



Private Property Rights & Resources

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Bulletin – 12th November 2012

DEPARTMENT OF WATER

The Department has released the Pilbara groundwater allocation plan for public comment. The plan covers an area of 200,000 sq.kms. and includes the coastal towns of Onslow, Karratha, Wickham, Roebourne and Port Headland and extends inland to include Marble Bar, Wittenoon, Nullagine, Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Newman. There have been some concerns expressed by our members regarding water extraction within the plan by the mining companies.

The department of water has stated that water availability is assessed on a case by case basis through licensing as outlined in WA Water in mining guidelines. The stated management objectives are to ensure that mining activities do not adversely affect the quality and quantity of public and private drinking water supplies and to develop and maintain positive relationships between all stakeholders.

Both the Pilbara Groundwater Allocation Plan and WA Water in Mining Guidelines are open for public comment until 18th January 2012. If you require further information or wish to comment please contact Zak at PGA on 94794599 or email milanz@pgaofwa.org.au.

DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND PETROLEUM (DMP)

The Minister recently announced the establishment of the new Mining Rehabilitation Fund (MRF) which will replace the Environmental bond system that has been operating for a number of years. The industry recognised the current bond system needed overhauling to ensure adequate funding was available for mine site rehabilitation where operators failed to meet their environmental obligations.

The Government is confident that the MRF is a more flexible and cost effective system for industry and meets public expectations for higher standards of rehabilitation at mine closure,”

The Mining Rehabilitation Fund (MRF) will require operators to make annual contributions based on a percentage of their total closure liabilities, which will go into a pooled Government-administered fund.

The DMP is of the view that the new fidelity fund will substantially reduce costs for tax payers and also provide some opportunity to address some historical legacy sites.

Information about the fund is available at <http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/RER>

UNCONVENTIONAL GAS

Earlier this year the WA Government introduced new petroleum environment regulations mandating public disclosure of any chemicals introduced into a well or formation. This was introduced in response to concerns from the community with regard to a potential threat of groundwater contamination

The State Government together with CSIRO and industry held unconventional gas workshops in the Mid-West and North-West of Western Australia to help identify and alleviate community concerns about hydraulic fracturing and the State's developing unconventional gas industry.

The workshops provided access to expert advice on current exploration and potential future development of the State's onshore shale and tight gas industries. It is estimated WA holds 288 trillion cubic feet of shale gas which is twice the gas contained in WA's offshore areas. Further information is available

If you would like more information about unconventional gas development in WA contact Zak at the PGA or visit www.dmp.wa.gov.au/onshoregas.

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