Water policy framework

The department’s Water Policy Framework coordinates and guides water policy development by the Department of Water. It identifies the type and scope of our policies and sets a consistent format to make our policies easy to read and understand.

Defining policy

Defining policy is not straightforward. People generally have very different views about what a policy is or is not. We apply the following definition of policy:

Policy is the instrument through which we translate the broad goals and objectives of government and carry out our legislative responsibilities. A policy is defined as a clear, concise and timely statement of the department’s endorsed position. A policy is issue specific and reflects our strategic direction for water resources management and the water industry in Western Australia.

Our policies:

- inform legislative change
- outline how we administer water legislation
- inform the water planning process
- support equity and consistency in our decision making
- promote public awareness of water issues
- inform water users of their responsibilities.

The policy hierarchy

The water policy framework is divided into three levels of policy:

- directional: broad and sweeping articulation of major government directions e.g. The Australian drinking water guidelines
- strategic: policies that set out how these broad directions will be achieved or broad statements of position against water issues e.g. Protecting public drinking water sources areas in Western Australia
- operational: detailed policies that guide operational decision making e.g. Policy and guidelines for recreation within public drinking water source areas on crown land.
Naming of our policies

Over recent months you may have noticed a change to the naming of our policies. This change better reflects the level, scale and scope of the policies we develop and tells you where the policy sits in the policy hierarchy.

Recently revised policies include:

- Operational policy 5.05 : Giving an undertaking to grant a water licence or permit (previously Statewide policy 8)
- Operational policy 5.13 : Water entitlement transactions for Western Australia (previously Statewide policy 6)
- Operational policy 5.12 : Hydrogeological reporting associated with a groundwater well licence (previously Statewide policy no. 19).

Further information

For more information on the Water Policy Framework contact the Strategic water policy and planning branch on 6364 6587.