



Guidance note 5

The role of local government

This note is one in a series that aims to assist people and organisations involved in implementing *Better urban water management* (BUWM), which was developed by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) in 2008.

Local governments play a crucial role in the implementation of *Better urban water management* (Western Australian Planning Commission 2008) by assessing water management reports, ensuring infrastructure is constructed in accordance with approved urban water management plans and subdivision guidelines, and ensuring that local planning is consistent with the state's planning policies, processes and requirements. Further information regarding the role of local government in assessing and approving water management strategies and plans is given in guidance note 3.

Actions for local government

Actions for local government include:

- considering total water cycle management at all stages of the planning process
- implementing water sensitive urban design.

These actions should also be undertaken by private individuals and organisations (e.g. developers, business, residents).

Local governments implement *Better urban water management* and ensure that developments are water sensitive through:

- their role in assessing the water management reports required by *Better urban water management*
- producing local planning policies related to water sensitive urban design and provision of water for public open space
- adoption of *Local government guidelines for subdivisional development* (Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia 2011)
- amendment of local (town) planning schemes to incorporate *Better urban water management* requirements
- producing a local government water management strategy.

Preparing a local planning policy

Local planning policies are one of the tools available for implementing the local (town) planning scheme and local planning strategy. They can be used to implement water sensitive urban design as they determine the parameters of development in a local government area. They serve to:

- guide local government councillors and planners, as decision makers
- help proponents, property owners and the community understand how decisions are likely to be reached.

If a local government is satisfied that *State planning policy 2.9: Water resources* (Government of Western Australia 2006), this policy is being reviewed and the latest version should be used when it is available, and *Better urban water management* give sufficient direction for decision making, there may be no need to establish a separate local planning policy for water sensitive urban design and water resource management.

Local planning policies must be consistent with *State planning policy 2.9: Water resources* (Government of Western Australia 2006), *Better urban water management* (Western Australian Planning Commission 2008) and the *Decision process for stormwater management in WA* (Department of Water 2009). They should either:

- apply to the entire local government area if there are similar hydrological and environmental characteristics throughout
- group areas with similar hydrological and environmental characteristics and provide specific information for each type.

The Department of Water should be consulted during the preparation of local planning policies relating to water to ensure that they are consistent with current best management practices and department objectives and guidelines.

The Waterwise Council program has produced the document *Local planning policy supporting document* (Department of Water and Water Corporation 2011) to provide information about how to develop local planning policies for water sensitive design in public open space.

How to amend a local (town) planning scheme to incorporate *Better urban water management* requirements

Amendments to local (town) planning schemes are an excellent opportunity to incorporate the requirements of *Better urban water management* and other water resource management issues, including public drinking water source areas, waterway foreshore areas and water for public open space.

Better urban water management requirements can be contained in the general directions section of the local planning scheme. This section of the scheme sets out the general requirements that apply to land use and development and the specific requirements that apply to particular uses and forms of development.

Development requirements relevant to particular zones may also be included in the

zoning provisions (Western Australian Planning Commission 2010). Particular development requirements may also apply to special control areas.

Instead of including the development requirements directly in the scheme text, detailed water sensitive urban designs consistent with *Better urban water management* may be contained in local planning policies. This has the advantage of simplifying the scheme text and avoiding the need for statutory amendments for minor changes to standards or requirements.

More specific information requirements can be included where development boundaries and precincts are known. Information such as the relevant water management report (i.e. regional water management strategy, district water management strategy, local water management strategy or urban water management plan) could be included in the scheme. An example is given in the text below.

Suggested example text: *Better urban water management* in a local planning scheme

1 General development requirements

1.1 *Better urban water management* (Western Australian Planning Commission 2008)

Note: *Better urban water management* provides guidance on implementing *State planning policy 2.9: Water resources* (Government of Western Australia 2006).

1.1.1 Any proposal to develop land shall be accompanied by a water management report appropriate to the level of planning approval required, as described in *Better urban water management*.

1.1.2 Urban water management design should be consistent with the principles in *Stormwater management manual for Western Australia* (Department of Water 2004–2007) and the *Decision process for stormwater management in WA* (Department of Water 2009).

1.1.3 Drainage and urban water management systems should incorporate water sensitive urban design, including water reuse and efficiency measures.

1.1.4 Details of proposed structure plan

a) For district structure plans, a map showing proposals for arterial drainage requirements and other land requirements for water management.

b) A written report to explain the mapping and to explain how the water management report is consistent with the requirements of *Better urban water management*.

2 Detailed requirements

2.1 District structure plan

2.1.1 District water management strategy

The developer will submit a district water management strategy to the local government for approval as a technical appendix to a district structure plan.

The local government will notify the Department of Water of the proposed strategy prior to advertising the district structure plan. The district water management strategy will include a level of detail consistent with the requirements of *Better urban water management* and relevant Department of Water guidelines.

3 Local structure plan

3.1.1 Local water management strategy

The developer will submit a local water management strategy to the local government as a technical appendix to a local structure plan.

The local government will refer the proposed strategy to the Department of Water prior to advertising the local structure plan. The local water management strategy must be consistent with the district water management strategy (where available) and shall include a level of detail consistent with the requirements of *Better urban water management* and *Interim: Developing a local water management strategy* (Department of Water 2008a).

4 Development and subdivision

4.1 The developer will prepare an urban water management plan, where required by *Better urban water management*. This shall be implemented as part of the development, and must be approved by the local government with the support of the Department of Water.

The urban water management plan must be consistent with the approved local water management strategy (where available), the requirements of *Better urban water management* and *Urban water management plans: guidelines for preparing plans and for complying with subdivision conditions* (Department of Water 2008b).

An urban water management plan shall accompany subdivision applications where an approved local water management strategy does not exist. Where an approved local water management strategy exists, the urban water management plan shall be lodged and approved prior to any site works occurring.

Preparing a local government water management strategy

Local government water management strategies define the local government's approach to water management in more detail than a local planning policy or local (town) planning scheme. The strategies:

- aim to guide the local government and developer in the planning, design, and construction of water management processes and infrastructure guide all stages of planning decisions
- assist the local government to implement water sensitive design.

To be effective these documents need to be implemented through a local planning policy or via requirements under the local (town) planning scheme. Ideally they

should include the whole local government area, however site specific boundaries may be appropriate in some circumstances, for instance where there are unique water management issues or strategic guidance is required to guide future development in an area.

The content and detail of a local government water management strategy focuses on the total water cycle and will vary depending on the relevant issues to the area, resources, available information and objectives of the local government. The strategy outlines the requirements set by the local government for water management. As a guide it should include:

- local government water objectives
- the allocation of management responsibilities between the council, the Department of Water, the Department of Environment and Conservation and private landowners
- identification (maps) of water resource management issues (e.g. main drainage lines, flood areas, catchments, wetlands, waterways)
- strategies for managing water resource management issues
- design criteria and engineering specifications
- information gaps and required investigations (including who is responsible for carrying out the investigations)
- water management information requirements (i.e. for district water management strategies, local water management strategies and urban water management plans), including when this information is required and who is responsible for preparation and approval
- water conservation plan (refer to www.water.wa.gov.au/Managing+water/Water+efficiency/Water+conservation+plans/default.aspx for further information)
- asset management strategy (maintenance and replacement priorities, maintenance and replacement costs, operational costs, asset value, service levels)
- risk assessment process for determining upgrade requirements
- methods for prioritising upgrade works (cost–benefit analysis)
- illustration of shortfalls in the current local government systems, policies and procedures and how they affect water sensitive urban design
- recommendations for improvements.

Although these strategies present the local government’s position on water resource management, local governments are strongly encouraged to obtain advice from the Department of Water on the preparation of the document.

Local government guidelines for subdivisional development

The *Local government guidelines for subdivisional development* (Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia 2011) are intended to guide local government and the

development industry by specifying minimum standards for the design and construction of roads, drainage, streetscapes, earthworks and public open space.

Where there are no engineering guidelines the IPWEA guidelines will be used as the default minimum standard in cases where the WAPC is asked to clear subdivision engineering conditions under S145 of the *Planning and Development Act*. Copyright of the guidelines is owned by Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA), and access to the guidelines is available on subscription from the website at: <http://ipwea.asn.au/>.

The Department of Planning and the IPWEA encourage developers, designers and approval authorities to use this document as the basis for subdivision engineering design and construction. Local governments are also strongly encouraged to formally adopt these guidelines as their minimum subdivision standards.

The adoption of these guidelines will assist local governments and the Department of Water to assess water management strategies and plans because they apply consistent requirements and design standards.

References

- Department of Water 2004–2007, *Stormwater management manual for Western Australia*, Department of Water, Perth.
- 2008a, *Interim: Developing a local water management strategy*, Department of Water, Perth.
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— unpublished c, *Scheme provisions for water sensitive urban design*, viewed 8 May 2012, <www.newwaterways.org.au/files/files/35_Scheme_Provisions_for_WSUD.pdf>.

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