



**Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group
Meeting No 5 - 12 October 2020**

Communique

The Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group (AWEAG) held meeting number 5 on Monday 12 October 2020 at Prime House.

Mike Rowe, Director General of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation chaired the meeting.

Main items discussed include the following:

Presentation by Western Australia Return Recycle Renew (WARRRL) on the Container Deposit Scheme

The Container Deposit Scheme commenced on 1 October 2020. WARRRL provided members with an update on the scheme, with an emphasis on engagement with Aboriginal communities and organisations.

Members acknowledged the importance of the scheme, and the potential for local organisations and communities to become involved. Members provided suggestions for engaging with remote communities, adjusting language used, and working together to provide appropriate infrastructure.

DWER's Reconciliation Action Plan and Aboriginal Engagement Strategy

The department presented an update on the Reconciliation Action Plan and Aboriginal Engagement Strategy. It was noted that some delays have occurred due to temporary shift in focus towards addressing the Coronavirus pandemic, and several items will be rolled over into a future Reconciliation Action Plan.

Members noted the opportunity for improving engagement through the update of the Reconciliation Action Plan in 2021, and the release of the Aboriginal Engagement Strategy for public comment.

Water resources reform

Members were provided with an update of the Water Resources reform program, including opportunities to better recognise Aboriginal people in water resources management and regulation, and to improve engagement with Aboriginal people through water management and regulation activities.

Members recognised the importance of legislation. They also noted the importance of working across government to ensure engagement with Aboriginal communities is coordinated and

consolidated where possible. This is especially the case when consulting on water, environment and land, involving multiple pieces of legislation and policy.

The AWEAG will continue to be actively involved as the legislation is drafted and progressed.

Working towards better engagement

The AWEAG forward program includes in-depth analysis of current and proposed future engagement with Aboriginal communities. Members shared stories and lessons learned from past engagement with government and industry (including the department). A number of opportunities and challenges were identified, which will inform the development of actions and guidance documents for the department's Aboriginal Engagement Strategy.