



Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group Meeting 23 – 11 June 2025 Communique

The Aboriginal Water and Environmental Advisory Group (AWEAG) held its 23rd meeting at Prime House in Joondalup. The meeting was co-chaired by Alistair Jones and Anthony Bellottie. The main items presented and discussed included the following:

Membership Recruitment Campaign and Communication Plan

The membership recruitment campaign is nearly ready for launch, with Corporate Communications finalising the details. It aims to increase engagement and awareness by reaching stakeholders and community members through regional media, social platforms, and existing networks. The campaign will highlight the department's role, its connection to Country, and successful partnerships like the Pilbara Ranger Network. Members are encouraged to support and share the campaign, although reviewing the full communications plan is not necessary. An update on its progress will be shared at the next AWEAG meeting.

Strategic Planning Review

The discussion centred on embedding cultural protocols and environmental responsibilities—particularly in relation to water—into licensing and training frameworks. Participants highlighted the importance of early engagement with Traditional Owners, the need for well-structured application processes, and the alignment of these efforts with climate change priorities. A strong emphasis was placed on the development of formal qualifications in water testing through State training systems. The department was identified as a potential registered training provider, reinforcing its role in supporting environmental stewardship and workforce capability.

Inland Water Target Update

The department is enhancing its engagement with Aboriginal communities in water planning by working closely with AWEAG, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia (AHCWA), Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA) and the Coalition of Peaks. It is co-developing a water literacy pamphlet and an Aboriginal Engagement Plan to support informed and respectful consultation. A consistent engagement protocol is needed, as current practices vary and many organisations lack the knowledge to consult effectively. Education sessions will help bridge knowledge gaps around water systems. An upcoming AWEAG session will focus on inland water targets and licensing, aiming to build trust and foster genuine partnerships with Aboriginal communities in sustainable water management.

Pilbara Traditional Owner Engagement Update

A recent discussion has highlighted the urgent need to address poor water quality in the Pilbara, which has deeply impacted local communities and their cultural responsibilities. In response, a three-way working group, including an independent provider, is exploring solutions such as desalination and hydrological studies. Bungaroo is working closely with Ministers, and strong advocacy from leaders like Leanne Evans has helped bring attention to the issue.

The importance of Traditional Owner input and learning from past experiences was emphasised to ensure better outcomes. A new environmental reporting portal, [EnviroWatch.com.au](https://envirowatch.com.au), has been launched, and there are calls to improve the environmental complaints process. A new program is also being developed to align DEE services with community needs, with a second information session planned before September. Future sessions will feature cultural storytelling, and onboarding materials will be updated to reflect these developments.