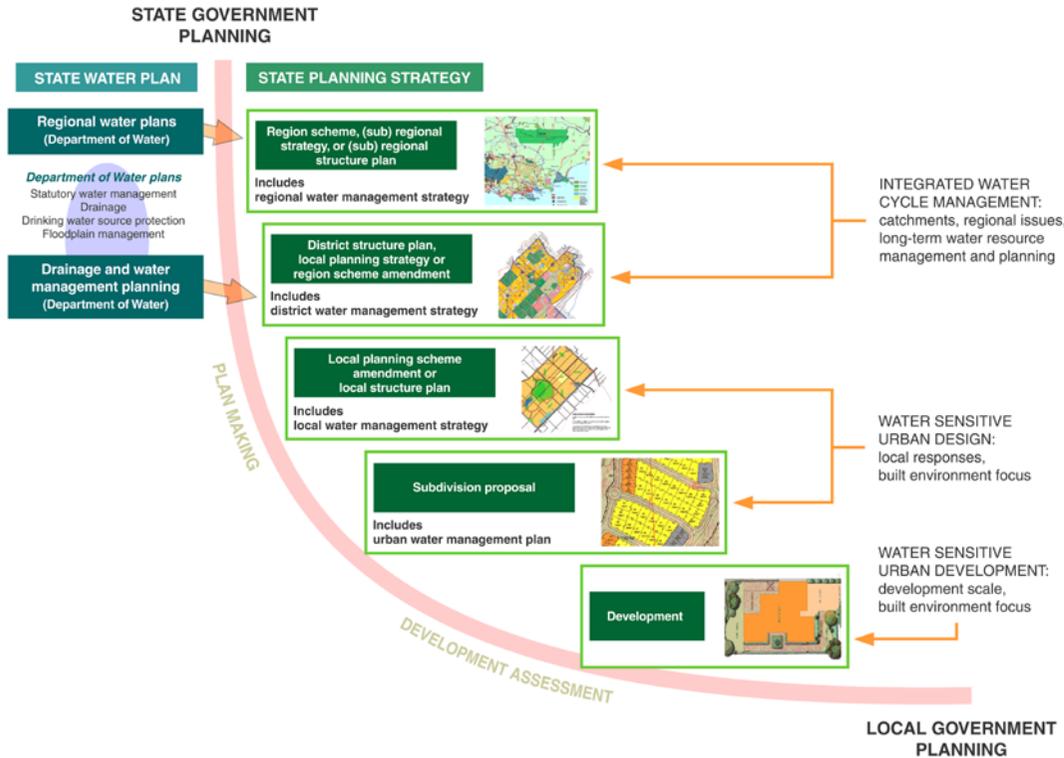
- assess and endorse regional, district and local water management strategies required by *Better urban water management*
- assess urban water management plans, provide technical advice and advise the clearance agency that the plans meet Department of Water requirements
- produce technical guidance documents and plans to assist in the management of water resources and implementation of *Better urban water management*
- provide water data, mapping and other water resource information.

These roles are explained in more detail below and their relationship to *Better urban water management* is summarised (refer to Figure 1).

Water management plans produced by the Department of Water

As part of the process for ensuring that water and land-use planning are integrated, the department produces detailed water management plans for water allocation, drinking water source protection, drainage (including management of surface water and groundwater), and advice about floodplain management.

For instance, drainage and water management plans provide guidance for proponents and decision makers on planning and water service provision in areas where water management will be a critical factor influencing or limiting the nature of urban development. They consider all aspects of total water cycle management in relation to flood protection, management of surface water, groundwater, water quality and quantity, water recycling and efficiency and protection of waterways, wetlands and other water dependent ecosystems.



Department's role – regional level

- Guide regional water priorities on behalf of government.
- Assist with preparation, assessment and endorsement of **regional water management strategies** prepared by proponents.
- Provide water data and mapping.
- Provide technical water management advice, guidance and input.

Department's role – district level

- Where identified, produce drainage and water management plans in priority development areas on behalf of government which contain pre-development hydrological conditions and objectives.
- Provide water data and mapping.
- Provide technical water management advice, guidance and input.
- Assessment and endorsement of **district water management strategies**.

Department's role – local level

- Provide available water data and mapping.
- Provide technical water management advice, guidance and input.
- Assessment and endorsement of **local water management strategies**.

Department's role – subdivision and land development level

- Provide technical water management advice, guidance and input.
- Assessment of **urban water management plans**
- Advises the clearance agency that the plans meet Department of Water requirements.

Notes: The above diagram depicts the ideal process. Adjustments may need to be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Western Australian Planning Commission and the Department of Water. Adapted from *Better urban water management* (Western Australian Planning Commission 2008). Figure 4. page 14).

Figure 1 Better urban water management and the role of the Department of Water

Technical water management advice

The Department of Water provides expert advice about water resources to inform planning decision making, as part of the planning and development approvals process. Advice is provided to the Western Australian Planning Commission, Department of Planning, Office of the Environmental Protection Authority, local government, other relevant agencies and proponents.

Only limited advice can be given if proponents provide insufficient information to accurately define the water resource management issues. In this situation, the department may advise the referring agency that the proposal cannot be assessed and may request additional information from the proponent. Additional information should be provided in accordance with *Better urban water management* and other supporting guidelines to ensure that it is relevant and that the appropriate level of detail has been provided (see guidance note 4).

Water management report assessment

In accordance with *Better urban water management*, the Western Australian Planning Commission is responsible for approving agency regional, district and local water management strategies, based on advice from the Department of Water.

In accordance with the *Model subdivision conditions schedule* (Western Australian Planning Commission 2012) the local government is the clearing authority for urban water management plan conditions issued by the Western Australian Planning Commission on advice from the Department of Water. The department assesses urban water management plans, provides technical advice and advises the clearance agency that the plans meet Department of Water requirements.

In most instances, the water management report will be reviewed by officers in the Department of Water regional office that manages the proposed development area. The officers will obtain feedback from experts within the department, from relevant natural resource management and land planning agencies, from local government and from water service providers. The feedback will be collated and provided to the proponent, local government and the Department of Planning as the decision making agency.

The Water Corporation has responsibility for assessing proposals and authorising works in the main drains and associated reserves or land holdings managed or owned by the Water Corporation. Although, this assessment and authorisation primarily relates to works that are directly related to the main drain, the Water Corporation has a responsibility to comment on land development proposals in a drainage catchment where there is the potential for land uses to have an adverse impact on the main drainage system or Operating Licence compliance.

Where a rural drain servicing a rural catchment is urbanised, the Water Corporation will continue to operate the rural drain in accordance with the service provider Operating Licence, unless the local government, within which the urban development

is proposed, takes responsibility for all or part of the rural drain as a multi-purpose open space corridor.

Guidance note 3 provides more information about the submission, assessment and approval of reports.

Wetlands

The Department of Water and the Department of Environment and Conservation share responsibility for managing wetlands. While the Department of Environment and Conservation is the lead agency for the management of wetlands, contaminated sites and acid sulfate soils, the Department of Water considers issues affecting wetlands as part of total water cycle management.

A proposal may be a 'significant proposal' under Section 38 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* if it is likely, if implemented, to have a significant effect on the environment. For the purposes of environmental impact assessment the EPA considers wetlands listed in B4.2.2 in *Guidance statement 33: Environmental guidance for planning and development* (Environmental Protection Authority 2008) to be of high conservation significance. Significant proposals may be referred to the Environmental Protection Authority for a decision on whether or not assessment is required. Further information is available from *Guidance statement 33* particularly Chapter B4 for wetlands and B5 for waterways.

Useful documents

Further guidance is available at the department website <www.water.wa.gov.au>. As new information is added regularly to the website it is recommended that hardcopies not be used to ensure that the most up-to-date information is obtained. At the time of publishing this guidance note, the information most relevant to *Better urban water management* includes:

- *Urban water management plans: Guidelines for preparing plans and for complying with subdivision conditions* (Department of Water 2008a)
- *Interim: Developing a local water management strategy* (Department of Water 2008b)
- *Guidelines for district water management strategies* (Department of Water in preparation)
- Drainage and water management plans
- Regional water management plans
- *Decision process for stormwater management in WA* (Department of Water 2009)
- *Stormwater management manual for Western Australia* (Department of Water 2004–2007)
- *Interim position statement: Constructed lakes* (Department of Water 2007)

- *Draft approval framework for non-drinking water sources* (Department of Water 2010a)
- *Water wise community tool kit* (Department of Water 2010b)
- *Water monitoring guidelines for Better urban water management strategies and plans* (Department of Water 2012)
- Water allocation plans
- *Operational policy: Identifying and establishing waterways foreshore areas* (Department of Water 2012)
- *State planning policy 2.9: Water resources* (Government of Western Australia 2006)
- Other guidance notes in the *Better urban water management* guidance note series.

Maps, data and atlases

The department monitors water resources throughout Western Australia. Its website contains data, maps and atlases about surface and groundwater throughout Western Australia including:

- floodplain mapping
- public drinking water source protection areas
- maps and groundwater atlases including:
 - Geographic Data Atlas - an interactive web mapping tool that allows you to freely view and download Department of Water geographic data: <http://www.water.wa.gov.au/Tools/Maps+and+atlases/Geographic+data+atlas/default.aspx#1>
 - Hydrogeological Atlas - contains spatial datasets showing the distribution of aquifers used for groundwater management, with a text description of each, a hydrogeological map of the State, and various maps of groundwater salinity. <http://www.water.wa.gov.au/Tools/Maps+and+atlases/Hydrogeological+atlas/default.aspx#1>
 - Perth Groundwater Atlas - designed to help water-bore drillers, irrigators, and private householders establish groundwater bores in the superficial aquifer within the Perth metropolitan area. <http://www.water.wa.gov.au/Tools/Maps+and+atlases/Perth+groundwater+atlas/default.aspx#1>
- waterways
- surface and groundwater allocation
- surface water and groundwater monitoring data.

Water monitoring and data

Water monitoring and data including surface water and groundwater levels, flows and quality are available from the online *Water resources information catalogue* (WRIC) and *Water resources information data* (WRDATA) summaries.

The WRIC is an index of water resources data, including water quality, rainfall, flows and water levels, collected from a variety of surface water and groundwater monitoring sites throughout the state. It presents information about data availability, allowing sites and variables of interest to be selected and forwarded to the department with a request for data.

It is available at : <<http://kumina.water.wa.gov.au/waterinformation/wric/wric.asp>>. Alternatively, search for 'Monitoring and data' or 'Water resources information catalogue' from <www.water.wa.gov.au>.

The WRDATA summaries provide access to selected water resources data from surface water, rainfall and groundwater monitoring sites throughout the state. The information includes monthly and annual streamflow and rainfall summaries, surface water discharge plots, and groundwater level data and plots. It is available at <<http://kumina.water.wa.gov.au/waterinformation/wrdata/wrdata.cfm>>. Alternatively, search for 'Monitoring and data' from <www.water.wa.gov.au>.

This information will assist developers to prepare water management reports. However, in many cases onsite monitoring will need to be undertaken by the proponent. For further information contact a water information officer on 08 6364 6505 or by email at <waterinfo@water.wa.gov.au>.

Geographical information system datasets and the geographic data atlas

The Department of Water's geographical information system (GIS) datasets can be used or downloaded from <www.water.wa.gov.au>. Search for 'Geographic data atlas', then select 'Download' or use the interactive web mapping tool online. Further information is available by emailing <spatial.data@water.wa.gov.au> or telephoning 08 6364 7600 and asking for the Spatial Data Exchange Officer.

GIS datasets from the Department of Water and other agencies are also available from Landgate's *Shared land information platform* (SLIP) at <www2.landgate.wa.gov.au>. Select the 'SLIP services' tab and then either the 'WA atlas' (an online web based map viewer) or 'data download'. SLIP support is available by telephoning 08 9273 7832 or emailing <SlipEnabler@landgate.wa.gov.au>.

Datasets that are not available from these sources may need to be obtained directly from the relevant custodian, such as the Department of Environment and Conservation (e.g. *Wetland base*) or the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (e.g. *A Directory of important wetlands in Australia* Environment Australia 2001).

Contacts

The Department of Water has seven regional offices. Contact details for each region, including a map of the department's regional boundaries and a list of the local governments in each region is available from <www.water.wa.gov.au> under the 'Water regions' tab.

The relevant regional office should be contacted in the first instance regarding all land-use planning matters, including the submission and assessment of water management reports.

References

- Department of Water 2004–2007, *Stormwater management manual for Western Australia*, Department of Water, Perth.
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- undated, *Monitoring and data*, viewed 27 February 2012, <www.water.wa.gov.au/Tools/Monitoring+and+data/default.aspx>.
- Environment Australia 2001, *A Directory of important wetlands in Australia*, Environment Australia, Canberra.

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