

PUBLIC LAND AND WATER RESOURCES — RECREATIONAL USE

Urgency Motion

THE PRESIDENT (Hon Nick Griffiths): I received the following letter this morning —

Dear Mr President

I hereby give notice that pursuant to Standing Order 72 I intend to move;

That this House considers as a matter of urgency, the Government's lack of commitment to the responsible "shared-use" of public land and water resources for recreational activities by the Western Australian community.

Yours sincerely

HON BARRY HOUSE MLC

Member for the South West Region

Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation

The member will require the support of four members in order to move the motion.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [3.36 pm]: I move the motion.

I will outline a number of high profile examples that illustrate the issue outlined in the motion. Before I do so, I acknowledge the undisputed value of recreational activities to our lifestyle, health and fitness levels through physical activity. Concerns abound about the modern diseases of diabetes and obesity, about drug and alcohol abuse and about community cohesion. All those things are addressed in a very positive way by a high level of recreational activity. That fact is backed by research; however, we all know it intuitively. Western Australia is a vast state. About seven percent of our land is held in freehold. About 37 per cent is held in pastoral leases involving a shared-use capacity. There are vast areas of crown land in the form of national parks and reserves of various types for conservation, timber, plantations, water, parks and gardens and recreational use. Some of those are vested with local shires for a specific purpose and for other purposes, such as education. All of that is good. A comprehensive process is in place and, in the main, it is handled quite well. However, we must acknowledge that governments are the custodians of the land—they do not own the land as though it were a freehold title; they are custodians in the sense that they are responsible for the management of that land in the interests of the community. That cannot be considered on the same basis as a freehold title.

I do not want to labour the point and to be accused of being totally negative; therefore, I acknowledge the many good examples of cooperative partnerships that involve land and water use, particularly those that involve the Department of Environment and Conservation. There are partnerships with other government agencies, but there are some difficulties with those. I have had some involvement with these areas over the years. In my pre-parliamentary existence, I was a youth education officer in a senior high school. I was involved in outdoor education activities and a range of other lifestyle pursuits. I am now the shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation. In 1994 I chaired a ministerial task force on the development of a trails network in Western Australia. After the task force investigation, a Trails West unit was developed within the Department of Sport and Recreation. The unit kick-started some progress in this area after it accessed Lotterywest funding. After the change of government in 2001, and the Machinery of Government Taskforce, the unit was dumped and the name Trails West was dropped. However, I am pleased that the process that had been established to access Lotterywest funding to facilitate the development of a trails network throughout Western Australia has remained largely intact within the department. I am grateful for that, and it has taken large strides in recent years.

Western Australia has icons such as the Bibbulmun Track, the Munda Bindi bike trail and the cape-to-cape track, of which I am a patron of the friends' group. All those are very important and very successful and rely heavily on contact with individuals within the Department of Environment and Conservation, of which Jim Sharp used to be head of the recreation section. His namesake, Peter Sharp, is also involved. The cape-to-cape region also has a very close and productive relationship with Neil Taylor, a DEC employee. All those initiatives involve productive partnerships with the Department of Environment and Conservation, shire councils, some private owners and, most importantly, the community, which in a sense has ownership of the assets.

I will give a couple of very quick positive examples from that report. Last year I went to the opening of a rail trail section from Nannup to Barragup. Federal, state and local funding had been sourced to repair some railway bridges, including a major railway bridge over the Blackwood River, which was an excellent outcome. The

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Margaret River-Cowaramup rail trail was used as a model in the report, and the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River has taken a leadership role in that area and has done a very good job over a long period. The rail trail has been extended further south towards Witchcliffe, but the northern section is in a sad state because a few of the bridges have been closed. This raises the first of the issues because those bridges were closed at the direction of Main Roads, which is a state government agency. It closed them on the basis of its safety regulations, which did not necessarily relate to the purposes that the bridges were being used for, such as individuals walking across them with their dogs or riding their bikes over them. A bit of a discrepancy arises there. The Shire of Augusta-Margaret River has been very proactive in putting together the planning for the repair of those bridges, some of which have been out of action for more than a year, which is far too long. I have raised the issue in the local media and sought some government assistance. Let us hope that some federal and state government support is in the offing very soon.

Throughout the state, of course, there are also a series of successful licensing arrangements between the Department of Environment and Conservation and tourist operators to run wildflower tours and Pinnacles tours. In my neck of the woods, in Margaret River, there is Bushtucker Tours, which has received many awards. Those tours have access to rivers, caves and the natural environment. One issue that arises is that of competition with the Augusta-Margaret River Tourist Association, which relies on income from three major caves—the Jewel, Lake and Mammoth Caves. A few years ago there was a bit of a hullabaloo about competition between the state and the tourist association, but that seems to have been resolved to a large extent.

There are many good and bad examples of school facilities, such as ovals and gymnasiums, being used for community purposes. I understand that Hon Ray Halligan has been pursuing an issue that has arisen with schools in Greenwood on that matter. It is pretty clear that the demand is there.

I will not read the whole article, but it was reported in *The West Australian* of Saturday, 22 March—on the recent Easter long weekend—that the south west camp grounds were all full and that there was no room in the parks and forests managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation. The article listed the camp sites that had been closed because they were chock-a-block. The demand from the community is increasing all the time and the article illustrates that people are using those facilities in overwhelming numbers. They must be provided for.

The main point of my motion is that the major obstacle to fair and reasonable access for many recreational uses is the Water Corporation's policy 13, which has been used as a vehicle to withdraw, rather than facilitate and enhance, access for recreational use. In a nutshell, its implementation is too inflexible and restrictive. The Water Corporation—because it can, because this is its policy—uses it as a blunt instrument. The Water Corporation's only consideration appears to be the provision of water for the Perth metropolitan area. All other considerations appear to be at least secondary, if they are considered at all. To my mind, the Water Corporation cannot completely ignore its community service obligations to meet community and social obligations and objectives.

Policy 13 relates to policy guidelines for recreation within the public drinking water source areas on crown land. It states —

The primary aim of this policy document is to protect the 'drinking water' environmental value of PDWSAs on Crown land, in the interest of public health. This will be achieved by protecting drinking water sources from contamination that may be caused by inappropriate recreational activities.

This report contains a lot of material, and states —

The most significant risk to water quality from recreational activities is direct or indirect contamination with the micro-organisms contained in human and animal excreta . . .

That is stated as the most significant risk. I would have thought that, in just about all cases that I can think of, that is a pretty manageable risk from a human point of view. It is not very manageable from an animal point of view unless we put nappies on kangaroos or something like that, but from a human point of view surely that waste stream can be managed, contained and removed before it enters the water source.

The Water Corporation invokes a policy called “multiple barrier protection”, but that does not take into account the opportunity lost, or the benefits foregone, for recreational activities. The report contains a host of other stuff that I do not have time to go through. Policy 13 refers to a couple of very pertinent points. I know that the President is familiar with this policy. The policy mentions compatibility of recreational activities and states —

Conditional recreational activities can be made compatible with the objectives of Priority 1 water source protection with appropriate management practices. All conditional activities should be referred to the Commission (or delegated agent) for assessment on a case-specific basis.

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The words used in that statement and other parts of this policy sound good, but there is a problem with the implementation of it. It is far too rigid and far too inflexible. A host of activities are deemed to be incompatible, and therefore prohibited; namely, coach tours; pleasure or scenic driving, which is limited to public roads and designated access roads; abseiling; rock climbing; amateur astronomy; barbecuing; picnicking; and birdwatching—I would not have thought that that was too dangerous! Also listed is bushwalking or hiking, military training, mountain bike riding, orienteering, photography and painting—they are dangerous people, are they not—and research and environment study. A host of other activities are prohibited from taking place near water sources. My contention is that this goes way over the top. Section 4.3, “Implementation”, states —

Implementation of this policy will be facilitated by the Commission working closely with other State agencies (particularly the Department of Conservation and Land Management), the Water Corporation and other water service providers, the community and recreational interest groups.

Hon John Kobelke is the Minister for Water Resources and also the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I do not have time to list examples, but issues such as Logue Brook Dam have arisen that involve both of his portfolios. Staff from the minister’s water resources and sport and recreation portfolios have not even been talking to each other. After a rally out the front of Parliament House last week, we discovered that 5.8 gegalitres had been released from Stirling Dam that could have aided Canoeing WA—even on an interim basis—to revive its international slalom course, which has produced Olympic gold medallists such as Robin Bell. There is a host of other examples of broken promises, such as the white water park at Champion Lakes in Armadale—there are many, many other examples.

HON ROBYN MCSWEENEY (South West) [3.51 pm]: I support the motion put forward by Hon Barry House. As he said, the Minister for Water Resources announced on 5 November the state government’s decision to use Logue Brook Dam to help meet the state’s public water supply. From May 2008, Logue Brook Dam will be closed to the public as a recreational facility so that it can be transformed into a drinking water source to come online in 2010. I see this decision as another insult to country people. The Logue Brook Dam closure has caused a real backlash for the government. People love their recreation. Our recreation facilities in the south west are these dams, lakes, trails and forestry and fishing areas and have been part of our lifestyle for more than 100 years. At present, the Logue Brook reservoir and catchment area’s recreational activities include fishing, camping, bushwalking, swimming, picnicking, canoeing, four-wheel driving, motorbike riding, sightseeing, nature appreciation, power boating and waterskiing. That happens on a lot of south west dams.

The Recfishwest presentation at the Logue Brook Dam forum at a public meeting held in Harvey in July 2006 stated —

We are the only jurisdiction that is subject to an absolute policy of exclusion.

This is where I am coming from; I think there should be dual use. There are dual-use dams in Victoria and New South Wales; I will give some examples of those. Dual use is the way to go. I do not see why we should have restrictions; there are ways to have dual use on our dams. The government should not just close down facilities that people have had responsible access to for many years.

The Waranga Basin in Victoria is important for off-river storage, as water is diverted from the Goulburn River at Goulburn Weir. It is situated eight kilometres northeast of Rushworth. It was constructed in 1915 and its recreation and tourism facilities include playground equipment, tables and chairs, car parking, boat ramps and barbecues. The Waranga Basin works along the same line as Logue Brook Dam—it is also a drinking water supply. Normally, about three-quarters of Waranga Basin’s capacity of 432 360 megalitres can be used for drinking water. I think that when it gets down to a certain level, certain recreation activities are not allowed on the basin. We could do the same thing here.

Lake Eildon is also situated on the Goulburn River in its upper catchment. A detailed feasibility study of all possible storage sites on the Goulburn River was conducted and this existing dam was suitable for construction of a larger dam. I think it was in 1955, when the larger lake was completed. I think it is also used for Victoria’s electricity needs. Once again, water sports, boating activities, swimming and fishing are permitted on the lake. Fish releases from Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery ensure that the lake is well stocked with trout and other native fish. The lake is not only used for fishing; it has caravan parks, camping grounds, motels, houseboat hire and services, picnic areas and public boat ramps. People in Victoria understand the need to have recreation and tourism in areas that supply their drinking water. They must be able to have dual-use lakes and dams because they do not close them down, like we are doing, to use it only for drinking water. I wonder whether the government can come to some sort of agreement or have a policy to allow recreational facilities on lakes and dams, such as Logue Brook. Why can the government not have dual use?

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Recfishwest provided the government with some sensible solutions to allow dual use. It seems to me, as I said earlier, that this decision is an insult to country people. However, it is more than that—there is no reason to take away people’s recreational facilities, when it would be so easy to come up with a policy for dual use. Does the government not care about the country? It should care because these areas provide our recreation.

Lake Eildon, which I talked about earlier, is used for drinking water, and it is not treated. The Hume Dam is tightly managed by the Victorian and New South Wales authorities. Goulburn-Murray Water manages water and land located in Victoria, and State Water is responsible for day-to-day operations, maintenance and management of major remedial works. The Hume Dam is the major operating storage of the River Murray system. The storage regulates the River Murray, and regulates water discharged from the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. Releases from Hume Dam and downstream tributary streams supply irrigation, domestic and stock and urban demands to Victoria and New South Wales and also provide about one-third of South Australia’s entitlement. The Hume Dam also has recreation and tourism facilities. When there is a drought, there are significant areas of water storage, obviously with low water levels, and some such areas can be dangerous. There is a risk that vessels will collide with submerged objects or will run aground; therefore, all boat operators are asked to exercise great caution and to be aware of and adhere to all safety restrictions. Therefore, even when the water gets low, the authorities still allow boating on Lake Hume.

I return to Recfishwest’s presentation —

The concept of **‘risk management’** rather than **‘risk avoidance’** in public drinking water sources in Western Australia **NEEDS** to be considered as a strategy.

Risk management could include a mix of the following measures . . .

- controlled access;
- restricted access to licence holders only (sign in and sign out basis);
- public amenities and waste collection points below the dam;
- only allowing the use of naturally occurring baits or artificial lures;
- prohibiting petrol powered vessels;
- a comprehensive education program;
- ongoing water quality testing,
- and most importantly secondary or tertiary water treatment as a safeguard.

. . .

Alternatively more strategic engineering solutions are possible to safeguard drinking water from not only Logue Brook Dam but also other dams in the region areas.

Recfishwest also states —

This simplistic example of how water could be “Shandied” across a number of dams into one central water body—in this case Stirling Dam, water could be efficiently treated prior to entering the drinking water supply. This type of example could provide an additional safeguard to dams which are already currently used to supply drinking water.

That would cost more, but Recfishwest believes that that is what should happen. Recfishwest also claims that in recent times recreational fishers have lost access to the Stirling and Samson Dams and areas upstream of Harvey River. The closure of these dams, which were once popular with recreational fishers, has led to increased pressure on the remaining water bodies where recreational fishing is still permitted. Environmental issues such as salinity have decreased the general water quality, which in turn impacts on the fish stocks and the overall quality of recreational fishing. They are some of the points raised by Recfishwest on recreational fishing only. I implore the government to think seriously about introducing a policy that does not exclude people but provides solutions concerning how people can continue to interact with the drinking water supplies.

HON NIGEL HALLETT (South West) [4.00 pm]: I will say a few words on Hon Barry House’s motion on the shared use of land and water resources. I will touch on some of the rivers that have been lost by the Water Corporation in recent years. Some rivers have been lost as a result of the dams built by the Water Corporation, and those areas have ceased to be used as recreational areas. The Mundaring and Canning Dams were built in 1903 and 1940. The rivers that have been lost include the Serpentine River in 1961, the South Dandalup River in 1972, the Wungong River in 1979 and the North Dandalup River in 1994, and the Harvey River has been closed since 1998. The Collie River is also under threat. The number of recreational areas that are able to be used as

recreational areas has diminished. Members are aware that many of those areas had camping and caravanning facilities that also have been lost. When combined with the loss of caravan parks along the coastal strip, it can be seen that the state is heading for a crisis in that type of recreational activity. As Hon Barry House rightly said earlier, the south west region was overflowing at Easter this year. The population is continuing to increase on a weekly basis, and therefore the problem must be addressed by both sides of politics.

I will talk in particular about the Logue Brook Dam in the south west. The Logue Brook Dam was built in 1963 and is situated 125 kilometres south of Perth. That facility is visited by 30 000 people each year. It shares a caravan park, it has a Seventh-Day Adventist camping area and is used by many waterskiers, picnickers, caravan park users, hikers, bushwalkers and some 150 000 people who use the Bibbulmun Track, which is close by. When Logue Brook Dam is closed in May, the people who use the Bibbulmun Track will not be able to pass through that catchment area. I do not know what the minister will do to divert those people. The area covers some 3 700 hectares of land, of which more than 90 per cent is state forest. We are told that Logue Brook Dam will be closed to provide five gegalitres of water to help top up the state's water supply. The Water Corporation's spokesman, Phil Kneebone, said that an extra five kilometres of surface water is being produced by the desalination plant at Kwinana and is being pumped into Canning Dam. The water supply in Canning Dam is basically two years ahead of what was expected, which I acknowledge is a great result. Therefore, why is the government hell-bent on closing Logue Brook Dam in May 2008 when that water will not be needed this year? We could have a wet winter. Why can that decision not be reviewed on a yearly basis?

The government says that Lake Kepwari at Collie will be an alternative recreational area. That is quite a distance from Logue Brook Dam. Many people from Mandurah use Logue Brook Dam. That system will become clogged up by recreational users because of the growth in Mandurah and Yunderup. Logue Brook Dam and Lake Kepwari will be needed for recreational use. I am unsure exactly how far Lake Kepwari is from Mandurah. However, I cannot understand why the government refuses to examine the possibility of providing for a dual-purpose dam. I do not believe Logue Brook Dam is needed for our water supply. Wellington Dam in Collie has a capacity of 185 gegalitres of water, but generally holds about 100 gegalitres. We have an opportunity to take out 14 gegalitres of water to reduce the saline water and to install a small desalination plant. Griffin Coal talked about an all-up expenditure of between \$65 million and \$80 million. That is a very cheap source of funding when we consider that the infrastructure is close to Wellington Dam. It would also free up the need to use five gegalitres of water from Logue Brook Dam. A desalination plant will be built at Binningup, which will produce in excess of 100 gegalitres of water by 2011. That is two and a half years away. As I said previously, a minimum of two years' extra water is being pumped into Canning Dam. The 30 000 people who use Logue Brook Dam each year could use that recreational facility for at least one more year. If we have a good wet season, they could continue to use it until 2010 or 2011 when the new desalination plant comes on stream. We do not need that facility. I have asked the minister many times why he is still going down this path with Logue Brook Dam. It does not make sense. Many people are experiencing pressure because of their mortgages, and the need for recreational facilities is increasing. I appeal to the minister to take a second look at his decision. He must come back with something positive for the people who use that facility.

Griffin Coal has told us that the use of Wellington Dam is a quick, simple and inexpensive alternative for water. We are looking at water from the desalination plant at Binningup costing in the vicinity of \$2 a kilolitre. When the cost of water is somewhere between 80c and \$1.20, the realistic cost of water from the desalination plant at Binningup is about \$2, as I already mentioned. The Logue Brook Dam facility will still need to be treated. It will cost somewhere at the lower end of that scale, but in the bigger picture it is not an issue.

Skiers at Esperance are concerned about Lake Wheatfield. The water level in the lake will be decreased, which will affect some 100 waterskiers who regularly use that lake. If Lake Woody is closed for waterskiing, there is an alternative but it is some 45 kilometres from Lake Woody. It is another thing for rural people, who are getting pushed further and further out, to contend with.

We talk about decentralisation but what is the government doing about it? We talk about trying to take people away from the coastal strip. What is the government doing about it? We are closing many of these inland facilities and not replacing them with something else. We have a salt problem in the wheatbelt. Why are we not looking at drainage and cleaning the water from areas such as Narembene, filling up Lake Kurrekuten and creating a top-class boating facility? We are possibly looking at between \$1 million and \$2 million to treat that water at the source and draw it into the lake. These things can be done at fairly low cost but the initiatives are not being taken up. I add my support to the excellent motion moved by Hon Barry House.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural — Leader of the House) [4.11 pm]: I thank Hon Barry House for providing us with an opportunity to discuss important issues concerning recreational opportunities. Most of the speakers have concentrated on a single dam, which I was not prepared for. I prepared my reply for the motion as it is written. I ask members to excuse me if I skip over some of the important points made, given the time

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available. I want to respond to one point made by Hon Nigel Hallett. He asked what we do with the water. He went through a list of dams that have been closed to public access, including Mundaring, which was closed in 1903. He missed Victoria Dam, which preceded it by a few years. It was the state's first dam to be closed to public access—I think it was 1887—and it was replaced by the new Victoria Dam on its one hundredth birthday. We have been damming the coastal hills streams, our only safe and cheapest supply of water, for a very long time. Were we not damming those streams, we would not have water supplies for the south west, Perth, Northam, Merredin, Southern Cross, Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Kambalda. A vast area of the state is serviced by the integrated water scheme. Much of the state is a regional area.

Hon Robyn McSweeney referred to Recfishwest's submission, which made the point that if we use the dams for recreational purposes, they may need further treatment. That is exactly the point. As much as the recreational use of dams is obviously highly desirable from a social amenity perspective, it ceases to become desirable and falls astray of the 2004 Australian standard, which all Western Australian water sources aspire to. Not all of them make it, but certainly all our major dams supplying the existing metropolitan and integrated structure comply with the 2004 Australian standard, which does not permit recreational use.

Hon Robyn McSweeney: Don't they do it elsewhere?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I understood what the member was saying but the dams she mentioned must fail to meet the 2004 Australian standard. I was listening very carefully to the member when she went through those dams, the last of which was the Hume, which I know a little about. Most of its catchment is from developed agricultural land. Clearly, it is a very poor original source of water supply. Logue Brook, by comparison, is pristine. About 95 per cent of Logue Brook's catchment is state forest. Hume water would have to undergo a considerable range of treatment to make it potable, whereas with Logue we do not. I am sure that the water is just as good at the end but it is a matter of cost and additional treatment. By that standard, a couple of the smaller dams, such as Logue Brook and Harris River Dam, also quite a new dam, are of extremely high quality given the nature of their catchments.

The Western Australian government is extremely supportive of the need to provide sufficient facilities for people to have appropriate areas to recreate. That is what the community sport and facilities recreation fund is all about. A total of \$9 million goes into that fund every year. Since 2001, over \$82 million has been provided to communities for recreational facilities. Interestingly, two-thirds of that \$82 million has gone into regional Western Australia. That is very important.

I will try to get back to the issue of dams to the extent that I am briefed. There was a fairly complicated argument about alternative water sources. That is hard for me to deal with given the nature of the briefing that I have received. We have a drying climate, a growing population and increasing demand for high quality potable water. The Water Corporation has carefully identified the need for diversification of our water sources. To add to that diversity, honourable members have already been good enough to point to the start-up of the desalination plant and the start-up of the proposed second desalination plant. They are useful water sources. They are certainly not the only answer. We have carried out a considerable amount of exploration into the deeper aquifers in the Perth area. We have been extremely fortunate. Often we worry about water. I was told some time ago that on a per capita basis, the residents of the south west corner of Western Australia have a great deal more potable fresh water available to them than other people in the world by a considerable margin. Obviously, the Canadians and the Siberians do better than us, but, on a per capita basis, we have a huge volume of fresh water available to us, most of which is underground water.

One of the parts of the diversity that I referred to is the Harvey water trade. That was instigated to ensure that a further 17.1 gegalitres became available to the integrated water supply system. That was obtained as a result of reduced water evaporation and seepage in the Harvey and Waroona irrigation districts. Logue Brook supplies 5.3 gegalitres of that 17.1 gegalitres. That is an important part of the equation. It meant that from the time we made that commitment to the Harvey water trade, Logue Brook was tagged as a future human supply drinking water source.

The Australian drinking water guidelines' best practice approach for the protection of drinking water dictates a multiple barrier approach. The guidelines state —

Prevention of contamination provides greater surety than removal of contaminants by treatment, so the most effective barrier is protection of source waters to the maximum degree practical.

I was absolutely fascinated when Hon Barry House went through the list of things those standards prohibit, including photography. I wondered about some of the things, not just photography, that he read out.

Hon Barry House: That is exactly the point of the motion—that they are too prescriptive and too rigid.

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Hon KIM CHANCE: To that extent, the member certainly made his point. I will try to find out a little more—not just about photography as that is perhaps at the extreme end—as there seem to be a number of uses that would not qualify the quality of the water. Every precaution needs to be taken to reduce the risk of pathogens in the water. Treatment alone is not an option. Dual use is not considered practical, and recreation is not allowed on or within a two-kilometre reserve protection zone around the high water level of a dam. As I said before, the Water Corporation sets the standards to ensure that all hills dams meet the 2004 Australian drinking water guidelines. I am informed that the best practice approach is to make sure that there are multiple barrier protections for the dam and that there is an even higher level of protection for the surface water source—that is, the catchment and the body of water. I am not aware of a single example anywhere in Australia of a new dam that is part of the major metropolitan water supply that has not met those standards.

Hon Barry House interjected.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Okay; that is something we can look at, but this is the information I am relying on.

As part of the decision to convert Logue Brook from irrigation and recreation status to irrigation and drinking water supply status from May 2008, some \$10 million was dedicated to a trust fund to replace the lost recreation amenity at Logue Brook. A flyer has been released indicating alternative waterskiing areas, including Glen Mervyn Dam, Waroona Dam and Stockton Lake.

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral — Leader of the Opposition) [4.21 pm]: I raise another matter about shared use of water sources for recreational and drinking purposes. I refer to probably the biggest water sources in Western Australia, Lake Argyle and Lake Kununurra. Members may not be aware that Kununurra's water supply comes from underground bores. Adjacent to the town of Kununurra is Lake Kununurra, which holds a vast volume of water. Further along the Ord valley is Lake Argyle, which holds approximately 10 000 gegalitres of water; it is a huge volume of water. Kununurra drinking water is supplied from underground sources for the reason that the lakes are used for recreational purposes. If the water from either of the lakes was to be used as a water supply for Kununurra, the town would, under the rules, have to deny people the use of the lakes for recreational purposes. It always seemed to me rather strange and absurd that this vast volume of water was simply not available to water lawns and gardens in the homes and businesses of Kununurra. Indeed, a proposition was put forward a couple of years ago to develop a new subdivision in Kununurra. The proposal put forward by the developers was to have a dual water supply system, one from the underground supply to provide water for drinking and washing purposes, and the second source directly from the lake for use in gardens. The Department of Health objected to the proposal on the basis that some kid might put the garden hose in his mouth, drink the water from the lake and possibly become infected in some way.

It seems to me that there must be a better way of making our water supplies available for more than one purpose. I asked the water supply people in Kununurra why they did not simply treat the water from either Lake Argyle or Lake Kununurra to a level acceptable for drinking purposes and thus provide access to a vast volume of water. They replied that it would cost too much. It all comes down to money and priorities. In that part of Western Australia there is a sufficient supply of water for all sorts of good uses, including gardens. I have to say that Kununurra does not have the best gardens in Western Australia, even though it has access to more water than anywhere else. It could be an absolute garden oasis because there is an unlimited water supply, but the residents cannot have it because of the rule that prevents the use of water for both recreation and reticulation. This motion is really about looking very hard at dual use of our water sources. Logue Brook has been mentioned in particular because it is the one that is most obvious right now. It has become a one-or-the-other situation, which is the same as the situation in Kununurra. Fortunately Kununurra has access to underground water, which enables residents to use the two lakes for recreational purposes. If there was no underground water, I guess there would be no recreation.

I say to the Leader of the House that there has to be a better way. We ought to be prepared to spend the extra money, where circumstances demand, to treat the water from these recreational water sources before it goes into the system. It is not too hard; we desalinate the sea. If it is only a question of money, it is a no-brainer to spend the money to allow people to enjoy recreational opportunities and at the same time provide water for use in their homes.

HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West) [4.26 pm]: This motion revolves around Logue Brook Dam and the recent protest outside Parliament House, but there is a veiled attempt to frame it in a broader recreational context. It is fair to say that the water crisis, the reduction in rainfall and the catastrophic reduction in stream flow has resulted in the need to look for alternative water supplies. We have to attend to drinking water as a priority. To some extent, the crisis is a result of the long-term over-allocation and mismanagement of water supplies in Western Australia. The population has increased, and as a result the impact on natural areas and water catchment areas has also increased, and there is increasing competition between nature-based recreation

and the supply of fresh drinking water. It is not as though the policy is consistent: it prohibits recreational activity in water catchment areas, yet allows open-cut mining, bauxite mining, coal mining and logging in the same areas that provide our drinking water supply. It seems to be a serious double standard to allow those sorts of massive industrial operations, involving movements of people and machinery, within water catchments while prohibiting people from taking photos. There are bigger and more principled questions to answer.

I refer to the case study of Logue Brook Dam. It is a very popular place for people to visit. It is close to Perth—about 130 kilometres—and it has a very big catchment for people in the greater Mandurah area. It is a genuinely important local recreation site. There are solutions to the conflict between our need for drinking water and—in this case—water-based powerboat recreation. That is where the pressure is coming from, and we need to name it. It is powerboat users and waterskiers who are particularly concerned about what is happening at Logue Brook. The government's decision to convert the usage of Logue Brook Dam from irrigation and recreation to irrigation and drinking water comes at a cost to that community of interest. We need to deal with that community by providing genuine alternatives. Griffin Coal has proposed to fill in one of its mine voids, Lake Kepwari, which would provide an excellent opportunity for powerboat usage. There would be no conflicting use, and people could continue passive recreational activities around Logue Brook, including bushwalking and nature photography. The real conflict is with the use of powerboats. Lake Kepwari can provide for that usage, even though it is a little further to travel, although not that much further. It is an inconvenience, but it is an appropriate solution to put powerboats into a mine void in which there is a lot of water and no conflicting recreational usage. People speeding around in powerboats do not mix very well with people who want to watch birds. We need to find a way of meeting the competing demand for both recreational powerboat activities and nature-based passive recreational activities. I understand that as part of the decision to close Logue Brook Dam, the Water Corporation has allocated \$10 million to a trust account that will be used to develop alternative recreational facilities across the south west. In saying that, I am not singing the praises of this government. I am merely outlining the way in which the government has been addressing this issue. The government has also allocated \$3.29 million towards making Lake Kepwari near Collie available for public recreational use in 2008.

The Greens are committed to ensuring that recreational facilities are provided in the south west. At a broader level, we are very concerned about the loss of caravan parks across the region. I was in Busselton on the weekend. There is a great deal of concern in Busselton about the proposal to sell off some of the caravan parks and use that land for home units. I agree with Hon Barry House that the opportunity for people in the south west to engage in low impact, low cost recreational activities is gradually being eroded because of the alienation of public land, or land under leasehold from the government. In the case of Logue Brook, the conflict between the need to provide recreational opportunities for powerboat users and the need to provide potable drinking water is too stark. I support the principle that we should not alienate public land across the south west that has genuine recreational value. I believe the problem at Logue Brook can be resolved in other ways and that we need to look for another technical solution. I think we are on the way towards doing that.

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [4.32 pm] — in reply: I thank all those members who have made a contribution to this debate. If we took the government's argument to its full extent, we would reach the ridiculous conclusion that because water from the ocean is now being desalinated, the use of recreational powerboats on the ocean should be prohibited. There is another solution. That solution is called management, tolerance and flexibility. The Water Corporation has made a commitment to develop Lake Kepwari for recreational purposes. However, in view of the government's track record, that promise is not worth very much. In 2002, the government made a \$10 million commitment—I stand to be corrected on the exact amount—to replace the international slalom course up river from the new Harvey Dam with a whitewater park in Armadale. However, the government later reneged on that promise because it decided that was no longer its core business.

I have said that in the case of Manton Dam, which is a primary source of water supply for Darwin, the government has established a management plan for recreational use. Therefore, it can be done and it is being done in other places.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.