Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Water**

Guilderton Water Reserve

Drinking water source protection review

Guilderton town water supply

Securing Western Australia's water future

Water resource protection series
Report WRP 154
November 2016

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November 2016

ISSN 1835-3924 (online)

ISBN 978-1-922248-85-5 (online)

Acknowledgements

The Department of Water would like to thank the following for their contribution to this publication: Justin King, Chris O'Boy, Chris Qui, Stephen Watson and Nigel Mantle (Department of Water), Michael Sawyer and Louise Holbrook (Water Corporation).

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Cover photograph: Aerial photograph of the Guilderton Water Reserve

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Summary

This drinking water source protection review considers changes that have occurred in and around the Guilderton Water Reserve since completion of the *Guilderton Water Reserve water source protection plan* (Bush 1997). Both of these documents are available on the Department of Water website or by contacting us.

Guilderton is a coastal holiday town located at the mouth of the Moore River, 90 km north of Perth, in the Shire of Gingin (Figure A1). Water is supplied to the town by the Water Corporation from three bores which draw water from a superficial aquifer in sand and fractured rock (Tamala Limestone). The aquifer is unconfined and is considered vulnerable to contamination from surface land uses.

The main risks to water quality within the Guilderton Water Reserve are nitrates and pathogens from agricultural activities, and hydrocarbons and chemicals from limestone quarries and accidents on the main road (Figure A2).

We prepared this document in consultation with key stakeholders, including land owners, the Water Corporation and the Shire of Gingin.

The main changes since the 1997 plan are:

- production bores 1/65 and 2/65 were decommissioned and replaced by production bore 1/06, and production bore 3/92 is currently not in use due to elevated nitrate levels
- an updated hydrogeological assessment by the Department of Water indicates that the immediate recharge area for the bore field extends further to the north-east of the existing Guilderton Water Reserve
- land within the Guilderton Water Reserve is identified for potential future urban development in the Shire of Gingin's draft *Local planning strategy* (2010), subject to planning studies.

This review consolidates the ongoing recommendations from the 1997 plan with the following new recommendations:

- encourage landowners and managers within the water reserve to adopt best management practices
- incorporate the Guilderton Water Reserve into the Shire of Gingin's draft *Local planning strategy*
- ensure land uses within the Guilderton Water Reserve are consistent with the recommendations for P2 areas in Water quality protection note (WQPN) no. 25: *Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas*
- continue to monitor nitrate levels in the bore field and take appropriate actions to ensure Guilderton's water supply remains within the *Australian drinking water guidelines'* (ADWG) (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011) health guideline values
- review the boundary of the water reserve, based on hydrogeological modelling and consultation with the Shire of Gingin and landowners, when this review is next updated or there are significant development pressures within the water reserve.

This review is consistent with the ADWG and State planning policy no. 2.7: *Public drinking water source policy.*

The following table shows important information about the Guilderton Water Reserve.

Key information about the Guilderton Water Reserve	
Status of this report	This report has been prepared based on information for the 2013/14 financial year
Local government authority	Shire of Gingin
Location supplied	Guilderton
Water service provider	Water Corporation
Aquifer type	Unconfined (vulnerable to surface-based contamination risks)
Licensed abstraction	170 000 kL per year
Number of bores	3
Bore names and GPS coordinates	3/69 (E 357 829, N 6 531 969, zone 50) 3/92 (E 358 687, N 6 533 009, zone 50) 1/06 (E 357 868, N 6 531 973, zone 50)
Date of bore completion	3/69 – 24 December 1969 3/92 – 6 March 1992 1/06 – 31 May 2006
Dates of drinking water source protection reports	1997 – *Guilderton Water Reserve water source protection plan* 2015 – *Guilderton Water Reserve drinking water source protection review* (this document)
Consultation	1996 – stakeholder and landowner consultation through the Shire of Gingin as part of the water source protection plan 2014 – consultation with key stakeholders including landowners, the Shire of Gingin and the Water Corporation
Proclamation status	Proclaimed on 23 July 1999 under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*

1 Review of Guilderton's drinking water source protection plan

1.1 Update on water supply scheme

The Department of Water renewed Water Corporation's groundwater allocation licence no. 69106 in 2011. The licence allows the Water Corporation to draw up to 170 000 kL of water from the superficial aquifer (unconfined) each year to supply Guilderton's drinking water from three production bores. This licence expires in 2020.

Guilderton's drinking water is supplied by production bores 3/69 and 1/06. Production bore 3/92 is currently not in use due to elevated nitrate concentrations. Since the 1997 *Guilderton Water Reserve water source protection plan*, production bores 1/65 and 2/65 were decommissioned and replaced by production bore (1/06) which was commissioned in 2006 (Figure A1).

All the production bores draw water from the superficial aquifer, which is less than 20 m below ground level within the bore field. Production bores 3/69 and 1/06 draw water from between 22 m and 28 m below ground level, while production bore 3/92 draws water from between 42 m and 63 m below ground level. Groundwater from this source is chlorinated to disinfect the water, dosed with Calgon to reduce hardness and then stored in a ground-level tank before being gravity-fed to the town.

The Water Corporation has indicated that if nitrate levels continue to increase in production bores 3/69 and 1/06, additional treatment will be required to ensure Guilderton's water supply remains within the *Australian drinking water guidelines'* (ADWG) (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011) health guideline values.

It should be recognised that although treatment and disinfection are essential barriers against contamination, public drinking water source area (PDWSA) management is the first step in protecting water quality and ensuring a safe drinking water supply. This approach is endorsed by the ADWG and reflects a preventive, risk-based, multiple-barrier approach for providing safe drinking water to consumers. This combination of catchment protection and water treatment will deliver a more reliable, safer and lower-cost drinking water to consumers than either approach could achieve individually.

For more information on why it is so important to protect our catchments, read Appendix D.

1.2 Boundary, priority areas and protection zones

The Guilderton Water Reserve was proclaimed in 1999 under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*. The boundary was defined based on land zoning and hydrogeological information available in 1999. It included the most likely areas of groundwater recharge to the production bores, assigned the water reserve a priority

2 (P2) area, and included 300 m wellhead protection zones (WHPZs) around each of the production bores in use at that time (1/65, 2/65, 3/69 and 3/92) (Figure A4).

An updated hydrogeological assessment of the Guilderton Water Reserve was undertaken in 2014 by the Department of Water. The assessment noted that because the superficial aquifer comprises sand and limestone (fractured rock), it is likely to have a highly variable fracture flow system, leading to some uncertainty regarding groundwater flow rates and flow paths.

The recharge area for the bore field has now been determined to extend north-east, beyond the existing boundary of the water reserve and onto Crown reserve and privately owned rural land. Further investigation via hydrogeological modelling is required to better define the immediate recharge area of the bore field. The groundwater travel time from the existing boundary of the water reserve to production bores 3/69 and 1/06 is estimated to be between 1.7 years and 10 years.

This review recommends that the recharge area for existing and any future production bores is more accurately defined by hydrogeological modelling when this review is next updated, or if there are significant development pressures within the water reserve. The boundary of the water reserve should then be reviewed based on the modelled recharge area and consultation with the Shire of Gingin and landowners.

If you require more information about how we protect drinking water sources, please read Appendix E.

1.3 Future urban development

The *Shire of Gingin local planning scheme no. 9* (Department of Planning 2012) identifies the location of the Guilderton Water Reserve through a special control area. This ensures that land use and development is compatible with the protection and long-term management of the water resources for public drinking water supply.

The draft *Local planning strategy* (Shire of Gingin 2010) identifies potential development pressure to expand the existing town site northwards and eastwards. The strategy identifies areas within the Guilderton Water Reserve for potential urban expansion, subject to planning studies. The draft strategy in its current form does not identify the water reserve as either a resource or a potential constraint on land development. This information needs to be incorporated into the draft strategy.

Urban development within the Guilderton Water Reserve is not consistent with P2 areas, as advised in WQPN no. 25 *Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas*. Planning studies and investigations for land within the Guilderton Water Reserve should consider land uses consistent with the P2 area to protect Guilderton's drinking water.

1.4 Aboriginal sites of significance and native title claims

Aboriginal sites of significance are those areas that Aboriginal people value as important and significant to their cultural heritage. The sites are significant because they link Aboriginal culture and tradition to place, land and people over time. These areas form an integral part of Aboriginal identity and the heritage of Western Australia. The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* protects all Aboriginal sites in the state.

There is one Aboriginal site of significance within the Guilderton Water Reserve; Gingin Brook Waggyl Site (unnumbered) (Figure A3).

Native title is the recognition in Australian law that some Aboriginal people continue to hold native title rights to lands and water arising from their traditional laws and customs. There is one native title claim within the Guilderton Water Reserve; Yued (WAD6192/98).

The Department of Water is committed to working with Aboriginal people in its planning and management activities. The department recognises that native title is an important framework for water management.

1.5 Enforcing by-laws, surveying the area and maintenance

This review recommends that the Water Corporation continue by-law enforcement under the existing delegation arrangement. This also includes:

- erecting and maintaining signs in accordance with *S111 Source protection signage* (Water Corporation 2013)
- maintaining security and fencing surrounding the bore compounds and treatment compound
- ongoing regular surveillance and inspections.

1.6 Other Department of Water work

The *Gingin groundwater allocation plan: for public comment* (Department of Water 2013) was released in August 2013. The allocation plan presents updated allocation limits and licensing rules designed to maintain the reliability of current groundwater entitlements. These limits and rules reduce the risks to the groundwater-dependent environment from abstraction. The final *Gingin groundwater allocation plan* (Department of Water 2015) was released in April 2015.

1.7 Update on water quality risks

As part of this review, we have updated the assessment of water quality contamination risks to the Guilderton Water Reserve drinking water source, in accordance with the ADWG. Table 1 shows a summary of this risk assessment.

1.7.1 Roads and tracks

The three production bores are located along the main transport route between Indian Ocean Drive and Guilderton. Accidents and spills pose a risk to drinking water quality from fuels, oils and chemicals. The short distance to the main road means that any spills of hazardous substances will need to be contained and cleaned up promptly to prevent contaminants from reaching the production bores.

There are also several access tracks within the wellhead protection zones (WHPZs) used by the Water Corporation. The tracks are sign-posted to discourage entry and there is little evidence of unauthorised access or recreational activities.

1.7.2 Rural land uses

The major land use in the Guilderton Water Reserve is pasture and grazing on Crown lease and privately owned land (figures A1 and A2). Elevated nitrate concentrations in groundwater may be attributed to historical agricultural activities in the area, which were of greater intensity than current activities.

Water quality risks from current agricultural activities include nutrients from fertilisers, pesticides, and pathogens from animal manure. These can be managed by encouraging land owners to adopt best management practices.

1.7.3 Limestone quarries

There are two mining tenements (M70/193 and M70/786), one petroleum title (exploration permit I.D. EP 440 R1) and three limestone quarries located on Crown reserve within the Guilderton Water Reserve (Figure A3). The Shire of Gingin's limestone quarry is located within the WHPZ for production bore 3/92, while the other two quarries are located more than 500 m away from the production bores.

Risks to drinking water quality from these land uses include fuel and lubricant leaks from heavy machinery and vehicles, and fuel spills from fuel storage facilities and refuelling equipment. Operators should be encouraged to adopt best management practices to minimise the risks of groundwater contamination within the Guilderton Water Reserve.

1.7.4 Decommissioned tip site

A decommissioned tip site is located within 200 m of production bores 3/69 and 1/06. The site has been reported as a potential contaminated site and is awaiting classification by the Department of Environment Regulation (Figure A2).

The 1997 *Guilderton Water Reserve water source protection plan* suggested that elevated nitrate levels in production bores 3/69 and 1/06 may have been linked to leachate from the tip. However, water quality monitoring by the Water Corporation has not detected any indication of contamination from tip leachate within the bore field. The source of nitrates is more likely to be fertiliser use on agricultural land that is up-gradient of the bores (Appleyard 1991).

Given that more than 20 years has passed without detection of leachate from the decommissioned tip, the management priority for drinking water quality protection is now considered low.

1.7.5 Other groundwater bores in the area

Bores drilled near a public drinking water supply bore (e.g. for irrigation or private purposes) can cause contamination of the drinking water source. For example, a poorly constructed bore may introduce contaminants from surface leakage down the outside of the bore casing into an otherwise uncontaminated aquifer.

It is therefore important to ensure that any bores are appropriately located and constructed to prevent contamination of the public drinking water source. This will be assessed through Department of Water's water licensing process where applicable under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914.* All bores should be constructed in accordance with *Minimum construction requirements for water bores in Australia* (National Uniform Drillers Licensing Committee 2012).

There are two licensed users nearby, both down-gradient of the Water Corporation bore field, as well as at least two domestic or livestock unlicensed bores within the water reserve.

Table 1 Summary of potential water quality risks, land use compatibility and best management practices

Land use/activity	Hazard	Management priority	Comments	Best management practice guidance[1]
Roads and tracks	Hydrocarbons and chemicals	Medium	Existing sealed roads are acceptable. Signage directs off-road vehicles away from unsealed roads near the bore field.	WQPN no. 44: *Roads near sensitive water resources*
Agriculture – pasture	Nutrients and pesticides	Medium	Increasing nitrate concentrations in groundwater may be attributed to more intensive historical agricultural activities.	WQPN no. 1: *Agriculture - dryland crops near sensitive water resources* Statewide policy no. 2: *Pesticide use in public drinking water source areas* Public Service Circular 88: *Use of herbicides in water catchment areas* (PSC 88)
Agriculture – grazing	Pathogens	Medium	Pathogens have not been detected by water quality monitoring to date. Grazing may occur within WHPZs.	WQPN no. 35: *Pastoral activities within rangelands*

Land use/activity	Hazard	Management priority	Comments	Best management practice guidance[1]
Limestone quarries	Hydrocarbons	Medium	Three quarries are located on Crown reserve land.	WQPG no. 1: *Water quality management in mining and mineral processing: An overview* WQPN no. 15: *Extractive activities near sensitive water resources*
Decommis-sioned tip site	Nutrients, hydrocarbons and chemicals	Low	Tip leachate has not been detected in more than 20 years of monitoring.	n/a

[1]Water quality protection notes (WQPNs) and water quality protection guidelines (WQPGs) are available http://drinkingwater.water.wa.gov.au.

1.8 Water quality information

The Water Corporation has provided updated water quality information for the Guilderton Water Reserve. This is shown in Appendix B.

Sodium, chloride, hardness and total filterable solids by summation (TFSS) have exceeded the ADWG's aesthetic values over the review period. Naturally occurring salinity and hardness are characteristic of the superficial aquifer in the area.

The nitrate concentration in Guilderton's water supply has gradually increased but remains below ADWG health guideline values. The Water Corporation ceased regular use of production bore 3/92 in 2002 when the raw water from this bore exceeded the ADWG health guideline value for nitrate. While the nitrate concentration has increased in the remaining production bores 3/69 and 1/06, it has stayed below ADWG health guideline values. The Water Corporation is regularly monitoring nitrate levels at Guilderton and has indicated that increased treatment for nitrates may be required in the future.

Microbial contaminants were not detected during the review period.

2 Implementation of Guilderton's drinking water source protection plan

2.1 Status of previous recommendations

Table 2 outlines recommendations from the 1997 plan and their current status.

Table 2 Implementation status for Guilderton Water Reserve

No.	Recommendation	Comments
1	Gazette the water reserve.	Gazetted in 1999 under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947.*
2	Incorporate the water reserve into land planning strategies.	*Shire of Gingin local planning scheme no. 9* (Department of Planning 2012) identifies the location of the Guilderton Water Reserve through a special control area. Shire of Gingin's draft *Local planning strategy* needs to incorporate the Guilderton Water Reserve (section 2.2, recommendation 1).
3	Refer development proposals which are likely to impact on water quality within the water reserve to the Department of Water (formerly Water and Rivers Commission).	Development proposals within the water reserve are referred to the Swan Avon Region office of the Department of Water. This is continued as a new recommendation in this review (section 2.2, recommendation 2).
4	Erect signs along the boundary of the water reserve.	Water Corporation signs are displayed on the bore compounds and drinking water treatment plant. Consider erecting additional signs at the boundary of the water reserve on Guilderton Road (section 2.2, recommendation no. 5).
5	Emergency response: • Develop response plan. • Inform Westplan-HAZMAT (formerly WAHMEMS) personnel of special requirements for the Guilderton Water Reserve.	The Water Corporation has spill response procedures in place. This is continued as a new recommendation in this review (section 2.2, recommendation no. 3).

No.	Recommendation	Comments
6	Establish a surveillance program to identify incompatible land uses or potential contamination threats within the water reserve.	The Water Corporation undertakes surveillance of the water reserve. This has been continued as a recommendation of this review (section 2.2, recommendation no. 6).
7	Initiate an investigation of the potential for contamination of production bores 1/65, 2/65 and 3/69 from the decommissioned tip site. Continue to monitor production bores annually for nutrients.	Monitoring and investigation has found no evidence of bore field contamination from the decommissioned tip site. Water Corporation has implemented a water quality monitoring program that includes annual monitoring for nutrients as well as metals, pesticides and industrial hydrocarbons. This review recommends that monitoring be continued (section 2.2, recommendation no. 7).
8	Review of the plan and recommendations.	Undertaken through the preparation of this review document.

2.2 Consolidated recommendations

Based on the findings of this review, the following recommendations will now be applied to the Guilderton Water Reserve. The bracketed stakeholders are those expected to have a responsibility for, or an interest in, the implementation of that recommendation.

1. Incorporate the Guilderton Water Reserve into the Shire of Gingin's draft *Local planning strategy*. (Shire of Gingin)
2. Refer development proposals within the Guilderton Water Reserve that are inconsistent with the Department of Water's WQPN no.25: *Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas* or recommendations in this review to the Department of Water regional office for advice. (Department of Planning, Shire of Gingin, proponents of proposals)
3. Ensure incidents covered by Westplan–HAZMAT in the Guilderton Water Reserve are addressed by ensuring that:
    - the Shire of Gingin's local emergency management committee (LEMC) is aware of the location and purpose of the Guilderton Water Reserve
    - the locality plan for the Guilderton Water Reserve is provided to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services headquarters for the HAZMAT emergency advisory team
    - the Water Corporation acts in an advisory role during incidents in the Guilderton Water Reserve

- personnel dealing with Westplan–HAZMAT incidents in the area have ready access to a locality map of the Guilderton Water Reserve and information to help them recognise the potential impacts of spills on drinking water quality. (Water Corporation)

4. Ensure landowners and managers are aware of the location of the Guilderton Water Reserve and are encouraged to adopt best management practices for protecting Guilderton's drinking water. (Department of Water)
5. Consider erecting signs along Guilderton Road at the boundary of the Guilderton Water Reserve including an emergency contact telephone number, in accordance with the Water Corporation's *S111 Source protection signage* (2013). (Water Corporation)
6. Water Corporation should continue the current regime of water quality monitoring, maintenance of fencing, inspections and by-law enforcement. (Water Corporation)
7. Water Corporation should continue monitoring nitrate levels in the bore field and take appropriate actions to ensure Guilderton's water supply remains within the ADWG's health guideline values. (Water Corporation)
8. Land-use planning within the Guilderton Water Reserve should be consistent with the recommendations for P2 areas in WQPN no. 25: *Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas*. (Shire of Gingin)
9. Review the boundary of the Guilderton Water Reserve when this review is next updated or if there are significant development pressures within the water reserve. Any revisions to the boundary should be based on hydrogeological modelling of the recharge area for existing and future production bores and be consulted with the Shire of Gingin and landowners. (Department of Water)
10. Update this review within seven years. (Department of Water)

Appendices

Appendix A.— Figures

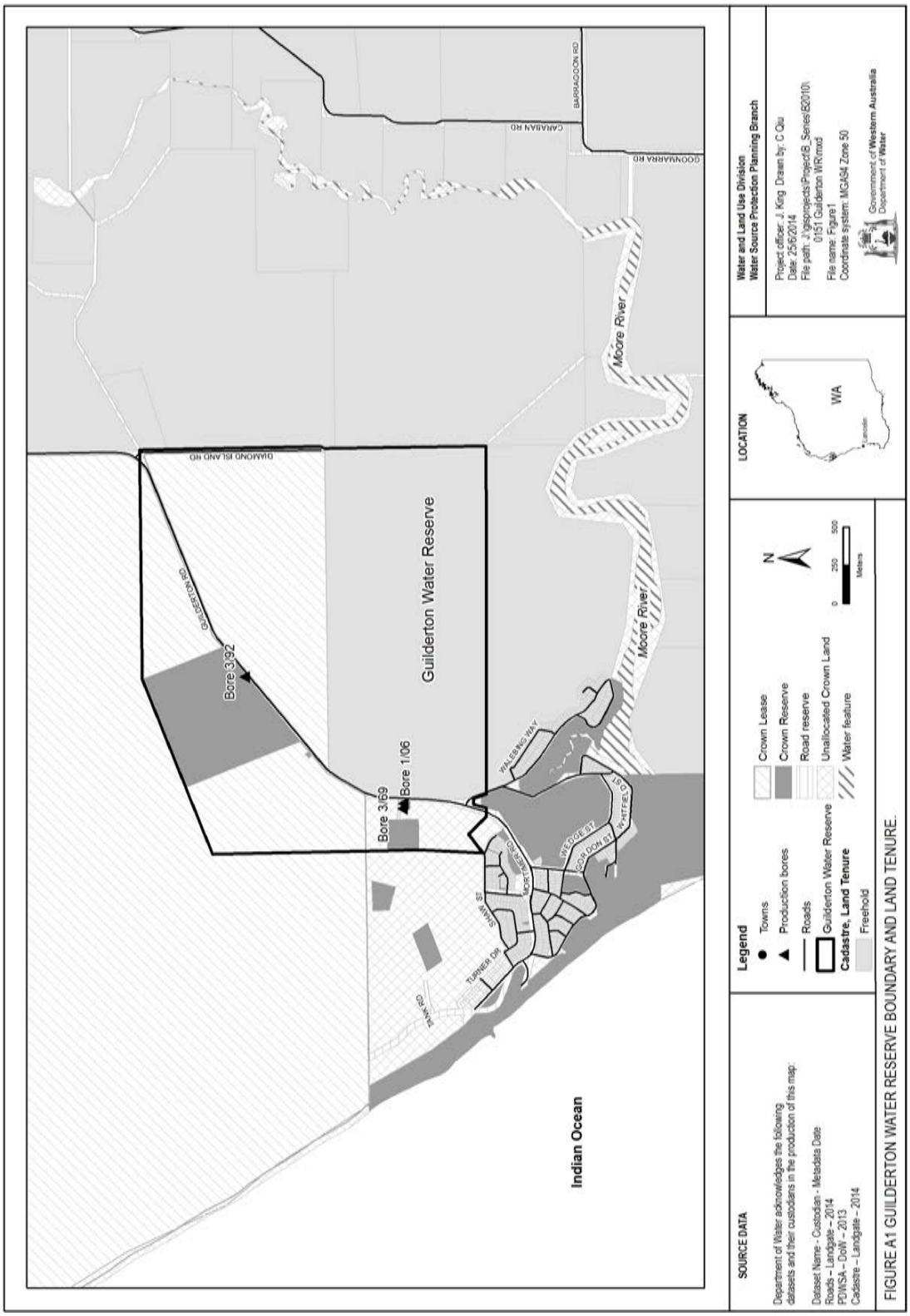

Figure A1 Guilderton Water Reserve boundary and land tenure

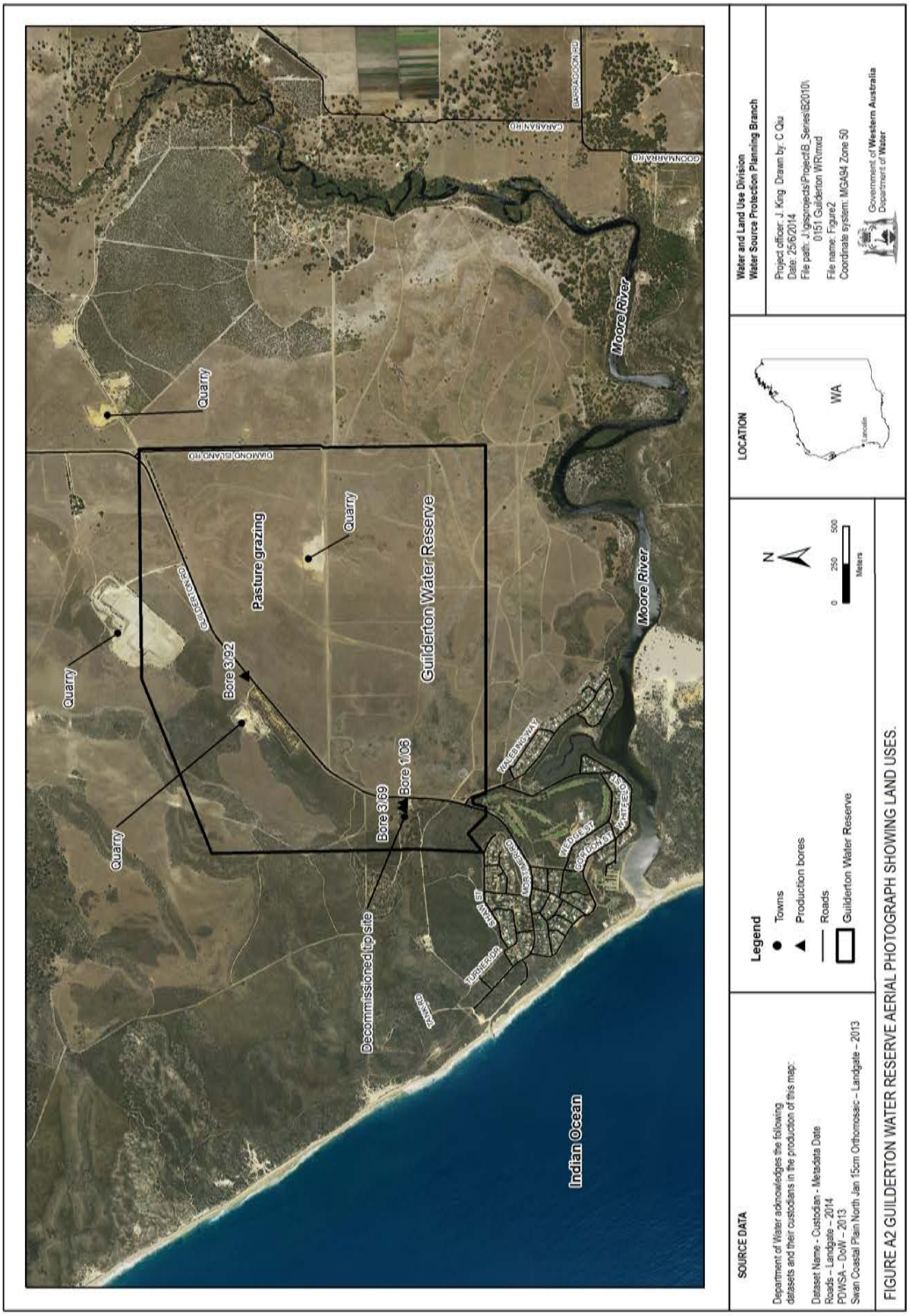

Figure A2 Guilderton Water Reserve aerial photograph showing land uses

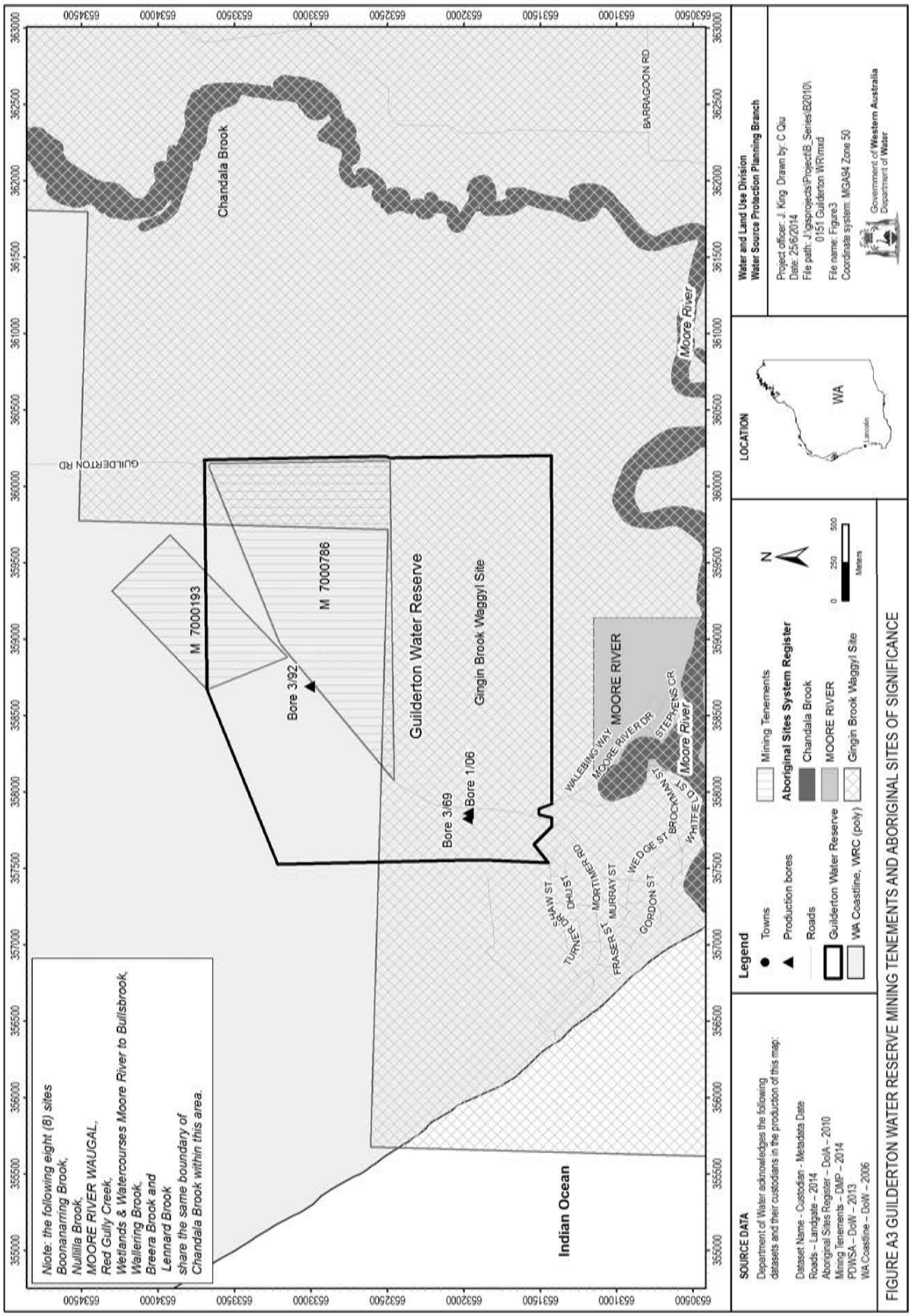

Figure A3 Guilderton Water Reserve mining tenements and Aboriginal sites of significance

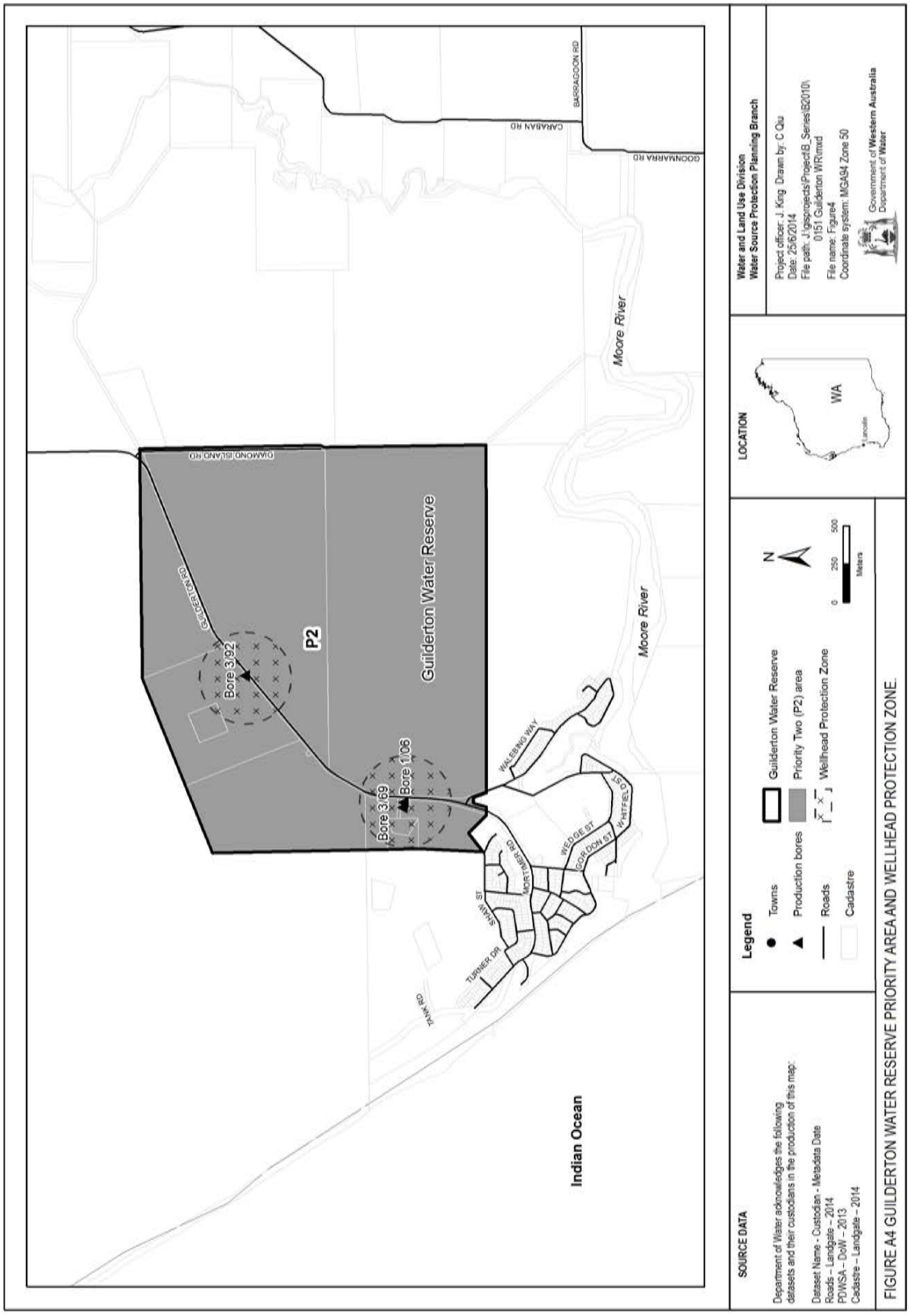

Figure A4 Guilderton Water Reserve priority areas and protection zones (note, these remain the same as the 1999 plan)

Appendix B.– Water quality data

The information provided in this appendix has been supplied by the Water Corporation.

The Water Corporation has monitored the raw (source) water quality from the Guilderton bore field in accordance with the requirements of the *Australian drinking water guidelines* (ADWG) (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011) and interpretations agreed to with the Department of Health. This data shows the quality of water in the catchment. The raw water is regularly monitored for:

- aesthetic characteristics (non-health-related)
- health-related characteristics including:
  - health-related chemicals
  - microbiological contaminants.

The following data represents the quality of raw water from the Guilderton bore field. In the absence of specific guidelines for raw water quality, the results have been compared with the ADWG values set for drinking water, which defines the quality requirements at the customer's tap. Any water quality parameters that have been detected are reported; those that on occasion have exceeded the ADWG are in bold and italics to give an indication of potential raw water quality issues associated with this source. The values are taken from ongoing monitoring for the period December 2008 to November 2013.

It is important to appreciate that the raw water data presented does not represent the quality of drinking water distributed to the public. Barriers such as storage and water treatment exist downstream of the raw water to ensure it meets the requirements of the ADWG.

For more information on the quality of drinking water supplied Guilderton refer to the most recent Water Corporation drinking water quality annual report at www.watercorporation.com.au.

Aesthetic characteristics

The aesthetic water quality analyses for raw water from the Guilderton bore field are summarised in the following table.

Aesthetic detections for the Guilderton bore field

Parameter	Units	ADWG aesthetic guideline value*	Guilderton bore field raw source	
			Range	Median
Chloride	mg/L	250	170–***415***	***310***
Colour (true)	TCU	15	<1–1	<1
Hardness as $CaCO_3$	mg/L	200	***240–340***	***290***
Iron unfiltered	mg/L	0.3	<0.003–0.05	0.004
Silicon as SiO2	mg/L	80	8.4–9.7	8.9
Sodium	mg/L	180	98–***240***	170
Sulfate	mg/L	250	19–51	36
Total filterable solids by summation (TFSS)	mg/L	500	***646–1105***	***888***
Turbidity	NTU	5	<0.1–0.8	<0.1
pH measured in laboratory	no units	6.5–8.5	7.35–7.93	7.54

* An aesthetic guideline value is the concentration or measure of a water quality characteristic that is associated with good quality water

Health-related chemicals

Raw water from the Guilderton bore field is analysed for chemicals that are harmful to human health, including inorganics, heavy metals, industrial hydrocarbons and pesticides. Health-related parameters that have been detected in the source are summarised in the following table.

Health-related detections for the Guilderton bore field

Parameter	Units	ADWG health guideline value*	Guilderton bore field raw source	
			Range	Median
Barium	mg/L	0.7	0.025–0.03	0.0275
Boron	mg/L	4	0.04–0.08	0.065
Fluoride measured in laboratory	mg/L	1.5	0.2–0.25	0.25
Nitrate as nitrogen	mg/L	11.29†	6.0–8.1	7.1
Nitrite plus nitrogen as N	mg/L	11.29†	4.9–9.2	7.25
Sulfate	mg/L	500	19–51	36

* A health guideline value is the concentration or measure of a water quality characteristic that, based on present knowledge, does not result in any significant risk to the health of the consumer over a lifetime of consumption (NHMRC & ARMCANZ 2011).

† A guideline value of 11.29 mg/L (as nitrogen) has been set to protect bottle-fed infants less than three months of age. Up to 22.58 mg/L (as nitrogen) can be safely consumed by adults and children over three months of age.

Microbiological contaminants

Microbiological testing of raw-water samples from the Guilderton bore field is currently conducted on a monthly basis. *Escherichia coli* counts are used as an indicator of the degree of recent faecal contamination of the raw water from warm-blooded animals.

A detection of *E. coli* in raw water abstracted from any bore may indicate contamination of faecal material through ingress into the bore, or recharge through to the aquifer (depending on aquifer type).

During the reviewed period, positive *E. coli* counts were not recorded in any samples.

Appendix C.– Photographs

Figure C1 Production bore 1/06, photograph by J. King, Department of Water

Figure C2 Production bore 3/69, photograph by J. King, Department of Water

Figure C3 Bore compound on main road (production bores 1/06 and 3/69), photograph by J. King, Department of Water

Figure C4 Bore compound for standby production bore 3/92, photograph by J. King, Department of Water

Figure C5 Signage at the track along the main bore compound, photograph by J. King, Department of Water

Figure C6 Pastoral land within the Guilderton Water Reserve, photograph by J. King, Department of Water

Appendix D.— Typical contamination risks in groundwater sources

Land development and land- or water-based activities within a water reserve can directly affect the quality of drinking water and its treatment. Contaminants can reach drinking water sources through runoff over the ground and infiltration through soil. A wide range of microbiological, chemical and physical contamination risks can impact on water quality and therefore affect the provision of safe, good quality drinking water to consumers.

Some contaminants in drinking water can affect human health, resulting in illness, hospitalisation or even death. Other impurities can affect the water's aesthetic qualities, including its appearance, taste, smell and 'feel' but are not necessarily hazardous to human health. For example, cloudy water with a distinctive odour or strong taste may not be harmful to health, but clear, pleasant-tasting water may contain harmful, undetectable microorganisms (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011). Contaminants can also interfere with water treatment processes, and damage water supply infrastructure (such as iron corroding pipes).

The ADWG (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011) outlines criteria for acceptable drinking water quality to protect human health, manage aesthetics and maintain water supply infrastructure.

Some commonly seen contamination risks relevant to groundwater drinking water sources are described below.

Microbiological risks

Pathogens are types of microorganisms that are capable of causing illness. These include bacteria, protozoa and viruses. In drinking water supplies, pathogens are commonly found in the faeces of humans and domestic animals (such as dogs and cattle).

Pathogens can enter drinking water supplies from faecal contamination in the water reserve. In groundwater sources, this occurs indirectly – faecal material can infiltrate through the soil and into the groundwater. For example, contamination can occur from septic tanks or grazing animals.

A number of pathogens are commonly known to contaminate water supplies worldwide. These include bacteria (for example *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* and cholera), protozoa (such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*) and viruses. Monitoring for the presence of *E. coli* in water supplies provides an indication of the level of recent faecal contamination.

Pathogen contamination of a drinking water source is influenced by many factors including the existence of pathogen carriers (humans and domestic animals), the transfer to and movement of the pathogen in the water source and its ability to survive in the water. The percentage of humans in the world that carry pathogens varies. For example, it is estimated that between 0.6 to 4.3 per cent of people are

infected with *Cryptosporidium* worldwide, and 7.4 per cent with *Giardia* (Geldreich 1996).

The survival and movement of pathogens in groundwater is influenced by the characteristics of the pathogen (such as its size and the length of time it normally takes to decay) and the groundwater properties (including flow rate, porosity, amount of carbon in the soil, temperature and pH). Inactivation rate (the time it normally takes a pathogen to decay) is one of the most important factors governing how far pathogens may migrate. Typical half-lives of pathogens range from a few hours to a few weeks. For example, some reported migration distances of bacteria in groundwater are:

- 600 m in a sandy aquifer
- 1000–1600 m in channelled limestone
- 250–408 m in glacial silt-sand aquifers (Robertson & Edbery 1997).

Unlike chemicals, which dissipate and dilute when they enter a water source, pathogens can multiply under the right conditions, increasing the likelihood of contamination. Therefore it is important to understand both the surface water and groundwater systems to be able to protect the drinking water source from pathogens.

When people consume drinking water contaminated with pathogens the consequences vary considerably, ranging from mild illness (such as stomach upset or diarrhoea) to hospitalisation and sometimes even death. During 2000, seven people died in Walkerton, Canada, because the town's water supply was contaminated by a pathogenic strain of *E. coli* and *Campylobacter* (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011).

Given the wide variety of pathogens, the differences in how they act in the environment and the potential consequences of consuming contaminated water, the most effective way to protect public health and reduce water treatment costs is to avoid the introduction of pathogens into a water source.

Physical risks

Turbidity is the result of soil or organic particles becoming suspended in water (cloudiness). Increased turbidity can result in cloudy or muddy-looking water, which is not aesthetically appealing to consumers. Turbidity can also reduce the effectiveness of treatment processes (such as disinfection). This is because pathogens can adsorb onto soil particles and may be shielded from the effects of disinfection. Chemicals can also attach to suspended soil particles.

Some physical properties of water such as pH (a measure of acidity or alkalinity) can contribute to the corrosion and encrustation of pipes. Other properties such as iron and dissolved organic matter can affect the colour and smell of water. Although not necessarily harmful to human health, coloured or 'hard' water will not be as appealing to consumers. Salinity can affect the taste of drinking water.

Chemical risks

Chemicals can occur in drinking water as a result of natural leaching from mineral deposits or from different land uses (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011). A number of these chemicals (organic and inorganic) are potentially toxic to humans.

Pesticides include agricultural chemicals such as insecticides, herbicides, nematicides (used to control worms), rodenticides and miticides (used to control mites). Contamination of a drinking water source by pesticides (and other chemicals) may occur as a result of accidental spills, incorrect use or leakage from storage areas. In these cases, the relevant authorities should be notified promptly and the spill cleaned up to prevent contamination of the drinking water source.

Hydrocarbons (such as fuels and oils) are potentially toxic to humans, and harmful chemical by-products may be formed when they are combined with chlorine during the water-treatment process. Hydrocarbons can occur in water supplies as a result of spills and leakage from vehicles.

Drinking water sources can also be contaminated by nutrients (such as nitrogen) from fertiliser, septic systems, and faecal matter from domestic or feral animals that washes through or over soil and into a water source. Nitrate and nitrite (forms of nitrogen) can be toxic to humans at high levels, with infants younger than three months being most susceptible (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011).

Other chemicals and heavy metals can be associated with land uses such as industry and landfill. These may enter drinking water sources and could be harmful to human health.

Appendix E.— How do we protect public drinking water source areas?

The *Australian drinking water guidelines* (ADWG) (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011) outline how we should protect drinking water in Australia. The ADWG recommends a 'catchment to consumer' framework that uses a preventive, risk-based and multiple-barrier approach. A similar approach is recommended by the World Health Organization.

The catchment to consumer framework applies across the entire drinking water supply system – from the water source to the taps in your home. It ensures a holistic assessment of water quality risks and solutions to ensure the delivery of a reliable and safe drinking water to supply your home.

A preventive, risk-based approach means that we look at all the different risks to water quality. We determine what risks can reasonably be avoided and what risks need to be minimised or managed to protect public health. This approach means that the inherent risks to water quality are as low as possible. A multiple-barrier approach means that we use different barriers against contamination at different stages of a drinking water supply system.

The first and most important barrier is protecting the public drinking water source area (PDWSA) (the area from which water is captured to supply drinking water). If we get this barrier right, it has a flow-on effect that can result in a lower cost, safer drinking water supply. Other barriers against contamination include storage of water to help reduce contaminant levels, disinfecting the water (for example chlorination to inactivate pathogens), maintenance of pipes and testing of water quality. Another community benefit from PDWSA protection is that it complements the state's conservation initiatives.

Research and experience shows that a combination of catchment protection and water treatment is safer than relying on either barrier on its own. That's why this drinking water source protection plan is important. We should not forget that ultimately it's about protecting your health by protecting water quality now and for the future.

In Western Australia, the Department of Water protects PDWSAs by implementing the ADWG, writing reports, policies and guidelines, and providing input into land-use planning.

This drinking water protection report achieves elements 2 and 3 of the 12 elements in the ADWG recommended for protecting drinking water. It shows the PDWSA's location, its characteristics, existing and potential water quality contamination risks, and makes recommendations to deal with those risks.

The *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act 1909* and the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* provide us with important tools to protect water quality in proclaimed PDWSAs. These Acts allow us to assess and manage the water quality contamination risks from different land uses and activities. The department works

cooperatively with other agencies and the community to implement this legislation and develop drinking water source protection reports. For example, the Western Australian Planning Commission has developed a number of state planning policies to help guide development in public drinking water source areas.

An important step in maximising the protection of water quality in PDWSAs is to define their boundaries, priority areas and protection zones to help guide land-use planning and to identify where legislation applies. There are three different priority areas. The objective of priority 1 (P1) areas is risk avoidance – ensuring there is no degradation of the water quality (for example over Crown land). The objective of priority 2 (P2) areas is risk minimisation – maintaining or improving water quality (for example over rural-zoned land). The objective of priority 3 (P3) areas is risk management – maintaining the water quality for as long as possible (for example, urban- or commercial-zoned land). Protection zones surround drinking water abstraction bores and surface water reservoirs so that the most vulnerable areas are protected from contamination.

With 129 proclaimed PDWSAs across Western Australia, the department prioritises the update of drinking water source protection reports (such as this document). Our aim is to update each report every seven years. In some locations, more frequent updates may be required to address changing water quality risks and land uses. These updates allow us to make changes to the PDWSA boundary, priority areas and protection zones if required. They also allow solutions to new water quality risks to be considered.

There are three different types of drinking water source protection report – each providing for different needs. The following table shows the differences between the types of reports.

There is a fourth type of report – Land use and water management strategy – that performs the same functions as a drinking water source protection report. However, these strategies are prepared by the Western Australian Planning Commission (with input from the Department of Water) and are strategic documents that integrate land use planning with water management. There are currently land use and water management strategies for Gnangara, Jandakot and Middle Helena.

If you would like more information about the ADWG and how we protect drinking water in Western Australia, visit <http://drinkingwater.water.wa.gov.au> or refer to our Water quality protection note (WQPN) no. 36: *Protecting public drinking water source areas*. You can also contact the Department of Water's Water source protection planning branch on +61 8 6364 7600 or email drinkingwater@water.wa.gov.au.

Drinking water source protection reports produced by Department of Water

Drinking water source protection report	Scope and outcome	Consultation	Time to prepare	Implementation table	Proclamation
Drinking water source protection assessment (DWSPA)	Desktop assessment of readily available information.	Targeted	Up to 3 months	No	Proclamation to protect water quality and guide land use planning can occur as a result of any type of drinking water source protection report.
Drinking water source protection plan (DWSPP)	Full investigation of risks to water quality building on information in the DWSPA.	Public	6–12 months	Prepared from recommendations in the DWSPA and/or information from public consultation.	
Drinking water source protection review (DWSPR)	Review change in land and water factors and implementation of previous recommendations. Sometimes prepared to consider specific issues in a PDWSA.	Key stakeholders	Up to 3 months	Prepared from recommendations in the DWSPA or DWSPP.	

Appendix F.– Understanding risks to drinking water quality

The existing integrated land use planning and public drinking water source area (PDWSA) protection program is based on the findings of three parliamentary committee reports in 1994, 2000 and 2010 (see *Further reading*). Since 1995, this integrated program has resulted in the development of four Western Australian Planning Commission state planning policies. These planning policies recognise the importance of PDWSAs for the protection of water quality and public health.

This integrated program relies upon a preventive and risk-based assessment process in each PDWSA through the development of drinking water source protection reports. It is important to understand how risks are assessed to appreciate the impact of development within PDWSAs.

Risk-based assessments normally focus on the acceptability of risks after mitigation (residual risks). For drinking water sources, a preventive risk base assessment that considers both the maximum and residual risks is required. This means that in some cases, the maximum risks from land uses will still be considered unacceptable, even after mitigation has reduced the risk. This is a more conservative approach needed to protect the health of consumers.

Water quality risks are evaluated by considering the type and scale of a potential contamination event (consequence), together with the probability/frequency of that event occurring (likelihood). An understanding of this relationship will prevent the common misunderstanding that probability equals risk (see risk matrix below).

For example, just because a drinking water contamination incident has not occurred for many years (low likelihood) does not mean that the risk is low, because we also need to consider the consequence of that contamination when determining risk. Further, no previous detection of contamination is not proof that the risk is acceptable.

Risk matrix: Level of risk (from the Australian drinking water guidelines *2011)*

Likelihood	**Consequences**				
	Insignificant	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Catastrophic**
Almost certain	Moderate	High	Very high	Very high	Very high
Likely	Moderate	High	High	Very high	Very high
Possible	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Very high
Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
Rare	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High

List of shortened forms

ADWG	*Australian drinking water guidelines*
ANZECC	Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council
ARMCANZ	Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand
HAZMAT	hazardous materials
kL	kilolitre
km	kilometre
LEMC	local emergency management committee
m	metres
mg/L	milligram per litre
mL	millilitre
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NRMMC	Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council
NTU	nephelometric turbidity units
PSC 88	Public sector circular number 88
PDWSA	public drinking water source area
TCU	true colour units
TDS	total dissolved solids
TFSS	total filterable solids by summation
WAHMEMS	Western Australian hazardous materials emergency management scheme (old name for Westplan–HAZMAT)
Westplan–HAZMAT	Western Australian plan for hazardous materials
WHPZ	wellhead protection zone
WQPG	water quality protection guideline
WQPN	water quality protection note

Glossary

Abstraction	The pumping of groundwater from an aquifer, or the removal of water from a waterway or water body.
Adsorb	Adsorb means to accumulate on the surface of something.
Aesthetic guideline value	The concentration or measure of a water quality characteristic that is associated with acceptability of water to the consumer, for example appearance, taste and odour (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011).
Allocation	Is the volume of water that a licensee is permitted to abstract, usually specified in kilolitres per annum (kL/a).
Aquifer	An aquifer is a geological formation or group or formations able to receive, store and transmit significant quantities of water.
Australian drinking water guidelines	The *National water quality management strategy: Australian drinking water guidelines 6*, 2011 (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011) (ADWG) outlines acceptable criteria for the quality of drinking water in Australia (see this plan's References).
Bore	A bore is a narrow, lined hole drilled into the ground to monitor or draw groundwater (also called a well).
Bore field	A group of bores to monitor or withdraw groundwater is referred to as a bore field (also see *wellfield*).
Catchment	The area of land which intercepts rainfall and contributes the collected water to surface water (streams, rivers, wetlands) or groundwater.
Confined aquifer	An aquifer that is confined between non-porous rock formations (such as shale and siltstone) and therefore contains water under pressure.
Contamination	A substance present at above background concentrations that presents, or has the potential to present, a risk of harm to human health, the environment, water resources or any environmental value.
Drinking water source protection report	A report on water quality hazards and risk levels within a public drinking water source area; includes recommendations to avoid, minimise, or manage those risks for the protection of the water supply in the provision of safe drinking water supply.

Fractured rock	An aquifer where groundwater is present in the fractures, joints, solution cavities, bedding planes and zones of weathering igneous, metamorphic and deformed sedimentary rocks. Fractures rock aquifers are highly susceptible to contamination from land-use activities when aquifers crop-out or sub-crop close to the land surface.
Health guideline value	The concentration or measure of a water quality characteristic that, based on current knowledge, does not result in any significant risk to the health of the consumer over a lifetime of consumption (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011).
Hydrocarbons	A class of compounds containing only hydrogen and carbon, such as methane, ethylene, acetylene and benzene. Fossil fuels such as oil, petroleum and natural gas all contain hydrocarbons.
Hydrogeology	The study of groundwater, especially relating to the distribution of aquifers, groundwater flow and groundwater quality.
Leaching/ leachate	The process by which materials such as organic matter and mineral salts are washed out of a layer of soil or dumped material by being dissolved or suspended in percolating rainwater. The material washed out is known as leachate. Leachate can pollute groundwater and waterways.
mg/L	A milligram per litre (0.001 grams per litre) is a measurement of something (such as salinity) in a solution.
Nutrients	Minerals, particularly inorganic compounds of nitrogen (nitrate and ammonia) and phosphorous (phosphate) dissolved in water which provide nutrition (food) for plant growth.
Pathogen	A disease-producing organism that can cause sickness and sometimes death through the consumption of water, including bacteria (such as *Escherichia coli*), protozoa (such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*) and viruses.
Pesticides	Collective name for a variety of insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, algicides, fumigants and rodenticides used to kill organisms.
pH	A logarithmic scale for expressing the acidity or alkalinity of a solution. A pH below seven indicates an acidic solution and above seven indicates an alkaline solution.
Porosity	The state of quality of a material to be porous – that is permeable by water.

Public drinking water source area	The area from which water is captured to supply drinking water. It includes all underground water pollution control areas, catchment areas and water reserves constituted under the *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act 1909* or the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*.
Public sector circular number 88	A state government circular produced by the Department of Health providing guidance on appropriate herbicide use within water catchment areas.
Recharge	Recharge is the action of water infiltrating through the soil/ground to replenish an aquifer.
Recharge area	An area through which water from a groundwater catchment percolates to replenish (recharge) an aquifer. An unconfined aquifer is recharged by rainfall throughout its distribution. Confined aquifers are recharged in specific areas where water leaks from overlying aquifers, or where the aquifer rises to meet the surface.
Scheme supply	Water diverted from a source or sources by a water authority or private company and supplied via a distribution network to customers for urban and industrial use or for irrigation.
Total dissolved solids	Total dissolved solids consist of inorganic salts and small amounts of organic matter that are dissolved in water. Clay particles, colloidal iron and manganese oxides, and silica fine enough to pass through a 0.45 micrometer filter membrane can also contribute to total dissolved solids. Total dissolved solids comprise sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, chloride, sulfate, bicarbonate, carbonate, silica, organic matter, fluoride, iron, manganese, nitrate (and nitrite) and phosphate (NHMRC & NRMMC 2011).
Total filterable solids by summation	Total filterable solids by summation is a water quality test which is a total of the following ions: Na (sodium), K (potassium), Ca (calcium), Mg (magnesium), Cl equivalent (chloride), alkalinity equivalent, SO_4 equivalent (sulfate) or S (sulfur) in grams, Fe (iron), Mn (manganese), and SiO_2 (silicon oxide). It is used as a more accurate measure than total dissolved solids (TDS). The higher the value, the more solids that are present and generally the saltier the taste.
Treatment	Application of techniques such as settlement, filtration and chlorination to render water suitable for specific purposes, including drinking and discharge to the environment.

True colour units	True colour units are a measure of degree of colour in water.
Turbidity	The cloudiness or haziness of water caused by the presence of fine suspended matter.
Unconfined aquifer	An aquifer in which the upper surface of water is lower than the top of the aquifer itself. The upper surface of the groundwater within the aquifer is called the watertable. This is also known as a superficial aquifer.
Water quality	Water quality is the collective term for the physical, aesthetic, chemical and biological properties of water.
Water reserve	A water reserve is an area proclaimed under the *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947* or the *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Act 1909* for the purposes of protecting a drinking water supply.
Wellhead	The top of a well (or bore) used to draw groundwater is referred to as a wellhead.
Wellhead protection zone	A wellhead protection zone is usually declared around wellheads in public drinking water source areas to protect the groundwater from immediate contamination threats in the nearby area.
Western Australian hazardous materials emergency management scheme	This is now known as Westplan–HAZMAT.

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