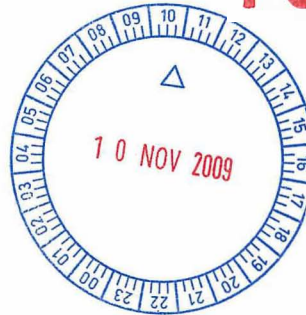


**PUBLIC**

The Committee Clerk,  
Public Administration Committee  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House,  
Perth.

6<sup>th</sup> November 2009



## **Recreation Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas**

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a foundation member (35 years) of the WA Trout and Freshwater Angling Association (WATFAA) and a sports fisherperson I wish to respond to the Media Statement of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009 regarding "Greater Access to Water Catchments to be Explored".

In recent years a number of waters have been closed to fishing. Parts of their catchment areas have also been closed to public access, including Samson Dam and Samson Brook, Stirling and the Serpentine Pipehead Dams, the Harvey River above Stirling Dam. Recently, stretches of Lefroy Brook above the Town Dam have also been closed to fishing. Logue Brook Dam was also closed for a short period. These closures have significantly restricted fishing and marroning activities for all WATFAA members as well as other holders of Recreational Southwest Freshwater Fishing and Marron licences.

As a WATFAA member, I request that these and other waters be re-opened to fishing and other low-impact recreational activities. WATFAA members are conscious of minimal environmental impact and sustainability (we share the bushwalkers' ethic of leaving nothing but our footprints behind). We support the concept of allowing environmentally low-impact activities within water supply catchment areas which are consistent with the aim of preserving water quality. With these principles in mind, I suggest that certain recreational activities should be allowed, both on the water and within the catchment areas.

### **I suggest that such allowable activities should include:**

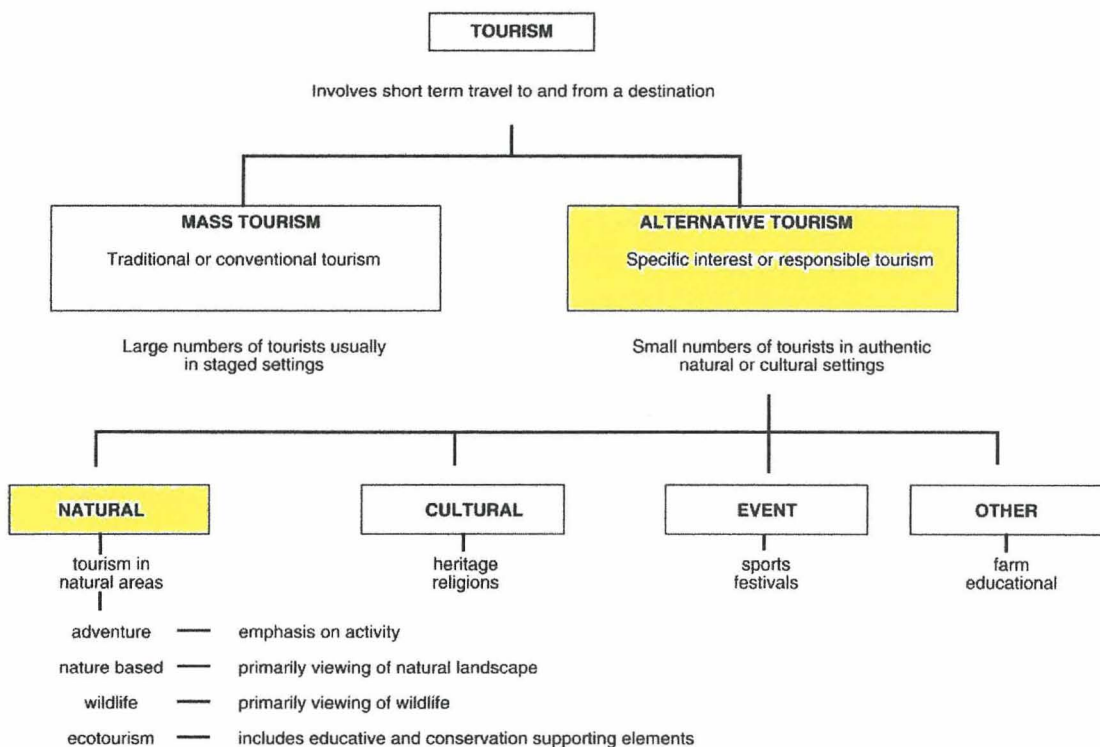
- Fishing **using artificial lures only**, both off-the-bank fishing and boat fishing, including use of kayaks, float tubes, rowing boats or electric-powered boats);
- Kayaking, rowing, sailing;
- Bush-walking and bird-watching and
- Cycling.

Trout fishing would be subject to the relevant W.A. Department of Fisheries legislation, including size and bag limits and seasonal restrictions. I believe allowing marron fishing within these waters (even with snare only) could cause some concern as baits would most likely be used to entice these crustaceans, with some non-thinking marroners lighting fires and dumping rubbish.

Access should be restricted to licensed individuals only (e.g.: there should be a low-cost annual permit available - a 'Permit to Enter a Restricted Access Area' - similar to that required for entry to our National Parks) and there should be some form of access control – e.g.: 'Sign-in Registration Stations' and regular permit checks by Water Corporation Rangers. The driving of vehicles/motorbikes etc. on dam banks/foreshores within the catchment area should not be tolerated. Provision for approved access points (i.e.: boat launching areas for non motorised vessels) and close proximity parking areas with 'Composting' or 'Closed System' toilets and 'Take Your Litter Home' signage should be provided.

Government agencies in America, Canada and New Zealand have adopted different methods of ensuring 'user pays' when accessing the environment for the purpose of recreational and sporting hunting and fishing tourism in the form of permits, licenses and taxes. One innovative programme in America requires recreational fishers to purchase special collector stamps in addition to an annual license; revenue from these are returned to ongoing research and site sustainability (Anonymous, 2005; Ikenson, 2002; Tice, 2003).

Recreational Fishing is categorised as an 'Alternative' or 'Special Interest' type of tourism, where participants purposefully intend to enjoy their chosen pursuit in a manner which both recognises and is compatible with the environmental, cultural and community values while interacting more closely with the host community than is common or normal in other types of tourism (Newsome, Moore and Dowling, 2002).



It is also worth noting that the majority of the water catchment boundaries are managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) which promotes the 'Healthy Parks, Healthy People' initiative, encouraging people to get-out and enjoy themselves in parks by promoting the physical, mental and social health benefits of spending time in the natural environment. Recreational fishing is the third most popular recreational pursuit in Australia (Ross and Duffy, 1995), and the annual economic value is estimated at more than 400 million



dollars per year both directly, in the form of fishing permits and licenses, and indirectly in the form of accommodation, travel and associated costs such as food, fuel, bait, tackle etc. (Murray Darling Basin Commission, 2003). Research estimates have established that approximately 25 to 30 per cent of Australians fish for recreation and sport (Fisheries Research and Development Corporation 2001; Morgan, 2002). In addition to domestic fishing tourism, recreational fishing also provides an important destination for international visitors. Places such as Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and New Zealand have become famous for their 'wild' trout fisheries, attracting thousands of tourists annually (Chamberlain, 2000; Earle-Levine, 2005; Harmon, 2005; Victorian Dept. of Primary Industries, 2005; Weigall, 2005; Wheeler and Damania, 2001).

The potential tourism flow-on effect of opening these catchment dams to fishing has now been proven in other states. In 2006 it was estimated that over 5 million dollars was returned to the local community of the Pemberton/Manjimup area from freshwater fishing (Goodlich, 2006). Industries that would benefit from the opening of the catchment areas could be retail tackle stores, shops/kiosks, farm-stays, canoe and fishing clubs and orienteering associations. Other promising industries would be fishing tour guiding, fly fishing and stream craft clinics (via tackle stores and clubs), town 'fish-a-fest' events and possibly fish tagging competitions for prize money.

I believe that such low-impact recreational activities would be a valuable step in allowing recreational access to selected areas without compromising water quality.

**Dams which should be considered for access for fishing and other restricted activities could include:**

- Churchman Brook Dam;
- Mundaring Dam;
- Canning Dam;
- Serpentine Main Dam including Pipehead Dam;
- South and North Dandalup Dams.

Without doubt, the Lefroy Brook above the Town Dam should be reopened. Logically this should be reopened **without any requirement for a permit** – since it can be accessed by tourists, bushwalkers etc. at present, without any restrictions. However, use of non-artificial bait for fishing and marroning could be banned there in order to preserve water quality.

I look forward to your response to these proposals.

Yours sincerely,



Terry Goodlich