

Frequently Asked Questions

ACTIVE

IN FORCE

Draft State Planning Policy 2.9

Planning for Water and Planning for Water Guidelines

These explanatory notes provide an overview of the Water Policies Review and a summary of key changes.

1 DOES DRAFT SPP 2.9 APPLY TO EXISTING APPROVED DEVELOPMENTS?

No, draft SPP 2.9 and guidelines does not apply retrospectively to existing approved developments.

2 WHY DID THE WATER POLICIES REVIEW OCCUR?

In 2017 a series of meetings were held with government and non-government stakeholders to discuss the effectiveness of water-related SPPs and identify any gaps and issues. Through this process it was identified that the current water policy framework was outdated, complex and needed to better respond to anticipated impacts from population growth, changing climate, differing land uses and economic trends.

3 WILL THE POLICY MAPPING BE UPDATED?

Yes, the mapping that accompanies the draft policy may be updated as necessary. For example, site-specific investigations or case studies may result in subsequent changes to groundwater-dependent

threatened and priority ecological communities or changes to proclaimed drinking water source areas. We recommend you always check the map(s) for each proposal.

4 ARE THERE INSTANCES WHERE DRAFT SPP2.9 DOES NOT APPLY?

This policy does not apply to the assessment of applications made under legislation other than the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and subsidiary regulation.

In addition, this policy is not intended to apply to a single house on a single lot unless a significant water resource matter has been identified for the lot within a local planning scheme (For example, sections 7.3 Riverine flooding, 7.5 Specific area measures: Public drinking water source areas and 7.7 Specific area measures: Swan Canning River system of the policy). When there is no development approval required for a single dwelling under a planning scheme, draft SPP 2.9 cannot be applied.

5 HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THE NEW POLICY COMES INTO EFFECT?

Draft SPP 2.9 will come into effect upon its gazettal. From this date, all planning and development decisions will need to consider water resource matters and include appropriate water management measures in accordance with the policy. In addition, the Guidelines will replace *Better Urban Water Management*.

6 HOW DO I KNOW IF MY PROPERTY IS IN A SENSITIVE WATER RESOURCE AREA?

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage interactive map viewer [PlanWA](#), provides mapping for sensitive water resource areas across Western Australia. To determine if your property is located within a sensitive water resource area, ensure you have the appropriate layer selected in the 'State Planning Policy' theme. This approach is also applicable to determine if your property is included within a public drinking water source area, Peel Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment or

the Swan Canning River system. There may be specific policy measures, in addition to the general measures, that apply if your property is located within one of these mapped areas.

7 WHY IS EARLY PLANNING NECESSARY?

Planning for water resources at later planning stages such as subdivision or development can make it difficult to achieve good water management outcomes.

For example, if land is identified as unsuitable for on-site sewerage purposes at the scheme amendment or structure plan stage, then it may remove complications at later planning stages, such as removing the issue of lots being unable to accommodate the required land application area.

Water management should be addressed at all stages of the planning process, with each stage outlining overarching water-related matters for the next stage. By the time a subdivision is proposed, integration into the surrounding areas should be seamless, based on the information provided in the structure plan and scheme amendment that has preceded it. This emphasises the importance of proponents engaging with local government and water providers and relevant agencies at the start of a project.

Nevertheless, application of the policy and the detail required at each stage of planning is directly relevant to the scale and location of a proposal, as well as risk to, and from, water resources.

8 WHAT IS A WATER MANAGEMENT REPORT?

A water management report addresses all water-related matters relevant to a planning proposal. The report demonstrates the appropriate protection, management and use of water resources. The proponent is responsible for the preparation of a water management report. This can be either a regional, district, local, or subdivision and development water management report.

These reports will replace the preparation of regional water management strategy, district water management strategy, local water management strategy and urban water management plan as previously required under *Better Urban Water Management*. The naming convention of these documents has changed (from strategy/plan to report) to prevent confusion with other documents produced by different agencies.

9 WHAT DOES A WATER MANAGEMENT REPORT COMPRISE OF?

The content of the water management report will depend on the level of planning process and the characteristics of the site of the proposed development. The water management report does not need to be lengthy or complex, however, all water resources relevant to the site and surrounds (including cumulative and downstream impacts) need to be addressed. In addition, the information provided in the report should appropriately correspond with the level of risk, to and from, water resources from the proposed development or land use.

For proposals with minimal water management matters, a separate water management report may not be required. Instead the relevant information can be contained as a section of a larger planning report. Where there is no planning report that is accompanying the application, the relevant information may be submitted in an alternative format to the satisfaction of the decision-maker.

10 WHY DO LOCAL STRUCTURE PLANS AND PRECINCT PLANS ALWAYS REQUIRE A WATER MANAGEMENT REPORT?

Lodgement of a local structure plan or precinct plan (including masterplans and activity centre plans) is typically the first major milestone of a design process that responds to site conditions to locate and size public open spaces, set out lot and road layouts and design the necessary systems and infrastructure that will service the future development. Water planning and design is a critical element of this process and requires design of conceptual 'whole of development' water management systems and strategies to guide detailed designs that may be developed stage-by-stage. For this reason, local structure plans and precinct plans must always be supported by a water management report which addresses the entire proposal area.

11 WHEN IS A WATER MANAGEMENT REPORT REQUIRED?

In accordance with measure 7.1(b) of draft SPP 2.9, a water management report is required in most, but not all instances, to demonstrate the appropriate protection, management and use of water resources. The type of water management report to accompany proposals should correspond to the relevant planning decision as detailed in Table 1 within section 5 of the Guidelines.

Appendices B, C, D and E of the Guidelines provide guidance on the preparation and content of a water management report as well as how water resources should be considered at each stage of the planning process. In some cases, if the previously approved water management report specifically states that there is sufficient information for the subsequent planning stage and the proposal complies with the previously approved water management report, a further water management report is not required.

12 HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TYPE OF WATER MANAGEMENT REPORT IS REQUIRED?

The type of water management report required should correspond to the relevant stage as well as the planning instrument or application. Table 1 of the Guidelines summarises the type of water management report required at each level.

Not all planning proposals will fit neatly within the planning hierarchy. In these circumstances the water management report will need to provide sufficient information to allow the decision-maker to be able to consider the water-related issues associated with the planning instrument or application being considered.

OTHER QUESTIONS

For other questions, please email waterpolicies@dplh.wa.gov.au