Protecting your drinking water

These plans are developed by the Department of Water in consultation with local communities, state and local government and other interested stakeholders. Government bodies such as the Department of Health and water service providers such as the Water Corporation are also consulted.

The Department of Water aims to publish protection plans for all of the 139 drinking water sources through Western Australia. So far more than 80 of these have been published.

The support we receive from local communities, state and local government authorities and other interested stakeholders, for both the preparation and implementation of these protection plans, will greatly assist in ensuring the availability of safe, good quality drinking water now and in the future.

How to obtain a copy of the Gibson Water Reserve drinking water source protection plan

If you would like to view this protection plan please visit, www.water.wa.gov.au and select water management, publications, water source protection plans and assessments. Then scroll down to find the Gibson Water Reserve drinking water source protection plan. If you are unable to access the internet, please call the Department of Water to arrange for a copy of the plan to be posted to you.

Where can I get more information?

A range of other publications, such as water quality protection notes, policies and guidelines, are produced by the department’s Water Source Protection staff. To find out if your property is in the area covered by this plan please use the Geographic Data Atlas found on the Department of Water website under maps, data and atlases. A registry of drinking water sources also exists at water quality, publications, water quality protection notes, or contact the department’s Water Source Protection staff on 08 6364 7600.

For more information please visit the Department of Water website www.water.wa.gov.au, and select water quality.

Website

www.water.wa.gov.au

Copies of this document can be made available in alternative formats if requested.

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Looking after all our water needs

Protecting your drinking water sources

Gibson Water Reserve
Gibson town water supply

Perth office:
168 St Georges Terrace, Perth WA 6000
Telephone: 08 6364 7600, Facsimile: 08 6364 7601
Email: drinkingwater@water.wa.gov.au

Regional office:
Department of Water South Coast Regional Office
5 Bevan Street, Albany WA 6331
Telephone: 08 9842 5760, Facsimile: 08 9842 1204
Email: margi.bond@water.wa.gov.au

Website

www.water.wa.gov.au

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June 2008
Drinking water source protection plans

The Department of Water protects and manages drinking water catchments and water reserves in Western Australia. This involves developing and implementing policies and plans based on the [Australian drinking water guidelines](https://www.water.wa.gov.au/guidelines). To maintain the quality of these water supplies we must protect and manage not only the catchments and underground water sources but also the associated storages, treatment plants and distribution systems.

A drinking water source protection plan has been developed for the Gibson Water Reserve. The risks to the water quality have been identified with the community’s help, and management strategies for tackling them have been recommended. The main risks are outlined under ‘Contamination’.

Am I in the proposed new Gibson Water Reserve?

Assessment of the land actually required to protect the water source has resulted in a recommendation for the existing water reserve to be reduced by approximately 50%.

Land use

The main land uses in the Gibson Water Reserve are:

- broadacre agricultural cropping and animal grazing
- townsie residential, service industry and amenities
- special rural (subdivision of 2 to 3.5 hectares)
- transport infrastructure (freight railway and highway).

While it will be possible for all existing, legally-established land uses to continue, there is a need for those involved to adopt management practices designed to protect the quality of this drinking water source. New developments or expansion of existing land uses may only be supported if they conform with the plan’s recommendations.

For more guidance on appropriate land uses please refer to the Water quality protection note: [Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas](https://www.water.wa.gov.au/policy/land-use), produced by the Department of Water. To do this please visit [www.water.wa.gov.au](http://www.water.wa.gov.au) and select water quality, publications and then water quality protection notes. If you are unable to access the internet please call the Department of Water to arrange for a copy of the note to be posted to you.

Contamination

Drinking water source protection plans identify sources of potential water contamination. The main water quality risks for the Gibson Water Reserve are:

- contamination from spills and leaks of fuels and other hydrocarbons/chemicals
- nutrients and bacteria from septic tanks
- nutrients from animal excreta
- micro-organism contamination from animal excreta.

Following careful assessment of all potential contamination risks, recommendations have been made whose implementation will ensure the long-term protection of this vital water supply. The main recommendations include:

- reduction of the area of the existing water reserve, by approximately 50%, based on a current technical assessment of the land actually required to protect the water source
- incorporation of the plan into the Shire of Esperance’s town planning scheme to ensure that future land uses in the water reserve are compatible
- current land uses within the water reserve adopting best practice management to protect the water source
- putting signs in place to make people aware of the new reserve boundaries and the need to protect drinking water quality.