

Garden Bores

Information sheet – April 2013

Western Australia is a dry State in a dry continent. Water is vital to life and our quality of life and it supports the natural environment, public health, the economy, community amenity and recreation.

To ensure that there is enough water for all, we need to address the challenges of our drying climate, increasing population and minimising our environmental impact. We all need to work together to reduce our water use, recycle more water and develop new sources to supplement existing supplies.

This information sheet is one of a series designed to enhance community understanding of water related topics.

Background

Domestic garden bores draw water from shallow groundwater, generally to about 50 metres in depth, although some can be as deep as 100 metres. This source of water is fed by rainfall which percolates into the ground across most of the Swan Coastal Plain.

The rain falls between the grains of sand and eventually stops at an impermeable barrier (for example rock or clay), trapping the rainwater to form “shallow groundwater”. Garden bores can provide a fit for purpose water source and can take pressure off scheme drinking water supplies. It is estimated that there are about 169,200 garden bores in the Perth Metropolitan Area.

The Department of Water manages the use of garden bores. Bores can provide an alternative water supply in areas where there is shallow groundwater of relatively good quality.

They are not however not suitable in areas with:

- acid sulphate soils;
- salt water intrusion;
- unacceptable impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems; or
- where groundwater may otherwise be contaminated.

Current Situation

The Perth Groundwater Atlas identifies areas where bores are suitable (available online at the Department of Water’s website at www.water.wa.gov.au).

Garden bores depend on rainfall to recharge groundwater. With a significant decrease in rainfall and stream-flow levels over the past 30 years, we need to use this resource wisely.



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In the Perth and Mandurah areas, garden bores are subject to a three day a week sprinkler roster system which is adequate to maintain a garden without wasting water and avoiding the risks of overuse.

A State-wide daytime sprinkler ban and a total winter sprinkler ban (from 1 June to 31 August) for Perth and Mandurah also applies to garden bores.

The Future

Garden bores

Existing garden bores will continue to play an important role in irrigating residential gardens in some areas of the State – particularly in Perth and the South West.

The Department of Water has released a policy on metropolitan domestic bores (Operational Policy 5.17).

The department has determined suitable and unsuitable areas for establishing domestic garden bores, shown in Figure 1 on next page.

Sustainability considerations

Social	Environmental	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assists the community to maintain gardens and green spaces.Supports horticultural and leisure industries.Positively impacts on property prices through maintenance of gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consumes some energy through pumping.May negatively impact wetlands through groundwater drawdown.May contribute to water quality problems if not adequately monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Less expensive than most scheme water sources.Provides fit for purpose.

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Figure 1: Suitability of areas for domestic garden bores

