



## Water quality protection note no. 3

August 2024

# Using water quality protection notes

## What does the department do?

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) is Western Australia's (WA) primary water and environmental adviser and regulator. The department helps support WA's community, economy and environment by managing and regulating the state's environment and water resources sustainably now and for the future.

## What are water quality protection notes?

Water quality protection notes (WQPNs) are the department's recommendations of best management practices for land use and activities to ensure water quality contamination risks are avoided, minimised or managed. This will help ensure the supply of safe, reliable and affordable drinking water to the people of WA.

Our WQPNs are linked to the department's [Strategic policy – Protecting public drinking water source areas in WA](#) and [Policy – Land use compatibility in public drinking water source areas](#) (PDWSAs). These policies describe how PDWSAs are managed in WA. It provides for the continuation of WA's existing integrated land use planning and PDWSA protection program. These policies and our WQPNs are available on the department's [Drinking water matters](#) website.

[WQPN 25 – Land use compatibility tables for public drinking water source areas](#) describes appropriate land uses and activities within areas that are used to supply drinking water to the public. Each water quality protection note topic is linked to a land use or activity within the table.

There are over 140 legally constituted PDWSAs in WA. To view the location of WA's PDWSAs, see the department's [Public drinking water source area mapping tool](#). There are also 140 sources that are not constituted under the water legislation. However, they are covered by other planning legislation and policy frameworks such as the WA Planning Commission's [State Planning Policy 3.2 – Aboriginal settlements](#).

## Standard information and appendices

Standard information that is relevant to all WQPNs is being removed from appendices of individual WQPNs and published separately as WQPNs are reviewed. This allows standard information to be updated independently of the topics. These are available at [www.wa.gov.au](http://www.wa.gov.au):

- [WQPN 3 – \*Using water quality protection notes\*](#) (this note)
- [WQPN 4 – \*Sensitive water resources\*](#)
- [WQPN 8 – \*Further reading\*](#)
- [WQPN 14 – \*Statutory approvals\*](#)
- [WQPN 18 – \*Information the department requires to assess a proposed development or activity\*](#)

## Limitations

WQPNs provide a general guide and best management practices on how to minimise or manage water quality contamination risks. They are based on reviews of scientific literature, relevant policies and guidelines from WA, Australia and around the world, our experience with similar land use and activities within WA, and our professional knowledge. WQPNs shall not be used as the department's policy position unless confirmed in writing.

Recommendations in our WQPNs do not override any statutory obligation or government policy. Decision-making and regulatory agencies should not use WQPNs in place of site-specific development conditions that have been based on a valid risk assessment.

If a conflict arises between a WQPN's recommendations and a proposed land use or activity, proponents may propose alternative practical solutions to protect water quality that are site specific, i.e. suited to local conditions. The proposal should be consulted on with the department and the decision-making or regulatory authority. The outcome should not result in a greater water quality contamination risk than would apply if the WQPN's recommendations were used.

The department cannot give assurance to the accuracy, validity, currency or completeness of any information contained within our WQPNs. This is due to changes in information which may occur after a WQPN has been published, but we endeavour to keep them as up to date as circumstances allow. <https://www.wa.gov.au/service/natural-resources/water-resources/water-quality-guidance>

## Updates

WQPNs are updated as new information is received, industry/activity standards change and resources permit. We aim to regularly enhance them so they are as useful as possible to help protect the quality of WA's precious water resources.

## Disclaimer

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