

Document details	
Document name	Online submissions received from individuals on the <i>Consultation draft - Fitzroy-Derby water resources management plan: policy and guidance</i>
Author	Respondents and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (Government of Western Australia)
Consultation summary	The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation sought feedback and submissions on the Consultation draft – Fitzroy-Derby water resources management plan: policy and guidance from 1 April to 30 June 2026.
	Input was sought with particular regard to how we should support sustainable groundwater use for economic development in the Fitzroy–Derby plan area, while protecting the Fitzroy River and water-dependent ecological, cultural, heritage and social values of the plan area. See online information to learn more about the public consultation and see other published submissions that we received.
Published responses	This document provides a record of online responses the Department received from individuals. Responses from organisations has been published separately.
	Other responses not included here those where the respondent requested their submission be kept confidential (not published) and other submissions received via email (published separately). Responses have otherwise been published here in full, except for removal of contact and locality details. Any files uploaded with online responses or via emails have also been published online and redacted as requested or appropriate.
Related publications and web pages	<i>Consultation draft - Fitzroy-Derby water resources management plan: policy and guidance</i> <i>Consultation draft - Fitzroy-Derby water resources management plan: methods</i> https://consult.dwer.wa.gov.au/water-policy/consultation-draft-fitzroy-derby-water-resources/ https://www.wa.gov.au/service/natural-resources/water-resources/fitzroy-derby-water-planning
Editing of all responses	Where necessary, responses may include text <i>[in italics and square brackets]</i> to show where we have edited or redacted content for publishing purposes. Edits included removing location or identifying information about individuals, signatures, and crude or abusive language.
Published	9 July 2026

What is your name? Name	Which of the following best describes you?	Which of the following best describes you? - Other	The draft plan proposes the department’s approach to regulating, allocating and managing water resources in the Fitzroy-Derby Plan Area. Tell us what you think about the approaches outlined in the draft plan.	Are there are any other comments you would like to make?
Adrian Watkins	Conservation and Environment		Any plan for these water resources should be about keeping development of any kind well away from those water resources. We are well past the time when further wrecking of Earth is justified.	
Allessandir Chloe Nielsen	Member of the public (individual)		The regulations require strong overview with powerful audit tools, that report back in a public manner via the local newspapers. Maintenance of the regulations will ensure long term adherence to these regulations and a large benefit for the duration. We cannot shy away from having a costly fines system to deter non compliance.	Constant commitment to public audit, always.
Andrea Myers	Member of the public (individual)		<i>[Cell 1/3 for publishing purposes]</i> I am a Bunuba native title holder, traditional owners, but these views are my own as someone who uses the river for wellbeing and connection to country and culture for my own family. I am supportive of protecting the Fitzroy River and dependent environments by not allowing the Fitzroy River or its tributaries to be dammed and no additional surface water entitlements being issued unless for the essential public purposes proposed in this plan. I also support surface water and groundwater regimes remaining within their natural range to protect water for dependent ecological, cultural, heritage and social values. I am supportive of the Groundwater allocation limits and availability • A total of 75.7 gigalitres (GL) a year is set across groundwater allocation limits, noting 25GL is set aside for Aboriginal reserve and only 36 is for general licencing (page 15). I am supportive of the Department’s approach being precautionary approach and that there are no plans to take further water is available from surface water resources or the Alluvial and Devonian Reef aquifers, unless it is essential or in the public interest. This is intended to protect the Fitzroy River and its tributaries and the ecological, cultural, heritage and social values that depend on the river and aquifers – which are of state and national significance. • In the Derby Peninsula subarea, no further water is available for licensing, except for public purposes. We have prioritised existing use from the Wallal aquifer and reserved water from the Erskine aquifer for future public water supply for the town of Derby and surrounding communities. • Water is still available for licensing in the Greater Derby and Fitzroy subareas from the Wallal, Erskine and Grant Poole aquifers. The limits we set for these groundwater resources balance water for the environment and future water needs. These limits are 40 per cent of the estimated rainfall recharge to each aquifer per year. • Allocation limits do not guarantee where and how much water can be taken under a licence. Local water availability is assessed through the water licensing process, in accordance with the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 and the local policies in this plan. Fitzroy–Derby Aboriginal Water Holding. I am grateful that the Department will continue to monitor records from licences that are granted and will be granted under this plan to mitigate environmental and cultural harm. I am supportive of the proposal to hold approximately 25 GL per year of the remaining groundwater available for licensing, under the limits in this plan, in the Fitzroy–Derby Aboriginal Water Holding. This gives effect to the policy position to establish an Aboriginal Water Reserve (Government of Western Australia 2023). The holding includes water across multiple groundwater resources to support future economic development opportunities for native title holders, either independently or in partnership with others. I would like to propose that Department remain mindful of "Black cladding" proposals and consult early with traditional owners so that this reserve is not misused against its original intention. As the Fitzroy River, impacts all PBCs and especially downstream PBCs, my view is that the holding needs to be administered through feedback from a body that covers a cross section of PBCs across the river and collaboration or meetings of this body be resourced by the Department. I am supportive of the plan requiring use of water from this holding, and from any allocation limit component other than exempt use, requiring a water licence granted through the Department’s licence assessment process as impacts of water licences impact everyone. I am supportive of the Department's plans for a "Careful and staged groundwater development" including all of the below aspects: • Groundwater use should increase gradually so that monitoring can detect any unacceptable impacts early. • Water licence applicants should demonstrate sustainable groundwater use, protect waterdependent ecosystems and sites of ecological, cultural and social significance, and engage with Traditional Owners early in project design. • Specific local licensing policies apply in sensitive areas (water management zones). • Traditional Owner knowledge will be considered alongside contemporary science. • This plan recognises their cultural authority and responsibilities, and deep connections to water and Country. • We will track water resources, water use, water-dependent ecosystems and significant sites, and may adjust the licence conditions, policies, or this plan as needed.	I would like to thank the dedicated DWER team, who have consulted widely on the plan as well as the technical team, who have worked really hard to accommodate community members and traditional owers across a wide range of activities, particularly since the 2023 Fitzoy River Floods.
Andrea Myers	Member of the public (individual)		<i>[Cell 2/3 for publishing purposes]</i> REPORTING ON PROGRESS OF PLAN The Swan River Trust reports on their plans annually. I see no reason why the Department could not produce a similar report annually and then combine it for the proposed five year plan. Considering the heavy interest in it over many years even since 2016 as while it is certain a groundwater allocation limit will be above zero as this is needed for remote community drinking water upgrades, stock etc at a minimum, this will hopefully assist all stakeholders who have advocated very strongly for a zero groundwater allocation. WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE I have advocated for a Water Advisory Committee similar to The Swan River Trust (the Trust) is an advisory body established under the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006, since 2018 when the Water Allocation Plan began to be developed and debated. I absolutely agree that Water Advisory Committee should be put in place to continue the collaboration work that has grown during the consultation phase of this plan and retain it once the plan is published. I absolutely also agree that it will strengthen collaboration on water matters between the State Government, Traditional Owners, industry and the community in the plan area. I have already seen this happen with the Bunuba Joint Management Body over the last ten years. • The committee will be formally established under the Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984. In accordance with this, the Minister for Water will appoint the committee's members. • The terms of reference and membership of the proposed committee I would be supportive of members being directly appointed by the Minister on a three year term so their experience is able to grow as well as understanding of the administrative processes. I propose that the Water Advisory Committee has within its terms of reference statements to the effect that it: supports and promotes stakeholder actions across the broader catchment that protect and improve river health and community amenity Drives collaboration by coordinating actions across partners and promoting shared responsibility for the river system. • Membership is likely to be made up of people representing Traditional Owners, government, industry and the community. It will be administered by the Department. I am supportive of at least 50% of the advisory committee being made up of Traditional Owners from PBCs along the Fitzroy River. While often traditional owners will have industry links, industry specific people from Pastoral and Mining are important to be represented. Similar to the Swan River Trust I would propose DBCA also be included as much of the Fitzroy River runs through National Parks. DBCA have been working in joint management for over a decade now and have finetuned the process with traditional owner groups across Western Australia. The Swan River Trust meets approximately every six weeks. I would propose the Fitzroy-Derby Water Management Committee meet at a similar frequency. Similar to Parks Council meeting, the meetings would enable board members to receive updates on river management matters and provides a forum for the provision of expert advice. Meetings are attended by board members and DBCA representatives and, as required, by other key river management stakeholders. Similar to Joint Management, having at least half the membership made up of traditional owners would allow 2 way sharing of knowledge and ensure links to the on the ground cultural aspects of water monitoring are prioritised and elevated as well as Western Science. In the name of transparency I would be supportive of all details of the Fitzroy-Derby Water Management Committee to be placed on the DWER Website for easy accessibility and how submissions and comments are able to be made easy to find. I am supportive of the proposed committee will advise the Minister for Water on water management, water planning, or water policy matters relevant to water in the plan area and implementing the final version of this plan. This includes advising on future iterations of this plan, and any other matters that the Minister for Water may seek advice on. I am currently on an NDIS participant committee and I can see the benefits of the agency being able to hear directly from people on the ground even if further public comment periods take place in the years after initial publication of this plan. I am grateful, drinking water for Aboriginal communities is considered an exemption as drinking water as that suitable for vegetable gardens and general cleaning and wellbeing is essential to wellbeing and now Water Corporation is working to mainstream water supply and investing in the infrastructure it is critical all options are available to ensure the sustainability of these communities.	
Andrea Myers	Member of the public (individual)		<i>[Cell 3/3 for publishing purposes]</i> I would also like to see the option for licences to be cancelled if the impact on water dependent ecosystems is found to be harmful once licences are granted and begun to be used. I am supportive of a "use it or lose it approach" - so if people do not use their licences it gets handed back, noting of course that while it is isnt being used there is of course no environmental impact. I am grateful for the following section, but note that resourcing of PBCs would assist this in being able to being able to be implemented effectively as consultation with DWER and Water Corporation/ Proponents takes significant time as well as the organising of such consultation and it is important that this is recognised by the Department in expectations of both sides. "2.1 To ensure the Department has relevant information on how an application may affect Traditional Owners’ rights, interests, cultural values and heritage, the Department may: a) inform the relevant native title party/ies and the Kimberley Land Council once a water licence, permit application or licence amendment has been advertised, in addition to notifications required under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) b) give at least 30 days for the native title party/ies to respond, and more upon request c) consider the relevant comments from the native title party/ies, and the relevant information provided by any interested persons" I would like noted that 30 days of notification for native title holders may not be sufficient, particularly in the wet season due to flooding and other cultural activities. The notice period for the right to negotiate process for future act activities for mining is four months so I would like the notice period extended for responses to water licence application notifications to allow greater opportunity to respond more effectively if desired to such notifications.	
Andrew Lucas and Family	Conservation and Environment		Fitzroy River and it's environment is a last remaining icon. It's habitat is for all to enjoy , animals and humans , not for exploitation. Its Natural value as is to Australia and all it's people cannot be even be estimated . We support no further development of any kind .	DO NOT ALLOW ANY DEVELOPMENT !!
Andrew Lucas and Family	Member of the public (individual)		The Fitzroy River and Environs is a unique and iconic natural feature of Australia. It should be respected, and remain as is for all to animals and humans to enjoy . It should not be exploted further.	DO NOT ALLOW FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE FITZROY RIVER !!
<i>[Anonymous]</i>	Member of the public (individual)		I disagree with the plan to increase the amount of groundwater being removed in the region. I am a <i>[redacted]</i> year old kid who is very concerned about the number of shortsighted decisions being made about environmental resources. I cannot vote for the next 6 years. I am very concerned at the idea that irreversible damage will be done to the environment before I get a chance to have a say in these decisions. Many animal depend on the Fitzroy River to live and breed the next generation, including one of my favourite animals, the Largetooth Sawfish. This fish needs to be able to travel between different parts of the Fitzroy River to complete its breeding cycle. Impacts on underground aquifers are likely to place pressure on the Fitzroy, interrupting this critical breeding cycle.	
<i>[Anonymous]</i>	Member of the public (individual)		Do everything needed to increase employment. But don't repeat the errors of the Ord River in irrigation for grain crops that just attracted magpie geese. Any agricultural endeavour must be able to be marketed properly. If water is to be used to support mining without polluting the river itself I support. The salt water crocs in the lower reaches should be culled but the leather should not be wasted. I worry that as a former resident of Broome that a croc will take someone at Cable Beach at night. I remember low tide parties at night on the beach. That can't happen now with crocs both north and south of the beach. (in the 1960,s when there were few crops south of the Fitzroy.	No
<i>[Anonymous]</i>	Member of the public (individual)		I believe the Government can not conduct new actions, policies or regulations that threaten the natural state of the rivers consistent flow and most importantly the environmental ecosystem that belongs to the water of the river and the land that meets water, especially if it's essentially making a business more profitable and that business doesn't care about its usage cause it can “afford it”. NO HUMAN OR AMIMAL can afford a dry river! Especially to those whom live off that particular land area or surrounding areas.	I am just a young woman that belongs to this land and knows my right to fight for those that do not have a voice! • animals whom only live in the waters of the river system •animals that live on the land and the birds Basically if you don't care about country and having natural resources for the rest of human existence then sure do whatever the money tells you too but you will have a problem bigger
Ben Falconer brown	Member of the public (individual)		I dont think this proposal should be allowed to go ahead as i messes with organic natural of the river, i do believe the kimberly region would benefit from water redistribution from yearly rainfall collection and cyclonic weather paterns. Messing with a fragile ecosystem to create weath is a incredibly stupid thought process and is prevalent in our current governments approach to matter things.	

Ben hagley	Member of the public (individual)		Agree with the approach to not allow dams or surface water extraction. I think a more cautious approach to ground water extraction should be take with much lower limits initially allowed to ensure there is no adverse environmental effect. Strict monitoring should be guaranteed.	There is no evidence to guarantee allowing development of this region will have a benefit for the Wa public and traditional owners. The Fitzroy river is an essential part of a healthy ecosystem for that area, a biodiversity hotspot and culturally significant. I'd like to see any plan take an extremely cautious approach to development with safeguards to ensure industry does not destroy another WA jewel.
Ben Orme	Conservation and Environment		Please, please, please leave the Fitzroy alone. In a world where money and power have already destroyed so much of our pristine, wild and special natural areas, keep WA wild.	
Brian Spittles	Academia		While I am not an expert on this issue, I know enough from reading about the terrible damage done through other Australian industrial water extraction projects, to feel very concerned about, and in strong opposition to, allowing such potential (likely) destruction in the Kimberley region. Allowing such water extraction not only risks major environmental consequences in a pristine region, but may result in <i>loss [edited]</i> for the Indigenous peoples who have deep spiritual and cultural connections with the river and all the life that it supports. A dead or damaged river will unavoidably have a corresponding <i>[edited]</i> effect on the lives of Indigenous peoples in the region.	No
C Berry	Member of the public (individual)		It's not easy to tell you anything, as this consultation survey does not provide meaningful information to refer to. I suggest you start from scratch and employ someone who can completely re-write your survey.	I live in far north Queensland, but that doesn't mean I don't care about issues that affect us all. I'd like to understand what you're aiming to do, and how it affects issues affecting the environment.
Cara Crosswhite	Not Answered	Home maker and mother of 3	I write to comment on the Fitzroy--Derby Draft Water Resource Management Plan – Choosing a Better Pathway Towards Protection for the Martuwarra. I urge the WA Government to strengthen protection of the National Heritage listed Martuwarra Fitzroy River through this plan. The Martuwarra is one of Australia's last great living rivers and is central to the culture, law and livelihoods of Traditional Owners, as well as the health of regional communities, wildlife and the iconic Kimberley coast. I welcome the government's stated commitment in the draft plan to no surface water extraction and no dams. Delivering on this commitment in the final plan would reflect the wishes of the consistently loud community voices in support of strong protections for the Martuwarra. Embedding this policy commitment into the final water plan would also recognise the river's outstanding values and prevent some of the most damaging mistakes seen elsewhere in Australia being repeated on the Martuwarra. I live in the Riverina of NSW on Lake Hume, the dammed mighty Murray River, and have lived experience of how poorly the Murray Darling Basin has been managed. Please do not turn the mighty Fitzroy into another Murray Darling disaster. Protecting the river floods is critical to preserving the natural and cultural values of the river, including its role as a last stronghold for the critically-endangered freshwater sawfish that only breeds in large flood years. A key risk the plan must address is groundwater. If groundwater is over allocated, it creates the conditions for large scale irrigated agriculture to take hold in the Fitzroy catchment. Across Australia and globally, this pathway has led to rivers being slowly drained, ecosystems collapsing and local communities losing control – outcomes most clearly seen in the Murray-Darling system. I urge the WA Government to strengthen the draft plan by: Locking in the commitment to no further surface water take and no dams Protecting groundwater from large-scale extraction to prevent mass irrigated agriculture taking over the Kimberley Supporting Traditional Owners' rights, including genuine decision making role in licensing, monitoring and governance. Getting this plan right is a step towards protecting one of Australia's last great free flowing rivers, shows we are learning from past national failures and choosing a future that doesn't repeat them. The Martuwarra still flows freely, and that gives us a chance to do things differently. Groundwater is what keeps the river alive through the long dry season, feeding pools, springs and wetlands that people, fish and species like the critically endangered sawfish depend on. Pumping groundwater in the dry season can show up months later as shrinking pools, and recovery in a boom and bust system like the Martuwarra can take many years. That is why the plan must start by significantly limiting groundwater take on a precautionary basis, to avoid repeating these mistakes before they occur. Acting early is far safe, cheaper and effective than trying to fix the damage after it's been done. Locally led development across the catchment should be supported, and there are many opportunities for partnerships with communities, and particularly Traditional Owners that do not rely on extraction of water. An essential safeguard in getting this right is a strong, well-resourced ongoing role for Traditional Owners in water licensing, monitoring and decision making. This must be a pre-condition for any future ground water extraction. Traditional Owners hold deep knowledge of how the river behaves and are best placed to identify early signs of harm. Embedding shared decision making is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk, to address shortcomings highlighted in the 2025 WA Auditor General's Performance Audit — Regulation of Water Licences and protect the river for the long term. The role of Traditional Owners in water licensing and management decisions is also crucial to preserving the National Heritage Listed cultural values of the river, which include groundwater. I urge the WA Government to listen to the community, to use this water plan as a milestone towards protection. Yours sincerely, Cara Crosswhite	
Cecily Mason	Academia	Retired	Not a good idea	Fitzroy crossing is surrounded by 4 Aboriginal groups. They are a strong community. A decade plus ago the women were fed up with their women & children being injured by their drunken men. So they decided to ban take away alcohol It had a dramatic impact. It was one place in Australia where we saw their adolescents showing off & behaving the same as white kids. Not frightened & hiding - the norm in Australia. These Aboriginal communities know their country & how it should be managed. Hand this decision to the Aboriginal community elders to decide. Then Fitzroy River will continue to be viable for centuries. Not handed over to multinational companies seeking to make excessive profits.
Christine Thomson	Conservation and Environment		I am glad to see extensive data on predicted water use and rainfall but was not able to find a great deal of information on both evaporation and quantity of use within mining. I believe that the volume of water use and waste within mining industries along with the likelihood of toxic contamination from mining, would be vital to determining a water plan. I have deep concerns that as water is the only thing we cannot do without, what will happen to the people and the environment they live in when mining is risking this through contamination of clean water. I understand we some industry but not at the risk of water.	See above
Claire Vanderplank	Member of the public (individual)		It is good that there is to be no more surface water entitlements given, along with the commitment to not allow any dams to be placed on the river or its tributaries. It sounds like the intent is there to limit groundwater extraction to protect ecosystems and cultural values, which is good. I don't think it is strong enough though given risks of groundwater allocation based on rainfall recharge estimates, and although it does state in the draft that monitoring will occur and limits may may adjusted, this needs to be strengthened and more specific, and ultimately resourced so that a truly adaptive/dynamic allocation plan can be put in place. Large scale irrigation should be ruled out. The weakest part of the plan appears to be the participation of First Nations in decision making. An advisory committee does not go far enough. I would like to see this plan include a commitment to shifting to shared decision making and ultimately shifting to a rights of nature framework, recognising the river as a living entity with rights, transforming the governance paradigm entirely.	A lot of value could be gained in implementing landscape rehydration - restoring the soil sponge, slowing the flow of water, increasing infiltration and 'greenwater'. This is a very different way of looking at it. It is not 'surface water take', it is effectively adding water to the system which means more is available for all purposes. While this would have a lot of benefit to pastoralists, it is best if First Nations led because it needs to be about enhancing the whole system.
Colma KEATING + Grecian SANDWELL	Member of the public (individual)		Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this draft plan. Congratulations on considering relevant aspects including the: - sensitive balance of these complex ecosystems - nature for nature's sake (habitat etc) - nature for ecosystem services for day-day survival of humans (oxygen, shelter, water) - connection, knowledge and responsibilities of the Traditional Owners - impacts of diverting water from its natural flows and accumulations (ground and surface waters) - importance of undisturbed natural and wilderness areas for wellbeing and tourism. FULLY SUPPORT no damming of the Martuwarra/Fitzroy River or its tributaries. DO NOT support the proviso "no additional surface water entitlements will be issued unless for the essential public purposes proposed in this plan". There should be NO EXCEPTION, but instead be "no additional surface water entitlements will be issued no matter the circumstances". DO NOT support transferrable water rights. Across WA and Australia, sadly they have been abused and manipulated – to the detriment of natural systems. DO NOT support extract of “These limits are 40 per cent of the estimated rainfall recharge to each aquifer per year.” – particularly with the impact of climate change. This should be far less. STRONGLY SUPPORT greater legislative and conservation management of the Martuwarra/Fitzroy River. STRONGLY SUPPORT the rights of active participation of the Traditional Owners in the planning, management, water allocation, monitoring & compliance – including respected contributions to decision making. STRONGLY SUPPORT investment and application into improving the efficiency of water use for pastoral and tourism operations to reduce the need and reliance on water. STRONGLY SUPPORT investment in awareness and education initiatives that lead to the wider community, land managers, tourism operators, visitors etc having an even better understanding of the sensitive balance of natural systems – and their personal/organisational role in contributing positively – ie how and where their actions can make a difference. STRONGLY SUPPORT enabling and protecting the natural flood cycles including as key reproductive habitat for the critically-endangered freshwater sawfish. STRONGLY SUPPORT the desperate need for the Martuwarra/Fitzroy River to remain free flowing and un-impinged by water abstraction (surface and ground), flooding to be left to follow its natural paths and cycles – including because of critical importance of the landforms, water movements and support for benthic fauna at the mouth of the River in Roebuck Bay. This area provides significant habitat (including food and shelter) for benthic fauna & flora, shorebirds (many endangered), marine life and other land based fauna (as documented by the ongoing scientific collaborations including between the Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ), the WA Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and Curtin University (CU) including the initial report by Pepping, M, Piersma T, Pearson G & M Lavaleye (1999) Intertidal Sediments and Benthic Animals of Roebuck Bay, Western Australia This was a 1997 study that we were privileged to contribute to as volunteer citizen scientists – where we learnt much about the interconnectedness of the free flowing Martuwarra/Fitzroy River and the formations and benthic richness of the mudflats – and the negative domino effect if there are changes.	We encourage the continuing learning and application of knowledge and experience of management of natural waterways and associated impacts of water abstraction (surface and ground) and the often blinkered, self-focused view and actions of some users. We only have one change - best wishes with your good environmental management.

DANIELLE EYRE	Conservation and Environment		This plan should include more protection of the National Heritage listed Martuwarra Fitzroy River, and it should extend to listing Martuwarra as a wetland of international significance under the Ramsar Convention. Martuwarra is one of Australia's last great living rivers and is central to the culture, law and livelihoods of Traditional Owners, as well as the health of regional communities, wildlife and the iconic Kimberley environment. I support the government's stated commitment in the draft plan to no surface water extraction and no dams. This commitment should be included in the final plan, recognising the community support for strong protections for the Martuwarra. Embedding this policy commitment into the final water plan would also recognise the river's outstanding values and prevent some of the most damaging mistakes seen elsewhere in Australia being repeated on Martuwarra. Protecting the river floods is critical to preserving the natural and cultural values of the river, including its role as habitat for the critically-endangered freshwater sawfish. The plan does not address groundwater abstraction adequately. If groundwater is over allocated, it creates the conditions for large scale irrigated agriculture to take hold in Martuwarra country. Once irrigated agriculture is established, the economic impact of restrictions on water licensing overtakes environmental values and over-allocation becomes the norm. This pathway has led to rivers being slowly drained, ecosystems collapsing and local communities losing control – outcomes most clearly seen in the Murray-Darling system. Martuwarra still flows freely, and that gives us a chance to do things differently. Groundwater is what keeps the river alive through the long dry season, feeding pools, springs and wetlands that people, fish and species like the critically endangered sawfish depend on. Pumping groundwater in the dry season can show up months later as shrinking pools, and recovery in a boom and bust system like the Martuwarra can take many years. That is why the plan must start by significantly limiting groundwater take on a precautionary basis, to avoid repeating these mistakes before they occur. Acting early is far safer, cheaper and effective than trying to fix the damage after it's been done. We know that the political pressure from industry will be louder than those defending the environmental, social and cultural values, and that over-allocation will creep in and become the default setting. Getting this plan right is a step towards protecting one of Australia's last great free flowing rivers, shows we are learning from past national failures and choosing a future that doesn't repeat them. Locally led development across the catchment should be supported, and there are many opportunities for partnerships with communities, and particularly Traditional Owners that do not rely on extraction of water. An essential safeguard in getting this right is a strong, well-resourced ongoing role for Traditional Owners in water licensing, monitoring and decision making. This must be a pre-condition for any future ground water extraction. Traditional Owners hold deep knowledge of how the river behaves and are best placed to identify early signs of harm. Embedding shared decision making is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk, to address shortcomings highlighted in the 2025 WA Auditor General's Performance Audit — Regulation of Water Licences and protect the river for the long term. The role of Traditional Owners in water licensing and management decisions is also crucial to preserving the National Heritage Listed cultural values of the river, which include groundwater. The inclusion of Bindjareb Noongar people within the Bindjareb Dijlba (Peel-Harvey Estuary) Protection Plan should be considered as a model for the way that the WA Government engages with Traditional Owners and should be implemented with modifications that are appropriate to local circumstances. I urge the WA Government to listen to the community, to use this water plan as a milestone towards protecting the river by making commitments on next steps beyond this plan to ensure long term and legally binding protections for the river and to work with Traditional Owners on a sustainable development plan that delivers for local people.	
david andrewartha	Conservation and Environment		The Fitzroy river is one of the last untouched rivers in a wilderness area of the Kimberley. Western Australia is a large state with many mining areas- surely this one area can be saved from development and preserved for all the future generations of Australia. This is a critical decision.	
David surpice	Member of the public (individual)		I think the proposed groundwater extraction limits are really excessive given how environmentally and culturally important the river is and that during dry years endangered species while rely on the river could be jeopardised by the proposed increases. I think they should not proceed, this river should be protected due to it's unique ecological values.	No.
Deirdre Decelis	Member of the public (individual)		As a citizen of this amazing and unique nation I urge the Western Australian Government officials responsible for water management and conservation to not allow further water harvesting and sell offs to mining magnates and billionaires who already have more than a fair share of Australian territory and resources. Please leave the natural water systems alone to thrive and not cause further irreversible destruction to the planet which we rely on as humans to survive, as well as the natural habitats living in the Fitzroy River. Use your humanity and conscience when making policy and decisions that affect the nation and future generations. Thankyou.	
Douglas Mitchell	Member of the public (individual)		I think the department's approach is fundamentally flawed. Emeritus Prof Lance Endersbee showed that groundwater is not replenished by rainfall (https://youtu.be/halR96J9qKs?si=bynnMoliNyuyzBm) I advocate for the 1964 plan for dams on the Fitzroy, Margaret and Leopold Rivers. I carried out research on that proposal and the discussion in the region in the 1990s. Also dams should be placed on the Lennard, Isdell, Barker and Charnley Rivers.	Australia has a lot of potential to develop our nation for future generations while preserving the natural beauty of this area. Extracting groundwater is not the way to go.
				I only learnt about this consultation today via ABC News. Better exposure of the issue to all Australians would've certainly helped.
Dr. Renee Catullo	Academia		To whom it may concern, While I support the draft plan's precautionary approach to water management, I am concerned that it substantially overestimates how well the biodiversity values of the Fitzroy region are currently understood. The plan appropriately recognises uncertainty in groundwater connectivity, recharge and hydrological processes, yet it appears to treat biodiversity as though it has been sufficiently documented to assess environmental risk. This is not the case. The Fitzroy River and its associated groundwater systems are already recognised as supporting nationally and internationally significant biodiversity, including groundwater- and freshwater-dependent species such as freshwater sawfish, as well as multiple species of endemic frogs and other aquatic fauna. However, these well-known species represent only the documented component of the region's biodiversity, not its full extent. Even among vertebrates, our knowledge of the region remains incomplete. Within my own research, I have identified a currently unknown endemic frog lineage from the Fitzroy catchment that cannot yet be formally described because additional field surveys are required to resolve its distribution and taxonomic limits. This is not an isolated example, but highlights that significant components of the region's biodiversity remain undocumented simply because they have not yet been adequately surveyed. If our understanding of vertebrate diversity remains incomplete, then our understanding of less conspicuous groups such as groundwater fauna, aquatic invertebrates, terrestrial invertebrates, and fungi is inevitably much poorer. The absence of records for these groups should not be interpreted as evidence that biodiversity values are absent. Rather, it reflects the limited biological survey effort that has occurred across much of the region. This area likely represents one of the poorer surveyed regions of Western Australia. This uncertainty is particularly important for groundwater-dependent ecosystems. The Dampier Peninsula and surrounding coastal regions support unique freshwater wetlands and groundwater-fed ecosystems whose biodiversity and ecological function remain poorly characterised and are also culturally important. Changes to groundwater levels or increases in saltwater intrusion have the potential to fundamentally alter these systems, with ecological consequences that may not become apparent until long after development has occurred. Because the biological communities associated with many of these wetlands remain incompletely documented, it is not currently possible to fully assess the impacts of hydrological change. For this reason, I believe the precautionary principle should apply equally to biological uncertainty as it does to hydrological uncertainty. The current lack of biodiversity knowledge means that the environmental consequences of future groundwater development cannot be fully quantified. The final plan should explicitly recognise the extensive biodiversity knowledge gaps as a significant source of uncertainty and require comprehensive, independent biological surveys, including targeted surveys of groundwater-dependent ecosystems in both the wet and dry season, before major groundwater development proceeds. The Fitzroy region represents a biologically significant landscape, not only because of its recognised biodiversity but because it continues to yield species new to science. Decisions regarding long-term water allocation should acknowledge that the biological inventory of the region is still incomplete and that this uncertainty should favour caution rather than assumptions of low environmental risk.	
Ebony Broughton	Member of the public (individual)		The government needs to learn to leave things alone and protect them instead of destroying everything. They need to listen to what the people wa t and they don't want the Fitzroy ruined	#LeaveltAlone
Elaine George	Member of the public (individual)		I support sustainable groundwater use that provides opportunities for local communities, Traditional Owners, pastoral enterprises and other appropriate economic activities. However, any groundwater development must be guided by the precautionary principle and should only proceed where there is clear scientific evidence that it will not adversely affect the Fitzroy River, its tributaries, wetlands, springs, groundwater-dependent ecosystems, or the cultural and heritage values that depend on them. The draft plan itself recognises the need to protect water regimes that support the Fitzroy River and its ecological, cultural, heritage and social values while allowing only sustainable groundwater use for development. Groundwater and surface water in the Fitzroy system are interconnected. Decisions about groundwater extraction must therefore consider impacts on river flows, permanent pools, wetlands and other groundwater-dependent ecosystems, particularly during dry periods when groundwater is critical to maintaining environmental and cultural values. Scientific reports prepared for the plan highlight the importance of maintaining natural water regimes and groundwater discharge to sustain these values. I believe groundwater licences should only be granted where: Traditional Owners are genuine partners in decision-making. Cultural heritage, Native Title rights and Aboriginal water interests are fully respected. Comprehensive environmental and cultural impact assessments are completed. Independent monitoring is established before, during and after development. Water extraction limits can be adjusted if monitoring identifies adverse impacts. Priority is given to local community benefits and sustainable industries rather than large-scale developments that may place excessive pressure on water resources. I support the policy that no additional surface water should be licensed and that the Fitzroy River and its tributaries should not be dammed. These measures help protect one of Australia's most significant free-flowing river systems and the many ecological and cultural values it supports. Future groundwater development should proceed cautiously, incrementally and transparently, with ongoing scientific research and community oversight. Where uncertainty exists about impacts on the river system or groundwater-dependent values, protection of the Martuwarra/Fitzroy River should take precedence. This river is of outstanding environmental, cultural and heritage significance and should be safeguarded for future generations. I wish to place particular emphasis on Traditional Owner leadership, the precautionary principle, and ensuring that future generations inherit a healthy, living river system.	As a grandmother, my deepest wish is that my grandchildren's children will have the opportunity to experience the beauty, cultural significance and life-giving presence of the Martuwarra/Fitzroy River, just as I, my children, grandchildren and generations before me have experienced the Kimberley. This remarkable river is the lifeblood of the region. It is part of an irreplaceable natural and cultural legacy that should be protected and cherished for all generations to come.
Fiona Preston	Member of the public (individual)		This submission objects to the Fitzroy-Derby Water Resources Management Plan as currently drafted, while acknowledging its efforts to make certain advancements. The primary objection is that the plan operates within a narrow Western allocation paradigm that, while cognisant of the views of Traditional Owners, still regards the river as a resource and still expects the river to support unsustainable activities. There is no solid evidence in this plan that Traditional Owners will be given decision-making authority, despite the tens of thousands of years of river wisdom and knowledge they have accumulated, particularly important as this river will be facing climate change, weakened, not strengthened by this plan. Further, this plan defers important governance questions to undefined future processes, and because fracking is being assessed through the EPA as though it and the water plan had no bearing on each other, this plan leaves the Martuwarra simultaneously vulnerable to Project Valhalla's groundwater risks. These are risks that cannot be accurately quantified or qualified. This plan also allows scope for large-scale irrigation pressure. A plan that cannot protect one of Australia's last intact free-flowing river systems across the full range of threats it is exposed to is a plan that must be substantially strengthened before it is finalised. Detailed argument, evidence and specific requested changes are set out in the attached submission.	See attached submission
Gemma	Conservation and Environment		Excessive Groundwater Caps: The annual allocation cap of 75.7 gigalitres is an "industrial-scale" extraction limit. This amount equals roughly a quarter of the annual water usage for the entire Perth metro region. Dry Season Ecosystem Risks: Pumping groundwater at this scale threatens the river catchment during the dry season.	The First Nations people should be listed to!
Georgi Abrahams	Member of the public (individual)		Any proposal that takes water to continue propping up fracking/mining for the oil and gas industry and endangers flora and fauna is inequitable and dangerous, now and certainly in the future.	
Georgia Beardman	Member of the public (individual)		See attached letter	See attached letter
Glenn Hatch	Member of the public (individual)		I would agree that a ground water supply from the river is a good idea, as long as it is used sensibly, Not given to foreign interests for ownership, must remain in Australian hands and not open to Gas Fracking, which has proven to be destructive to the environment.	Please look after this pristine area, Do not destroy it.
Harry Lake	Conservation and Environment		Too environmentally risky	
Hayley Gray	Recreational		Protect the river ! It is vital not to sell the Fitzroy-derby resources. Life depends on it!	Please keep greedy billionaires from destroying something so precious
Jael Johnson	Member of the public (individual)	I lived in the Kimberley for many years and visited the Martuwarra many times. It is a unique and very special river and gives me hope as we haven't yet polluted, diminished or destroyed it.	I implore you to please take this opportunity - one we can't miss - to protect one of the last intact remaining rivers of the world. For all of those animals, plants and humans that rely on it but also for future Kimberley locals, West Australians and visitors for the experience to enjoy an intact river. It's very encouraging that you've said you will not allow surface water extraction or for the river to be dammed. But please do not stop here - you don't need to. Those wanting to extract water (one party in particular - does not need to dam it - they are not reliant on this in any way. Yet the unique and much loved animals and plants that rely on the Fitzroy River have no other options available to them. This of course includes the rare and critically endangered saw fish, who's future is literally in your hands. So please commit and stick to your commitment to not allow any more surface water to be taken and for the river to be no further surface water take and no dams. Do not allow any groundwater extraction either. Just let the river be allowed to flow naturally in response to the seasonal patterns of the Kimberley, as it has done for thousands of years. Just leave it alone. And empower local Traditional Owners to have increased say as decision makers and be allowed to oversee its management and protection like they have done, also for thousands of years. This is an opportunity to do something good for the Kimberley and protect a much loved and important river and source of life instead of future West Australians (and others) wondering why we didn't do this while we still could. Please learn from past mistakes about river system managment and not even risk some of the same mistakes. I am imploring you to make the best decision for the river itself, the animals and plants that rely on it and for the many Aboriginal people who live along the river or visit it and who love it and do not see it as something to be extracted from, rather as something to be respected and looked after. Best wishes, Jael Johnson	

James Harrison	Not Answered	Man	The Baaka / Darling River (NSW)The Issue: Excessive upstream water extraction and large-scale agricultural diversions have historically turned what was once a continuous flowing river system into disconnected, dry pools Traditional Owners and hydrologists have documented severe drops in groundwater levels. This has forced some mining operators to pivot to energy-intensive desalination to offset their reliance on natural systems This is re: Murray-Darling Basin (Eastern Australia)The Issue: Widely cited by environmentalists as the prime example of what happens when over-allocation occurs. The basin suffered massive fish kills and devastating ecological collapse in the 2010s due to unchecked agricultural irrigation	Natural systems develop over millennia and it behooves us to think that we can jump in there in a couple of years and make better of it.
James Nichols	Member of the public (individual)		Keep the Fitzroy-Derby industry-free. My personal view is that we should cherish one of the last remaining healthy river systems in the country.	
Janet Rice	Member of the public (individual)		The fact that the draft plan is called the Fitzroy -Derby Water Resources draft plan says it all. You should actually be planning for the health, vitality and wellbeing of the Martuwarra. This plan should not be about minimising impacts on country and people, it should be about ensuring the wellbeing of the river system and water and life. The Martuwarra is not a 'water resource' to be exploited and extracted as have the 'water resources' of the rest of the country, leading to degraded depauperate ecosystems. . It is a living entity that deserves to be valued in its their right. The traditional owners of this land should have the final say in what needs to happen to ensure the wellbeing of the Martuwarra.	Please learn from the mistakes of the past colonial extractivist misuse of water across so called Australia H1N5 bird flu is about to hit Western Australia with devastating impacts on wildlife. Our bird life and other wildlife needs everything going in its favour to survive, not further degradation of the life sustaining water and water systems that they need.
Janice Francisco	Member of the public (individual)		It is short sighted, it will definitely put all the environment and delicate ecosystems under extreme irreversible duress.	That water belongs to everyone. Your proposal is not sustainable.
Jardine Macdonald	Hydrogeological Consultants		The draft Plan represents an important shift toward integrated water management. The Vision appropriately recognises water as fundamental to culture, Country, ecosystems, communities and economic opportunity, while emphasising collaboration, Traditional Owner partnership and protection of a 'healthy' Martuwarra Fitzroy River. I strongly support this direction for now and future generations. In particular, the proposed Advisory Group represents an important opportunity to move beyond consultation toward genuine collaborative catchment stewardship. However, as discussed at the Broome community session there are unaddressed gaps in capabilities/capacities - both in Traditional Owners/Groups being asked for feedback on ecohydrological impacts, and proponents to get data, model and demonstrate and communication results. This gap is compounded by very limited data in the region (as well as WA water policy issues hindering integrated assessment), creating an ongoing precipice for any development proposal and so sustainable development for all. The Plan has established an excellent vision. The challenge is now ensuring the governance arrangements are capable of delivering that vision in practice. Water cannot be managed independently of catchment function, governance, capability and incentives. If the objective is long-term water security, economic development and improved standard of living in the region, these components must be managed together through adaptive catchment stewardship. Most notably the economics needs to reconnect with land stewardship which is the central point seen in the Martuwarra Council / Prof Anne Poelina's Forever Economies, echoed by the Enduring Pilbara, and highlighted globally by the Commonland 4 returns framework for holistic catchment restoration. We are currently spending ~\$3.2/ha/yr in flood and cyclone recovery in the northwest - not including bushfire, private business impacts and socio-cultural or environmental impacts. This level of investment could proactively have transformational impact through a holistic approach as outlined in detail by the Commonland framework, and seen in other examples such as the Dampier Peninsula Fire Working Group (Broome), Project Pioneer with WWF and RCS on the Great Barrier Reef and a number of other landscape-scale successes. I believe the Advisory Group being developed as part of this planning approach could be the DWER contribution to a more effective, catchment-based and community-led approach. As a member of the West Kimberley Land Conservation District Committee (pastoral soil conservation group) - I see great alignment and potential, however I feel we need to rebuild trust, mutual understanding across sectors, and regional voice. There is potential alignment with the nature positive agenda, and the Wentworth Group Blueprint for the West Kimberley - a national pilot. Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss further.	
Jess Reeves	Academia		I commend this piece of work by DWER for the thorough approach to recognition of Traditional Owner rights, knowledges and interests. I also acknowledge the co-ordinated and collaborative approach undertaken by the diverse communities represented across the Fitzroy-Derby Plan Area. Having a clear articulation of the rights and interests of Traditional Owners at this highest level of approval goes a long way to reducing burden on individual communities and helps facilitate appropriate representation of the rights and responsibilities to maintaining and enhancing healthy country and healthy communities, in alignment with regional development.	I would encourage the ongoing assessment of individual licenses within a cumulative frame, rather than in isolation. This can include spatially and/or temporally and across a range of projects and other uses. In doing so, the cumulative impact can also be assessed through an Indigenous-lens, regarding the aspects that are of most relevance to each community. This is in addition to the standard water quality and quantity metrics and even the monitoring of threatened species, to include either a more holistic ecosystem approach or attention given to species deemed of cultural significance to Traditional Owners within each community. This provides a specific measurement of what is of greatest importance to each community, building trust and transparency. I have attached a model for this approach. Obviously for input on license proposals, appropriate timing, resourcing and materials need to be considered. The PBCs may need to be supported to deliver this, particularly in the smaller communities. This could be through a central body, with representation from Indigenous communities across the region, that meets regularly and provides high level feedback on proposals, before going to the specific communities for targeted response. Are there any considerations for seasonality of take? Or restrictions depending on levels of flow? Or are all licenses based on annual allocations? I would encourage either the installation of some data loggers or a higher frequency of sampling to ensure seasonal variability is considered - particularly as climatic patterns are currently shifting. Where possible, agreements around data sharing and transparency are highly recommended.
Joan Ward	Member of the public (individual)		Good	
Jordie Rieniets	Member of the public (individual)		Leave the Fitzroy alone!	Leave the living water alone
Joshua Scammell	Member of the public (individual)		Leave the river alone	Don't touch the river
Julie Tyers	Member of the public (individual)		I oppose Gina Rinehart's plans to manage this important body of water	
Julienne Ginbey	Member of the public (individual)		It is essential our Water resources are protected for the Environment. All nature is reliant on fresh, in polluted water. Drawing from the aquifer for fracking and damming for cattle estates will damage the survival environmentally endangered Sawfish, reliant of intermittent pools. Environment first. Profits way down in priority.	
Kevin Brady	Member of the public (individual)		The Fitzroy river is an iconic wilderness area and home to dozens of species of endemic plants and animals. It has cultural significance for multiple Aboriginal groups and the impact of any changes to the environmental integrity of the area are likely to be very significant. While the documented plan is ambitious in its scope, the lack of detail and the vast area covered by the plan provide little scope for confidence in the ongoing outcomes. The key objection is that the plan lacks specificity in the processes, certainty levels and risk management efforts for the breadth of the claimed area. Section 2: Water Resource Management The plan suggests that there will be recognition of the cultural importance of water to Aboriginal people (Table 3, part E), but it is not clear how this will be implemented or evaluated. The plan suggests that there will be assessment of the site-specific water availability, but water availability is highly variable across the region and how this will be managed in the rugged nature of the terrain is unclear. The plan includes the strategy to 'enable incremental and low-risk groundwater development' but it is not clear what these 'low-risk' developments are or at what point a project ceases to be a 'low-risk' development. While the plan talks about engaging with traditional owners, it is not clear how overlapping interests of different language and cultural groups will be engaged and supported, or what the Department's expectations are in terms of how these will be resolved.. The volumes of water considered are mind bogglingly large. How this can be effectively monitored and reported in the area of the Kimberley is not made clear and the data looks to be 'best guess' suggestions rather than well documented and researched decisions. All of the Policies on Further Information are conditional, using the term 'may require' as the indicator. There seem to be no hard expectations of a license applicant as a project unfolds. There is limited information around much of the water and environmental conditions in the Kimberley and as a minimum requirement the Department should demand additional information be provided by any licensee on an ongoing basis. Parts 3, 4 and 5 continue to be vague on the hard expectations of license holders in relation to policy outcomes and data collection. Section 3 Monitoring and Evaluation Monitoring should ensure that sufficient data is available to evaluate the impacts of water use by the range of licensees in the plan area. This means that sufficient indicators should be common, clear and mandated as a part of the water licensing plan. However the plan does not provide a confidence that the data gathered will be able to make meaningful determinations about the collective impact of the water use methods across the plan area.	Getting the plan wrong can mean an ineffective allocation, assessment and evaluation process for the Fitzroy River catchment. The plan has too many gaps where insufficient detail is provided, or licensees are not required to make sufficient mandated provision for environmental, cultural or scientific aspects of the water use.
Kevin White	Member of the public (individual)		The risks outweigh the rewards . Industry has a long track record of abusing land and water agreements and should not be trusted in an area that is too delicate to unbalance.	
Larry Bruce	Member of the public (individual)		The Aboriginal community must come first. This is one of the last untouched rivers in Australia. Once opened up you loose the tourist appeal. The Murray/Darling darling basin has been exploited for 100 years & is now over allocated . Continual disputes within politicians & the only winners are the very large cooperations. You have enough mineral income with out opening up this pristine rivers in so as to destroy it. Hoping my opinion helps your decision. Larry Bruce ex WA.	No
Lauren Reed	Member of the public (individual)		Zero genuine consultation with First Nations Traditional Owners which also means this is bound to create mass environmental devastation.	
Leah Hawkesford	Member of the public (individual)		Refer uploaded file	Refer uploaded file
Leonard Warren	Member of the public (individual)		The Plan needs to take more account of the huge demand for water in WA especially from the mining and processing industries as well as the demand for drinking water. In my lifetime I have watched the Gngangara Mound virtually sucked dry by urban and farming demand. To see the stalactites at Yanchep dry up was beyond belief, and the surface freshwater sources around Wanneroo slowly disappear. The Martuwarra is not a limitless resource. But it is part of outback Kimberley a region that attracts massively increasing tourism and that is what should be planned for, not industrialization of a precious near-pristine environment.	It's no good having a plan if the resources are not provided to monitor compliance and clean-up. Furthermore, monitoring and public reporting of the results need to be independent and not able to be changed by the Government in power.

Leonie Stubbs	Member of the public (individual)		Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Fitzroy-Derby Water Resources Management Plan. I applaud the Plan's objectives and strategies to ensure the Martuwarra-Fitzroy remains free flowing and dam-free through restrictions to any further surface water extraction. This is fundamental to the health of the Martuwarra-Fitzroy and the cultural and social values associated with it, so is central to the success of the Plan. I am concerned however about groundwater extraction. The Murray-Darling Basin provides a devastating example of how large irrigation projects can destroy a river. We do not want such an outcome for the Martuwarra-Fitzroy. The precautionary principle must be stringently applied by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation when faced with large irrigation proposals. I also support the central role of the Traditional Owners in the decision making, management and monitoring processes, well aware of the profound significance of the Martuwarra-Fitzroy in their lives. It is imperative that the centrality of their involvement is recognised through the development of a strong collaborative approach to these processes.	
Lilo	Conservation and Environment		I definitely think that the water usage must be regulated so we can maintain the environmentso the draft plan is a good idea to try and save our environment.	I hope this can help the river
Linda Delaney	Academia		I feel that the bottom line on the permissible volume of water to be extracted is not sustainable for the survival of the river and the species dependent on the healthy flow of water. Mandatory and regular monitoring of the River's health is not clearly defined and steps to hold commercial interests accountable for damage to it are weak and historically unregulated or overlooked. The significance of this River to custodians and public more broadly does not seem to feature with any priority or rigour. I want future generations to see and experience the long, healthy, flowing wilderness that this River supports but the draft plan does not recognise its value or provide robust protections. Ms Rhinehart has got an amazing resource in the Martuwara all for her own interests and once again we get not a thing as West Australian citizens in return. I think the draft plan has a baked in bias that is clearly irresponsible to the interests of environmental protection. On that record both sides of government have completely failed us.	
Liz Manera	Member of the public (individual)		Remove "may" from the text and replace with the words I have supplied throughout the Plan, see attached document. Monitoring, managing and reporting on this public/environmental resource is not to be left to applicants and their agents. The water allocation is too large for the varying rainfall which occurs over the watershed. The interval between rain and recharge of aquifers is unknown. The collapse of an aquifer or more will cause ecological collapse and render the country untenable for pastoral activities and communities. A maximum of 25% is recommended if all the guidelines in the Plan have been met.	The Department will require ongoing significant additional funding allocation to effectively and comprehensively manage this public Kimberley resource now and into the future. More monitoring is required in addition to ongoing training and mentoring of additional staff. Due to soil type and geology in the Upper Fitzroy/Hann river area the maximum water allocation should be 20 000 not 60 000. Ground water is known to carry minerals. Irrigated areas must be banded to prevent mineralised water run off into nearby water ways. We know that mineral scald damages fragile country and is very difficult and slow to fix. Downstream damage would be exponential. An applicant's water allocation cannot and must not be leased, shared or sold to any other entity. An applicant's water allocation must not be used for exploration, mining or processing purposes.
Louella Dunbar	Member of the public (individual)		I feel if you proceed to try and control a natural water way, you will fail the environment around these areas.	Everything that has been done so far with rivers has had a huge impact on the surrounded areas. Please learn from all the mistakes that have ruined water ways within Australia thous far.
Maree Murfet	Member of the public (individual)		Too much water to be allowed to be taken from the river. Also mining companies having access.....I don't like it	Our culture needs to learn respect for our water and waterways. I have lived in a van moving around Australia for 9 years and the Fitzroy River is one of the most special rivers. Please respect it
Margaret Cachilla (Chilla) Bulbeck	Member of the public (individual)	Deep lover of the Kimberley	Ever since I visited the Kimberley in 2021, I have been campaigning to preserve our beautiful Martuwarra Fitzroy River, insofar as we can in this world of galloping climate disruption. It would be adding insult to injury to allow the waters of this majestic life-giving and culture-laden river to hasten its own destruction by using ANY of its surface or ground water for fracking. The Kimberley should not be fracked, as the recent Labor Party conference declared in response to a majority of Western Australians. More people are becoming aware of the massively distorted and growing imbalance between our diminishing environment and extractive industries which undermine and destroy it forever. I support the commitment in the draft plan to protect surface water and maintain strong engagement with Traditional Owners. However, I am concerned by the commitment to 'careful and staged groundwater development' based on trusting applicants to hasten slowly with regard for ecosystems, the government and applicants responding to the concerns of traditional owners and the government imposing a powerful and well-funded regulatory regime willing and able to stand up to corporate interests, whether agribusiness or mining. Most Australian governments have a dismal record in this regard. An industry, once established, will seek to expand – not to pack up because it is causing unacceptable risks. Getting this plan right is a step towards protecting one of Australia's last great free flowing rivers. The Martuwarra still flows freely, and that gives us a chance to do things differently. Groundwater is what keeps the river alive through the long dry season, feeding pools, springs and wetlands that people, fish and species like the critically endangered sawfish depend on. Pumping groundwater in the dry season can show up months later as shrinking pools, and recovery in a boom and bust system like the Martuwarra can take many years. I urge the WA Government to strengthen the draft plan by: •Blocking in the commitment to no further surface water take and no dams •Embedding strong monitoring, enforcement and transparency •Supporting Traditional Owners rights and involvement as partners, including a genuine decision making role in water licensing and governance, and monitoring and compliance. Please consider this my submission to the Fitzroy–Derby Draft Water Resource Management Plan – Choosing a Better Pathway Towards Protection for the Martuwarra.	
Margaret Slattery	Member of the public (individual)	Medical practitioner	I am concerned that the draft plan, while sensible in some ways, makes no mention of climate change as a confounding factor in future planning. No one knows what future Kimberley rainfall/temperatures are likely to be so any plan needs to be conservative enough to allow for worst case scenario. There is also mention of water quality or the effects on water quality of excessive extraction or of contamination from mining or pastoral use. Of particular concern, amongst others, nitrate levels and radioactive contamination. The greatest concern that I have is the repeated statements indicating that the guidelines in this report can be over ridden in case of public need. This need is not defined and does not appear to be limited. There is, for instance, an open door for any mining company, pastoral company or other industry to claim public need for their products or services. This would include fracking which requires dangerous levels of water use and likelihood of water contamination which would destroy the river and life in it as well as the homeland and cultural life and health of the local population.	This plan needs to be strengthened and loopholes closed.
Mark Mccorkell	Member of the public (individual)			
Martine Porret	Member of the public (individual)		The main concerns this water plan must address are: Is there enough water to take? What science supports this plan? Is the plan going to be co-managed with Traditional Owners? Once licences are granted, how will the department ensure there is proper monitoring and enforcement?	
Mary EDWARDS	Member of the public (individual)		Leave the river exactly as it is. Listen to the people who have lived along it for thousands of years	Other Australian rivers have been so badly “managed” that their surroundings have been all but destroyed. Learn from these disasters - have the courage to stand up to developers who are only looking for short- term profits with no long term vision for the natural environment
Michael Douglas	Academia			The attached document is feedback from academic researchers from the University of Western Australia
Michael Pemberton	Conservation and Environment		The plan as it stands raises significant concerns with regard to water sharing, particularly as climate change intensifies. Please see attached document for my full range of concerns.	Please see attached document. I object to the plan as it currently stands.
Nicholas Rodway	Member of the public (individual)		To whom it may concern, My name is Nicholas Rodway and I am a resident of the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley. I need to disclose from the outset that I have worked as a journalist for much of the last decade and have written multiple stories about the Martuwarra/Fitzroy River for local and international media. However, I am writing this submission as a resident of the Shire of Derby/West Kimberley and someone who has spent a considerable period of time on and alongside the River, as well as working with Traditional Owners in managing their Country. As a resident, I hold reservations about local groundwater being used for industrial development. With unpredictable seasonal fluctuations, the possibility of over-extraction should be a serious concern for both state and federal governments. I strongly support the strengthening of the draft plan to preserve groundwater and to support the rights of Traditional Owners. The Martuwarra/Fitzroy catchment holds outstanding natural and cultural values. Our elected representatives should do everything in their power to ensure these values are maintained. To close, the River is a shining beacon in a world where the natural world is becoming ever more diminished by the day. This alone should give the government pause to truly consider the repercussions of their eventual decision. Thank you for your consideration. Nicholas Rodway	

Nigel Murray	Member of the public (individual)		Here is my submission to the Fitzroy–Derby Draft Water Resource Management Plan – Choosing a Better Pathway Towards Protection for the Martuwarra. I hereby call on the WA Government to strengthen protection of the National Heritage listed Martuwarra Fitzroy River through this plan. The Martuwarra is one of Australia’s last great living rivers and is central to the culture, lore and livelihoods of Traditional Owners, as well as the health of regional communities, wildlife and the iconic Kimberley coast, a hidden gem of Australian tourism. I welcome the government’s stated commitment in the draft plan to no surface water extraction and no dams. Delivering on this commitment in the final plan would reflect the wishes of the consistently loud community voices in support of strong protections for the Martuwarra. Embedding this policy commitment into the final water plan would also recognise the river’s outstanding values and prevent some of the most damaging mistakes seen elsewhere in Australia being repeated on the Martuwarra. Protecting the river floods is critical to preserving the natural and cultural values of the river, including its role as a last stronghold for the ‘critically-endangered’ freshwater sawfish, <i>Pristis pristis</i>, that only breeds in large flood years and for which water flows are critical. A key risk the plan must address is loss of groundwater. If groundwater is over allocated, it creates the conditions for large scale irrigated agriculture to take hold in the Fitzroy catchment and this would not be conducive to the long-term health of the river system. Across Australia and globally, this pathway has led to rivers being slowly drained, ecosystems collapsing and local communities losing control – outcomes most clearly seen in the Murray-Darling system. I urge the WA Government to strengthen the draft plan by: • Locking in the commitment to no further surface water take and no dams. • Significantly limiting groundwater extraction to prevent large scale irrigated agriculture taking over. • Embedding strong monitoring, enforcement and transparency. • Supporting Traditional Owners’ rights and involvement as partners, including a genuine decision making role in water licensing and governance, monitoring and compliance. Getting this plan right would be a step towards protecting one of Australia’s last great free flowing rivers. It would show that we are learning from past national failures and choosing a future that doesn’t repeat them. The Martuwarra still flows freely, and that gives us a chance to do things differently. Groundwater is what keeps the river alive through the long dry season: feeding pools, springs and wetlands that people, fish and species like the critically endangered sawfish depend on. The effects of pumping up groundwater in the dry season can show up months later as reduced water flows, shrinking pools and dry river beds. Recovery in a boom-and-bust system like the Martuwarra can take many years. That is why the plan must start by significantly limiting groundwater take on a precautionary basis, to avoid repeating these mistakes before they occur. Acting early is far safer, cheaper and more effective than trying to fix damage after it has been done. It is easier to limit permissions than to withdraw them once businesses have become dependent upon a resource. Locally led development across the catchment should be supported. There are many opportunities for partnerships with communities and particularly Traditional Owners that do not rely on extraction of water. An essential safeguard in getting this right is a strong, well-resourced ongoing role for Traditional Owners in water licensing, monitoring and decision making. This must be a pre-condition for any future groundwater extraction. Traditional Owners hold deep knowledge of how the river behaves and are best placed to identify early signs of harm. Embedding shared decision making is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk, to address shortcomings highlighted in the 2025 WA Auditor General’s Performance Audit — Regulation of Water Licences and protect the river for the long term. The role of Traditional Owners in water licensing and management decisions is also crucial to preserving the National Heritage Listed cultural values of the river, which include groundwater. I urge the WA Government to listen to the community and to use this water plan as a milestone towards protecting the river by making commitments on next steps beyond this plan to ensure long term and legally binding protections for the river. I urge the WA Government to work with Traditional Owners on a sustainable development plan that delivers for local people and the health of Martuwarra ecosystems. Yours faithfully, Nigel Murray	No.
Nona Harvey	Member of the public (individual)		Excellent	
Peter Enge	Member of the public (individual)		See my uploaded file.	No.
Peter Veth	Academia		Please find the submission attached from Professors Peter Veth and Sue O’Connor	
Pippa Kern	Member of the public (individual)		After attending a community information session and reading the plan I am still uncertain what the scientific basis is for the 40% recharge allocation limit. The plan must explain why 40% is considered protective of important groundwater dependent ecosystems, and what environmental data and modelling approaches let to this target. What evidence has been used to demonstrate that a 40% extraction will maintain groundwater discharge and maintenance of groundwater dependent ecosystems? I am also concerned with the Departments capacity to regulate water use, given the recent criticisms from the Governor General that DWER does not effectively monitor or enforce the conditions on existing water licenses. How does the plan deal with this existing failure of DEWR? Given possible resourcing issues within DEWR, the Fitzroy-Derby plan should take a more cautious approach until a time that DEWR can demonstrate effective monitoring and enforcement as water licenses come online.	
Reto Zollinger	Conservation and Environment		This Plan must not become a mechanism for facilitating industrial expansion. It must instead serve as a legally enforceable framework that permanently safeguards the ecological integrity of the entire catchment. The consequences of getting this wrong would be profound and irreversible. Once groundwater systems collapse, once aquifers are contaminated or depleted, once floodplains are cleared, and once river flows are altered beyond ecological limits, restoration will be impossible within human timescales. There remains substantial scientific uncertainty regarding the cumulative impacts of large-scale groundwater extraction, irrigated agriculture, unconventional gas development, and land clearing across the Fitzroy catchment. The Plan must therefore adopt a precautionary approach whereby any activity posing a risk of serious or irreversible environmental harm is prohibited unless it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that no such harm will occur. The ecological health of the Martuwarra depends upon the timing, volume, duration, and variability of natural flows. Once altered, these processes cannot simply be recreated through management interventions.	Any attempts that sacrificing an irreplaceable natural and cultural legacy for temporary commercial benefit such as unconventional gas extraction, mining or large-scale water extraction would be a profound failure of that responsibility. Once damaged, the Martuwarra (Fitzroy River) and the Kimberley region can never be restored. The Martuwarra is not an industrial resource waiting to be exploited. It is a living river system of global ecological significance, a cultural landscape of profound importance, and a natural legacy that belongs to future generations.
Rick Hallin	Member of the public (individual)		The approach to ensure that this legislation continues , should only be considered if there are enough guaranteed water sources available for the current use by the the traditional owners and especially the environment that so much wildlife depends on !	To ensure that at all times the benefit to the environment , the wildlife and the people take precedence at all times over any development plans ! There must also be in place a plan to contain any toxic disasters , that may occur through whatever reasons !
Rob	Member of the public (individual)		Although the approaches outlined in the draft appear adequate at first glance, history shows that once these resources are allocated, they will be exploited and lack of government oversight and failure to prosecute breaches mean the recourses will be depleted and irreversible damage to the environment will occur. Once these endangered species are lost, they are gone for good.	Please leave the water where it is. If industry needs water, it should be located where there is an adequate water supply that will not put the environment at risk.
Robyn Colledge	Member of the public (individual)	Advocate for protection of Manning Park Ridge as a Bushcare Volunteer	I oppose the Plan, further consideration needs to be taken into consideration prior to implementation.	I used to live in Halls Creek for a number of years. The water in the town is calcified and difficult to drink. The towns people do not have access to good drinking water, thereby are impacted by health issues. Lowering of any water table will affect the surrounding areas exacerbating health issues and diabetes, and other health problems. Coca Cola is cheaper than bottled water..... The endless supply of water is not endless. The nature of the human race has shown via allocation of water within the Murray Darling Basin has been proven that the allocation/s will be compromised and stolen.
Ron	Member of the public (individual)		Mining and Fracking - will this be clearly stipulated as a NO?	Who were the traditional owners consulted in 2025 and what group did each one of them represent? Do they belong to the area they represented? This plan needs to be actively discussed and communicated more broadly within the groups that this plan covers.
Sarah Dudley	Conservation and Environment		Water, tomorrow’s gold, is to be shared by all. Not just for the rich	
Scarlett Blydenburgh	Conservation and Environment		I urge the WA Government to strengthen protection of the National Heritage listed Martuwarra Fitzroy River through this plan. The Martuwarra is one of Australia’s last great living rivers and is central to the culture, law and livelihoods of Traditional Owners, as well as the health of regional communities, wildlife and the iconic Kimberley coast. The Martuwarra still flows freely, and that gives us a chance to do things differently. Groundwater is what keeps the river alive through the long dry season, feeding pools, springs and wetlands that people, fish and species like the critically endangered sawfish depend on. Pumping groundwater in the dry season can show up months later as shrinking pools, and recovery in a boom and bust system like the Martuwarra can take many years. That is why the plan must start by significantly limiting groundwater take on a precautionary basis, to avoid repeating these mistakes before they occur. Acting early is far safe, cheaper and effective than trying to fix the damage after it’s been done. Locally led development across the catchment should be supported, and there are many opportunities for partnerships with communities, and particularly Traditional Owners that do not rely on extraction of water. An essential safeguard in getting this right is a strong, well-resourced ongoing role for Traditional Owners in water licensing, monitoring and decision making. This must be a pre-condition for any future ground water extraction. Traditional Owners hold deep knowledge of how the river behaves and are best placed to identify early signs of harm. Embedding shared decision making is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk, to address shortcomings highlighted in the 2025 WA Auditor General’s Performance Audit — Regulation of Water Licences and protect the river for the long term. The role of Traditional Owners in water licensing and management decisions is also crucial to preserving the National Heritage Listed cultural values of the river, which include groundwater.	A key risk the plan must address is groundwater. If groundwater is over allocated, it creates the conditions for large scale irrigated agriculture to take hold in the Fitzroy catchment. Across Australia and globally, this pathway has led to rivers being slowly drained, ecosystems collapsing and local communities losing control – outcomes most clearly seen in the Murray-Darling system. I urge the WA Government to strengthen the draft plan by: Locking in the commitment to no further surface water take and no dams, Significantly limiting groundwater extraction to prevent large scale irrigated agriculture taking over, Embedding strong monitoring, enforcement and transparency, and Supporting Traditional Owners rights and involvement as partners, including genuine decision making role in water licensing and governance, and monitoring and compliance.
Sebastian Tops	Member of the public (individual)	Associate mechanical piping design layout engineer (water, desalination, mining, petrochemical, power), and graduate (politics)	File upload to follow	Thank you for the opportunity to assist in finding necessarily respectful results for all involved.
Sharyn Martin	Member of the public (individual)		We need to Protect the Kimberley from greedy profiteers! This is a massive environmental and Indigenous cultural risk. In fact, I think it’s more an inevitability, than a risk, that tremendous and irreversible damage will be done to country and culture if this goes ahead. tremendous and irreversible damage will be done to country and culture if this goes ahead.	no

Steven Mathews	Not Answered	Consultant - ecology and environment	I support no extraction of surface water from the Fitzroy. I am strongly opposed to the extraction of ground water from the Fitzroy hydrological system, as this will inevitably negatively impact the river itself and the dependent ecological communities. Further, basing 'sustainable' extraction rates on past rainfall and hydrological data is a completely inadequate method of setting extraction limits, given the changes to these parameters caused by climate change. To allow up to 40% extraction from the Greater Derby and Fitzroy subareas from the Wallal, Erskine and Grant Poole aquifers is the same as a reduction in input of this amount from rainfall into this system. This means that the potential for dramatically different precipitation and evapotranspiration rates would occur against the background of already significantly depleted input into these acquirers. Further, taking the currently known 'natural range' extremes of the system as thresholds beyond which use of the resource will not be permitted is an unsound basis for setting extraction rates, as it necessarily means the lower limit will taken as the new reference point. Any extraction will shift the system into deficit, compared to the pre-existing parameters. Committing water resources over and above those already committed means calling forth significant private investment, predicated on continued access to this primary production input. In the event of reduced availability, the pressure to continue to supply commercial allocations will almost certainly result in access to water resources allocated to the environment and cultural purposes, to satisfy the demand. I am concerned that there may be legal liability issues at stake here, if the specified commercial allocations cannot be met. At the very least, tin the event of water resource shortfalls and consequent commercial failure, there will be pressure brought on the Government to assist businesses that have been established on the basis of the proposed allocations. I consider this to be a significant risk to Government.	Having walked wild sections of the Fitzroy River, I believe it to be treasure of international significance - as a jewel in its own right, but also in comparison to the degradation experienced by the vast majority of rivers globally, due to impoundment, extraction of surface- and ground- waters, pollution, sedimentation, diversion and so-called 'improvement' programmes. While facilitating development of industry and commercial activities is an important role for Government, this cannot be at the expense of impacting one of the most significant relatively intact riverine systems in the world. The river and associated hydrological systems must be left intact.
Sue Clegg	Member of the public (individual)			
Susan Dyer	Member of the public (individual)		I think this will be a huge mistake that will have unintended consequences especially for wildlife and the environment in general. We must leave this pristine ecosystem and environment to do its living as it has for millions of years. Why must us humans keep taking? Haven't we ruined so many ecosystems already? I implore the people who hold the power to do this to step back and listen to the science. Please, please leave the tropical water system to its wonderful peace.	Please don't do this. For the future. For our planet. For our grandchildren's children. For nature.
tamsinhodder	Member of the public (individual)		I urge you to leave it alone. It will be fatal to the environment and ecosystem to proceed with your plan	I beg you please do not do this
Tania Slater	Member of the public (individual)			Please listen to the people who understand their land. The Government need to understand the rights of the people's who's land this really belongs to. Listen to them!!! Stop taking what isnt yours to take... They understand their land, listen to what they say.. thanku.
Terri aldridge	Member of the public (individual)		The river must be protected. It belongs to the land and First Nations people. It is what holds the land safely to survive. It is a fragile environment. The damage from business enterprise is irreversible. It is an irresponsible decision to allow any current or future plans to interfere with this iconic water system	Water is precious. Water is life. The risks are to great. I have lost faith in corporations and the current government being honest. I am so concerned for where this country's leadership has gone.
Tim Booth	Pastoral and Agricultural		This proposal is reckless and wanton. It will jeopardise the health of the whole ecosystem including several iconic rare and endangered species. Extraction of this water must not go ahead. The ecosystem cannot argue for itself, we must speak for it. It was there first! I strongly object to the proposal TimBooth	
Tricia Edwards	Member of the public (individual)		I think that the river should be left in its natural state. There should be no allocations of water to agriculture or any other industrial production. We need to keep this water ecosystem in its intact natural state which supports all life in the area and the aboriginal people of the area can manage it as they have done for thousands of years. There are new understandings of agriculture which can use animals in a way to reduce the need for any extra water in their production. Allan Savory of the Savory institute manages animals in the driest areas of Africa with no additional water and actually increases the Water in the landscape with holistic managed grazing. This can be replicated in Australia. In the current climate conditions we MUST protect our natural areas as a number 1 priority above profit and destruction for the survival of the ecosystem and our people.	Put the environment first and we will continue to survive and thrive. It must be managed with people in mind not profit.
Warwick Gibbons	Pastoral and Agricultural		We have to reach forward and plan ahead for the Generations following our journey so far. Considering the actual Size of our WA State, it's about time we an acknowledged the 'extremes' of climate we have occurring each year. 'Water' is in abundance thru out the 'wet season' across our Kimberly region and unless we continue to ignore its generous availability, the remainder of our State will run dry !! Our Royalties alone can sustain the cost and Planning 'diversion' of the Fitzroy will not only make sense, it will also provide a much better lifestyle for our indigenous people.	Let's just make it happen !!
Wayne Lee	Member of the public (individual)		After attending the meeting in Broome on 20/5/26 my comments are; 1. There should be a page in the departments WEB site listing all applications made in the Plan Area. 2. Consulting with TOs should be mandatory not advised. 3. The system needs to be 100% transparent. 4. The DWER should have its own people and wells for monitoring ground water levels and not rely on the licensee to provide the information. 5. The volume of water available on a licence should be variable on actual rainfall figures and not exceed the 40% maximum rainfall target for the Plan Area. 6. The licensee should be charged for the water used and all funds allocated to help safe guard the Plan Area to make sure it is viable long term for all.	No.
Willem Prins	Member of the public (individual)		I think this river system needs to be conserved as is, with no further development that will harm this pristine environment. Fracking these areas or anywhere else in WA are too risky with poisonous chemicals injected into groundwater, piping everywhere. Please restrain the greedy developers and farmers breaking their pastoral lease agreements. Create massive natural parks and leave these areas for furure generations to enjoy.	No.
Yvonne Ingeme	Conservation and Environment	and private individual	We do not know or understand what the future climate may hold, with that in mind the approach has not taken an adequate precautionary approach. With this extreme level of uncertainty, the water should be kept in the river and the ground water to supply the ground water dependent ecosystems including stygofauna and supply the river, springs and waterholes over the dry season to support its biodiversity including the critically endangered sawfish and continue to provide for the needs of the local traditional owners and community rather than be exploited and lead to the further destruction of environmental values	No water must be allocated for broad acre cropping No water must be allocated to gas fracking!!!
Zakiah	Member of the public (individual)		Derby is my birth place. I hold significant respect for the town's traditional owners of the land, the Warrwa and Nyikina people and the Mowanjum Community. I stand with the aboriginal community of Derby and Australia, as I say this project should cease to continue. The government shouldn't be altering or managing functioning, sustainable, flowing waterway's especially in sacred, protected regions in the Kimberley's. The negative impacts on humanising the marine wildlife living in the fitzroy - derby water resource will not only show in time once species become endangered (saw fish) but immediately with ancestors disappointment. My main concerns are focused on the long-term consequences of the department's waterway 'maintenance'.	This reserve and environment should remain unaltered and untouched by humanity.
Zena Williams	Member of the public (individual)		In brief, I oppose several of the approaches set out in the draft plan, with my full reasoning and five specific recommended actions detailed in the attached pdf. To summarise: the plan's groundwater provisions rest on an undefined "sustainable" test that its own methods report admits it cannot yet verify, its no-dams commitment leaves floodplain harvesting unaddressed, and its proposed Water Advisory Committee falls well short of the genuine Traditional-Owner-led co-governance the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council has called for since 2020. I ask the Department to release no new groundwater for general licensing until a safe threshold is independently established, close the floodplain harvesting gap, and replace the advisory committee with a statutory co-governance authority. Please refer to my attached submission for the full evidence and reasoning behind each of these points.	Please see my full attached submission commenting on the entire proposal, and outlining actions the department must take.