

## **Meeting with David Templeman Minister for the Environment Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2007**

**Purpose:** - To highlight the lack of understanding by Water Corp of the impact of Nutrient migration into the Peel waterways. Sources of these nutrients are septic tanks, storm water, domestic gardens, domestic animals (cattle) and various other sources.

**What is the reason for this lack of understanding:-**The Water Corps Key Result Areas and Key Performance Indicators are in conflict with current environmental policy and philosophy.

**Eg see letter from the Premier of WA.** The Premier's/Water Corps position that 84% of the properties in the region managed by the Bunbury office are connected to reticulated sewerage and that the remaining 16% is considered to be minor doesn't consider that the remaining 16% contribute 2 tonnes of nitrogen and in excess of ½ tonne of phosphorous into the Peel Waterways to be significant. This is in direct conflict with what is espoused on the Water Corp. Web site.

**Drainage:** - nutrient migration via drains is significant but Water Corp is not required to manage drainage for water quality improvement, simply water conveyance. Through a recent advertised amendment to their operating licence (operating lic No 32) they want to use a 1977 document as the guidelines for drainage for the future, this does not take into account the water quality in drainage. The proposed changes also included an amendment to remove the Serpentine River levees from the flood protection work list but no reason or consultation was provided to justify both of the above changes. The licence will still require compliance with the 72 hour rule for the Serpentine area which we believe was put in place for the potato farmers who no longer exist thus requiring drains to be unnecessarily large transferring more nutrients into the Peel waterways. **See Notice application to amend operating licence**

Homeswest owns Amarillo Farm within the City of Rockingham and this property has been leased back to a farmer who is running cattle on the property. These cattle are allowed to graze in and around the Serpentine River and subsequently their faeces enters the waterways contributing to the nutrients. There has been considerable public money allocated to improving the health of the Peel regions waterways but it appears that there is a lack of understanding or desire to understand across government agencies as to the objectives of other government departments. **See media docs.**

**Examples of this are:-** (1) signage warning of overhead powerlines in the Serpentine River that were covered by vegetation and a government officer claimed at the inquest into the death of a citizen that it was not his job to either fix or advise the relevant govt department responsible for the sign to address the problem. **See Media Doc.**

(2) Esperance Lead inquiry: - where a govt officer did not inspect closely the loading of the material as he was concerned for his own well being. So why didn't he advise his superior or wasn't it his job.

A prominent local politician said **"Everyone is responsible for the waterways. It is clear that the community along with all levels of government we ensure that we manage in a sustainable way our environment"**. **See Media Article DT/JE.**

Our organisation is seeking the assistance of you the Minister to convene a community workshop to improve the level of co operation and understanding between the Water Corp, Department for the Environment and the community.

It should involve: - the Water Corp Regional Manager from Bunbury

Department of Water Drainage Manager

Peel Harvey Catchment Council

A representative from the Department for the Environment

Community/Land care group delegates who are actively involved in the

Peel Harvey Catchment.

At this workshop all stakeholders can get to understand and appreciate the areas of concern of those present and work together to break down the barriers that currently prevent forward progress in the rehabilitation of the Peel waterways. We envisage that through co operation pilot projects can be established that can provide important information as to the way forward in slowing down and reducing the volume of nutrients migrating into the Peel waterways.

The Perth to Bunbury Highway project managers Southern Alliance have involved the community and taken on board local issues and have benefited from local knowledge. They will be taking steps with this project to address the water born nutrients that will go into the Peel Main Drain. So why can't it be done elsewhere. **See the Drain Game, Lake Macquarie Doc**

**From the Environment and Heritage Portfolio**

Point 5 of the principle outcomes of the portfolio: - To provide a frame work for catchment management (agency focus and leadership role across government)

**See Doc Environment and Heritage**

**See answer to question on notice** re implementation of the Economic Development and Rec Management Plan.