

8 November 2021

Submitted via email to: waterpolicies@dplh.wa.gov.au
Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
140 William Street
PERTH WA 6000

Submission: Draft State Planning Policy 2.9 Planning for Water (SPP 2.9) and Planning for Water Guidelines

The Committee for Perth (Committee) is WA's leading independent think tank focused on the liveability and competitiveness of Greater Perth. Our vision is for a region with world-class amenity that is culturally diverse, sustainable and economically prosperous. This submission has been prepared by the Committee with input from our Reshaping Working Group.

We congratulate the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (Department) on the preparation of the *Draft State Planning Policy 2.9 Planning for Water (SPP 2.9)*. We also are appreciative of the briefing provided to the Committee's Reshaping Working Group on the draft policy and for the opportunity to provide feedback.

General Feedback

The Committee concurs with the sentiment expressed in the draft policy that the health and wellbeing of the community, environment and economy are all dependent on water that is of sufficient quantity and quality. It is also apparent that Western Australia's water resources are vulnerable and subject to increasing pressure. In this context, the Committee supports the more up-to-date, whole-of-government, holistic approach to water management proposed in SPP 2.9. We also support reducing duplication within existing water provisions and providing for a simpler and more streamlined approach to water management.

Outcomes-based Approach

As proposed in SPP 2.9, the Committee supports the shift towards an outcomes-based approach to water planning and management. This approach will provide the flexibility and innovation that will be essential to effectively address the unique and substantial challenges faced in managing water resources in different catchment areas in the State. It is our view that the Department should look to shift towards more outcomes-based planning and policy in the future to assist the State in identifying and supporting innovative solutions to manage challenges associated with growth, development and environmental change.

Policy Objectives, Outcomes and Values

The Committee endorses the policy objectives, outcomes and values listed within SPP 2.9. We also confirm our support for General Measures (Section 7), particularly the consideration of water resources at the earliest possible stage of the planning process and consideration of issues such as climate change and cumulative effects.

Climate Change

The Committee agrees with the view of the Department that timely consideration of climate change impacts on infrastructure will result in this to be more resilient and adaptable, and ultimately it will reduce costs.

Yet it is our view that, in order for climate change impacts to be effectively addressed within individual Water Management Reports, clear guidance should be provided by the State Government on the expected impacts of climate change on specific water catchments areas, and leadership should be afforded on appropriate catchment management strategies. In this regard, it is our view that the implementation of SPP 2.9 would be strengthened by prioritising the preparation of catchment level water management plans. Rapid progression of Western Australia's Climate Action Plan is also needed to provide a framework for the consideration of managing climate related impacts on water resources at a regional and local scale.

Cumulative Impacts

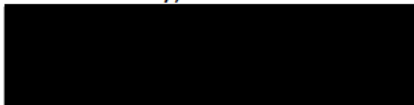
The effective identification and management of cumulative impacts will also require strong foundational knowledge regarding catchment areas, and future management issues and challenges (including forecast climate change impacts). In this regard, planning and decision making regarding cumulative impacts would also be significantly strengthened by the early preparation of catchment management strategies for key water catchments within the State.

Water Management Reports

The Committee supports the development of Water Management Reports at a regional, district, local and subdivision/development level. However, it is noted that it will be crucial for Regional Water Management Reports to be prepared as a priority to provide the framework for effective lower order water management. As specified above, it is also our view that these reports will be most effective if supported by the development of catchment management strategies and a Climate Action Plan for the State which should provide the evidence base and identify the goals and objectives for water management at regional, district, local and development level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on SPP 2.9. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require clarity on the issues identified in this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Marion Fulker AM
Chief Executive Officer
Adjunct Senior Research Fellow UWA