

Some important tips

- Respect signs and don't swim or recreate in drinking water reservoirs where it is prohibited. Note that fines may also apply.
- Use fertilisers appropriately, according to manufacturer's instructions and by applying best management practices, to reduce leaching of nutrients.
- Minimise the use of pesticides (e.g. insecticides and herbicides).
- Recycle or dispose of unwanted chemicals, oils, fuels and solvents through approved collection facilities.
- Ensure effective management and regular maintenance of on-site sewage systems (such as septic tanks and leach drains). Note: Do not dispose of chemicals or pool water into septic tank systems. This may reduce the effectiveness of the wastewater treatment system.
- Do not dump waste materials such as garden and household rubbish or leave picnic remains in PDWSAs.
- Report any waste dumping, contamination or spill immediately (call 13 13 75 if it affects a drinking water supply, or 1300 784 782 for all pollution, both numbers are 24 hrs) so it can be cleaned up before it soaks through the soil.

Am I living or working in a public drinking water source area?

Currently there are over 130 PDWSAs that are actively being used to supply drinking water in WA. These include underground water pollution control areas (such as the Gnangara mound), water reserves (other groundwater sources) and catchment areas (such as Mundaring Weir and North Dandalup dam).

Maps of WA's PDWSAs are available online via the Department of Water's Geographic data atlas, see www.water.wa.gov.au > [Tools & data](#) > [Maps and atlases](#) > [Geographic data atlas](#).

Cover photo: Mundaring Weir

Want to know more?

For more information about drinking water sources and how these are protected, see <http://drinkingwater.water.wa.gov.au>, send an email to drinkingwater@water.wa.gov.au or contact your nearest regional office (contact details below).

Regional offices:

Goldfields: Viskovich House, 377 Hannan Street, Kalgoorlie
Telephone: 08 9026 2222

Kimberley: 27 Victoria Highway, Kununurra
Telephone: 08 9166 4100

Kwinana-Peel: 107 Breakwater Parade, Mandurah
Telephone: 08 9550 4222

Midwest Gascoyne: 94 Sanford Street, Geraldton
Telephone: 08 9965 7400

Pilbara: Lot 4608, Cherratta Road, Karratha
Telephone: 08 9144 2000

South Coast: 5 Bevan Street, Albany
Telephone: 08 9842 5760

South West: 35-39 McCombe Road, Bunbury
Telephone: 08 9726 4111

Swan-Avon: 7 Ellam Street, Victoria Park
Telephone: 08 6250 8000

Perth

168 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Phone: 08 6364 7600
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Government of Western Australia
Department of Water

Living and working in public drinking water source areas



Looking after all our water needs



Inspecting a drinking-water supply bore

What is a public drinking water source area?

Water is an increasingly precious resource, especially in Western Australia (WA). The Department of Water takes great care in identifying and protecting areas from where drinking water is sourced. These areas are called public drinking water source areas (PDWSAs). They are designed to safeguard the availability and quality of our limited drinking-water sources so we can enjoy reliable, safe, good quality scheme water supplies.

Our drinking water comes from a variety of surface catchments (such as dams and reservoirs) and groundwater resources (bores) across WA. PDWSAs are designated to protect these water sources against contamination from chemicals, nutrients, fuels, waste, litter, bacteria and other harmful microbes, and physical disturbances that may lead to increased turbidity of the water source. We do this by striving for appropriate development in these areas, based on vulnerability of the resource to contamination and existing land uses, activities, tenure and zoning.

Different priority areas

We assign three different priority areas within PDWSAs:

Priority 1 (P1) areas are usually assigned over land that is owned or managed by the State, but can sometimes include private land in high risk settings. These areas are managed to avoid the risk of contamination to drinking water. Because many land uses create a significant risk to water quality, most are not supported in P1 areas.

Priority 2 (P2) areas are managed to maintain or improve water quality by minimising risk, so low to medium intensity activities such as rural lifestyles and grazing are supported.

Priority 3 (P3) areas include residential, commercial and light industrial zones where there is greater potential for contamination. The aim is to manage water quality contamination risk through implementing best environmental management practices.

Reservoir and wellhead protection zones

To safeguard land closest to drinking water sources, protection zones are designated around the drinking water extraction points of reservoirs and bores. Protection zones for reservoirs normally extend 2 km on the upstream side of the reservoir (and include the water body itself). Protection zones around wellheads are generally circular with a 500 m radius in P1 areas and a 300 m radius in P2 and P3 areas.

Who protects our drinking water sources?

The Department of Water plays a pivotal role in ensuring that development and activities in PDWSAs are appropriate for the primary purpose of protecting drinking water supplies. We do this through implementing legislation and policy, as well as undertaking protection planning and surveillance. In particular, we prepare and implement drinking water source protection plans for each PDWSA around the state. For a list of drinking water source protection plans available, visit <http://drinkingwater.water.wa.gov.au> and scroll down to [click here for our drinking water source protection plans and assessments](#).

We are supported in our efforts by the departments of Health and Environment and Conservation, along with water service providers like the Water Corporation.

Most Western Australians living in cities and towns consume water from PDWSAs, so maintaining water quality is everyone's responsibility. The Department of Water provides extensive information to anyone working in agriculture, business or industry about how to conduct their work appropriately while ensuring the protection of water quality. For more information visit www.water.wa.gov.au > [Managing our water](#) > [Water quality](#). There are also many measures we can all take to help safeguard a reliable supply of safe, good quality drinking water when living, working and recreating in PDWSAs.



Sign displayed at Serpentine Dam