



# Water Allocation planning in the Pilbara



Department of Water  
The Atrium  
168 St Georges Terrace  
Perth WA 6000  
Phone: 08 6364 7600  
Fax: 08 6364 7601

Department of Water  
Karratha regional office  
Lot 4608 Cherratta Road  
Karratha WA 6714  
Phone: 08 9144 2000  
Fax: 08 9144 2610

[www.water.wa.gov.au](http://www.water.wa.gov.au)

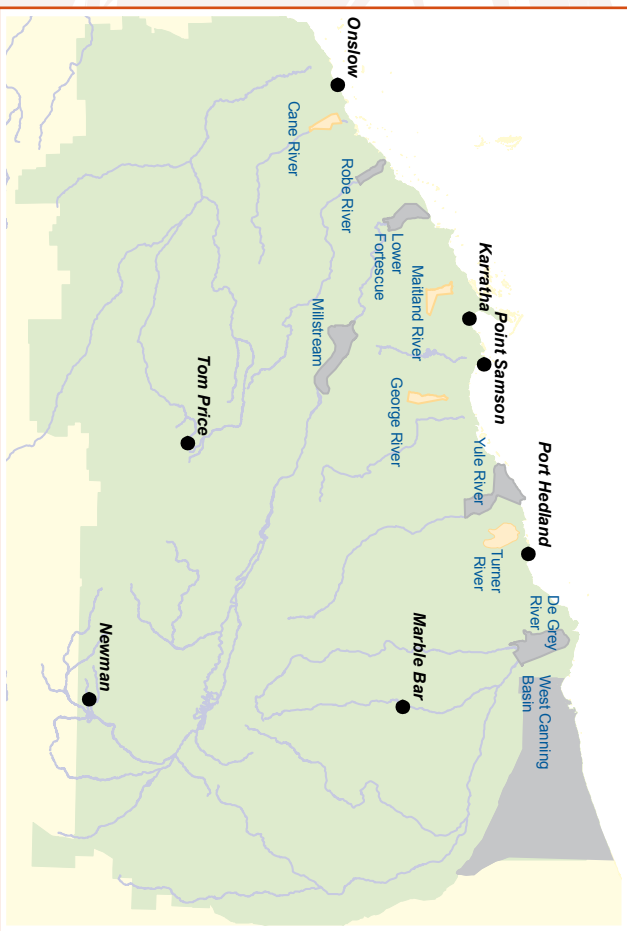
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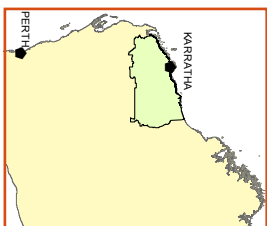


*Looking after all our water needs*

April 2011



Pilbara Target Resource Map



Locality Map

### Legend

- Pilbara groundwater allocation plan
- Detailed assessment
- Risk based assessment
- Major town
- Major road
- Major river



Crossing Pool  
at Millstream

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The Department of Water manages the amount of water taken from rivers and groundwater through water allocation plans which guide water licensing. To meet the increasing demand for water from the growing Pilbara mining industry, we are developing a groundwater allocation plan for the Pilbara region.

During 2007–2010 the Australian Government's *Water for the Future* initiative funded over \$3 million in investigations to support the plan. We are now using this scientific data and information from stakeholder and community consultations (economic, environmental, social and cultural water issues) to develop the plan. The plan will be released for public comment in 2012.

We will address the new challenges in water management, including:

- improving the security of water supply at ports and coastal towns
- managing water at mines
- considering catchment-scale cumulative impacts of changes to water regimes.

### What will the Pilbara water allocation plan do?

The plan will set out allocation limits and water management rules for the target groundwater resources. This will tell us how much water can be taken for consumptive use while leaving enough water to maintain ecological and cultural indigenous values that are dependent on groundwater.

The plan will also provide guidance in the form of policy to help licensees (existing and potential) in other parts of the Pilbara groundwater area to improve water management across the region.

The map on the back panel shows the target groundwater resources, all of which were the focus of the *Water for the Future* work:

- Lower Fortescue, Lower Robe, Lower Yule and Lower De Grey coastal alluvial aquifers
- Millstream aquifer
- sedimentary aquifer of the West Canning Basin.

Risk based allocation limits for smaller alluvial aquifers along the Lower Cane, Lower Turner, Lower George and Lower Maitland rivers will be based mainly on existing available information.

Other groundwater resources (for example, fractured rock) within the Pilbara groundwater area will be covered by Department of Water statewide policies, the *Pilbara Water in Mining Guideline* or policies specific to this plan.

### The main issues

The main issues to be addressed through the water allocation planning process include:

- How much water can be taken from groundwater resources?
- How much water must be left in the systems to support social, cultural and environmental needs?
- How can we manage water for use now and for future generations?
- How should the impacts of water use, such as changes to water quality, be managed?
- How should water use be managed in areas with no allocation limits?
- How is water management aligned with other government policies and objectives?

### Want to be involved?

Stakeholders have been involved to date in scoping the values and issues for the groundwater resources.

To develop the plan, we will consult with key stakeholders, including traditional owners, industry, pastoralists and government agencies, for their input into water allocation decision-making. Other stakeholders and the general public will have an opportunity to comment on the draft plan when it is released for public comment. This is scheduled for early in 2012.