Working together to protect drinking water

Drinking water source protection documents are developed by the Department of Water in consultation with local communities, state and local government agencies, water service providers (such as the Water Corporation) and other interested stakeholders.

The support we receive from stakeholders through the development and implementation of protection plans and reviews greatly assists in ensuring the ongoing availability of reliable, safe, good quality drinking water sources now and in the future. Ultimately, the quality of water provided to consumers depends on everyone working together to keep the water reserve clean.

There are more than 130 public drinking water sources areas in Western Australia. We have completed around 110 drinking water source protection reports for these sources, so far. Copies can be found on our website.

Want to know more?

If you would like a copy of the Exmouth Water Reserve drinking water source protection plan (2000) and review (2011) go to www.water.wa.gov.au > Publications > Find a publication > Series browse > Water resource protection plans or contact us for a copy to be posted to you.

To read about best management practices to help protect water quality, go to www.water.wa.gov.au > Publications > Find a publication > Series browse > Water quality protection guidelines, water quality protection notes, water quality awareness brochures and information sheets.

To find out more about how we protect drinking water, visit our website: http://drinkingwater.water.wa.gov.au/ or contact us.
Where does Exmouth's drinking water come from?

Exmouth's drinking water comes from 34 bores located on the eastern side of the Cape Range Peninsula. This borefield is located to the west and south of the Exmouth town site and extends over a distance of about 7 km. Water from this borefield is abstracted from unconfined limestone aquifers within karst formations. The Exmouth Water Reserve boundary has been determined based on the recharge area for the production bores and consideration of surrounding land uses and ownership. A recharge area is the land over which water infiltrates into the ground to replenish the aquifer.

Where is the Exmouth Water Reserve?

The plan to protect Exmouth’s drinking water

The Department of Water has recently published the *Exmouth Water Reserve drinking water source protection review* to continue the protection of water quality in the Exmouth Water Reserve and to help ensure a reliable, safe, good quality drinking water supply. The review updates the plan published in 2000 by considering changes that have occurred in and around the Exmouth Water Reserve since completion of the plan. Where changes have occurred, the review recommends new management strategies. The updated plan also provides information on:

- the borefield supplying drinking water to the town of Exmouth
- implementation of recommendations within the 2000 publication plan and
- the priority areas and wellhead protection zones used to protect the drinking water source.

What are the risks to the town’s drinking water quality?

Karstic formations contain sink holes and solution channels that can transport contaminates quickly to the drinking water production bores in the event there is a contamination spill or incident. The main land uses in the Exmouth Water Reserve are limestone mining and a pastoral lease. Some of the water quality risks associated with these land uses are:

- pathogens and nutrients from people and animal waste
- hydrocarbons from vehicles via spills and leaks of fuel

How can we manage these water quality risks?

Recommended actions to protect Exmouth’s water supply include:

- recognition of the Exmouth Water Reserve boundary, its P1 area and wellhead protection zones in the Shire of Exmouth Townsite Structure Plan
- assessment of development proposals within the Exmouth Water Reserve for compatibility using the Department of Water’s Water Quality Protection Note (WQPN) no.25: Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas.
- Providing advice to the Department of Mines and Petroleum and the Environmental Protection Authority for mining proposals and ongoing operations of extractive industries within the Exmouth Water Reserve.

What am I allowed to do in the water reserve?

We support all existing, approved land uses and activities to continue. We encourage land owners and managers to adopt best management practices to protect the quality of this important drinking water source.

We have a range of publications that provide advice on best management practices. See *Want to know more?* on the back of this brochure.

New developments, or expansion of existing land uses or activities will need to consider the priority areas, protection zones and recommendations in the *Exmouth Water Reserve drinking water source protection plan (2000) and review (2011)* and our WQPN no. 25: *Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas*. 