Made possible by water

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

WATER CORPORATION

AQWEST BUNBURY WATER

BUSSELTON WATER

Acknowledgement of Country

The State Government of Western Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and community.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations people today.

We recognise the deep cultural and spiritual significance of water to Aboriginal people and their communities. Their enduring connection, knowledge and custodianship of water resources are vital to shaping a sustainable and inclusive water future.

As we move forward, we commit to strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal people and communities and embedding Aboriginal world views and knowledge systems into water planning, management, and guidance on decision-making across Western Australia.

01

Minister's message

Water: the foundation of WA's future

"Water is life. It sustains our growing communities, supports our economy, and nourishes the landscapes and ecosystems that define Western Australia (WA). Every home, every job, and every vision for our State's future depends on secure, sustainable water. "

Hon. Don Punch MLA

For generations, Aboriginal people have cared for this precious resource, and it remains vital to all Western Australians today.

Continued stewardship is key to ensuring a sustainable water supply. Water, land, and climate are deeply interconnected, and it is through this lens that we are shaping the future of WA's water.

However, our State is changing. Few places in the world face the same kind of water challenges as WA. Our population has surged, coinciding with a period of major economic expansion, driven by global demand for our State's valuable resources. Rising demand for water is occurring at the same time that climate change is reducing the availability of our traditional water sources and testing the limits of our infrastructure.

WA's water challenges have always been complex, and they are intensifying. Meeting these pressures demands bold adaptation and world-class innovation – something WA has consistently delivered. This success reflects the skill and expertise of our engineers, water source planners and water industry professionals. In 1903, the state government transformed water access in WA with a monumental investment in a visionary 560km pipeline from the Perth Hills to the Goldfields. Although the cost of construction equalled the government's entire annual budget, few would argue today that the project wasn't needed. Decades later, WA led the nation by introducing large scale desalination in the mid-2000s. We were also among the first in the world to adopt groundwater replenishment, setting a global benchmark for sustainable water management.

This forward-thinking and industry-leading innovation has helped WA to adapt to a changing climate. Today,

> **We must recognise water's full value – not only for health and liveable communities but also for economic prosperity, environmental care and cultural heritage.**

desalination plants in Kwinana and Binningup supply around half of Perth's drinking water, and this is set to increase when the Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant comes online in 2028. At the same time groundwater replenishment is recharging Perth's aquifers with up to 28 billion litres of purified recycled water each year, securing a sustainable supply for the future.

Globally, places like Cape Town, California and Singapore have faced acute water stress and responded with bold innovation. California is investing heavily in recycled water, while Singapore's NEWater program is a global benchmark for purified recycled water. In WA, we must consider every option to secure future water supplies, especially as water becomes a critical enabler for emerging, high-demand industries such as critical minerals, and data centres driven by AI.

This is why a new approach is needed now. Climate change is reshaping our water resources, and we must prepare for a drier future by managing this precious resource carefully and accelerating the shift to climate resilient solutions such as desalination and water recycling. This requires careful planning, meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders, and valuing water.

Innovation, however, comes with trade-offs. Water, once seen as a free resource, is now produced at significant cost through energy-intensive processes such as desalination and recycling.

The WA Government is committed to unlocking the possibilities of water across our cities and regions, from agriculture to mining, and from households to emerging industries. *Made possible by water* sets out our commitment to build a thriving, climate resilient future; one where water continues to support people, the economy, and environment across WA.

Hon. Don Punch MLA
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Water; Climate Resilience; South West

02

A shared commitment to a secure water future

As the leaders of Western Australia's key water agencies, we present a unified commitment to securing a thriving, climate resilient future made possible by water – one underpinned by timely, sustained investment in critical water infrastructure.

Reliable water services are fundamental to supporting communities, industries and the environment in a changing climate, but delivering water across our vast and diverse state is increasingly complex. Declining rainfall, population growth, urban expansion and rising service expectations mean existing systems must be upgraded, diversified and expanded.

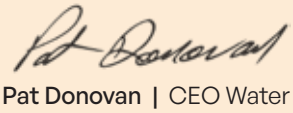
The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation manages and regulates WA's water resources and environment to support the community, economy and environment. Water Corporation, Busselton Water and Aqwest - Bunbury Water provide high quality drinking water to Western Australians. Water Corporation, along with local government, also supplies wastewater and drainage services.

All agencies are committed to working together, each through our respective roles, to implement practical and innovative solutions.

To respond effectively, we will continue delivering robust regulation, compliance and long-term planning. We will promote the responsible and efficient use of water across industry and the community by expanding on the success of Waterwise programs. We will ensure the true value of water is understood and reflected in our decisions. We will work closely with Aboriginal people, and actively engage with communities so their needs, priorities and values are reflected in decision making. We will continue to explore partnering with industry, investors and local governments.

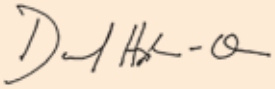
WA stands at a critical point in water management. Decades of proactive planning and infrastructure investment have built a strong foundation, but the challenges ahead demand renewed focus. By combining world-leading innovation and technology with sustained infrastructure investment, ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal communities, strong partnerships with industry and government, and a continued focus on customer and community values, WA can remain a global leader in securing a thriving future made possible by water.

Alistair Jones | Director General
Department of Water and Environmental Regulation



Pat Donovan | CEO Water Corporation

Gary Hallsworth | CEO Aqwest – Bunbury Water



David Hughes-Owen | CEO Busselton Water

WA has a proven track record of adapting to water challenges, and we can continue on this path.

As climate change accelerates and WA grows faster than any other State, water is no longer something we can take for granted.

Karijini National Park

03 A State made possible by water

Water shapes every part of life in Western Australia.

This document brings together a clear, accessible story of where our water comes from, why it matters, and how we secure it for the future. From the red dust of the Pilbara to the forests of the South West, water supports our communities, drives our economy, and sustains cultural traditions that stretch back tens of thousands of years. This precious resource is so important to life, but we rarely stop to notice how deeply it defines our way of life. Today, changing rainfall, rapid population growth, and expanding industries mean the way we manage water will shape our future.

Public drinking water schemes provide safe, reliable water to communities from Kununurra to Esperance. These schemes draw on surface water and groundwater as well as climate resilient sources like desalination, which now underpins the supply for Perth and, increasingly, regional areas. Most urban water comes from these schemes, while the remainder is mostly self-supplied, mainly from groundwater bores used by households, local government, schools, and businesses. This helps reduce demand on scheme water, but requires careful management to protect groundwater, rivers, and wetlands.

Across the State, water utilities collect and treat the equivalent of about an Optus Stadium of wastewater every day. A portion of this is recycled for irrigation, groundwater replenishment and resource recovery (biosolids and biogas). Local governments and Water Corporation manage stormwater systems, thereby reducing flood risk, protecting homes and roads, and preventing pollutants from entering rivers and estuaries. These systems are essential for housing development and community safety, especially as climate change increases the frequency of extreme weather events.

As WA plans for significant growth, wastewater, and drainage systems remain the hidden enablers: connecting homes, supporting liveable neighbourhoods, and safeguarding health and the environment.

Our collective vision for WA is for a thriving, climate resilient future made possible by water

Supporting people, the economy and environment

Safe and inclusive communities

Waterways, parks and gardens provide opportunities for recreation and connection.

Housing

Reliable water services support housing growth, while integrated water and land planning deliver efficient, liveable waterwise communities.

Healthcare

Everyone has safe, fit-for-purpose water services, preventing disease and supporting WA's healthcare priorities.

Quality infrastructure

WA has reliable, efficient, secure and climate resilient water services, such as desalination.

Diversifying the WA economy

Efficient water use supports industry to diversify and create jobs in emerging sectors.

Diversifying the WA economy

Water efficient practices and irrigation networks sustain our agriculture and tourism sectors.

Government priorities

- Diversifying the WA economy
- Housing
- Environment
- Healthcare
- Safe and inclusive communities
- Quality infrastructure

- Water
- Wastewater

*Delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the National Water Grid Fund

Safe and inclusive communities

Equitable access to safe, affordable water services for regional and remote WA.

Healthcare

Upgrades in Aboriginal communities improve liveability and health.*

Quality infrastructure

Wastewater is no longer something to be wasted – it is recycled for reuse.

Diversifying the WA economy

Water infrastructure and technology is upgraded and maintained supporting local jobs and manufacturing.

Quality infrastructure

Wastewater treatment protects community and coastal environments.

Diversifying the WA economy

Mining delivers economic growth, while valuing and using water wisely.

Diversifying the WA economy

Water is valued and used wisely by everyone.

Environment

Protection of our water sources helps provide safe and cost effective drinking water.

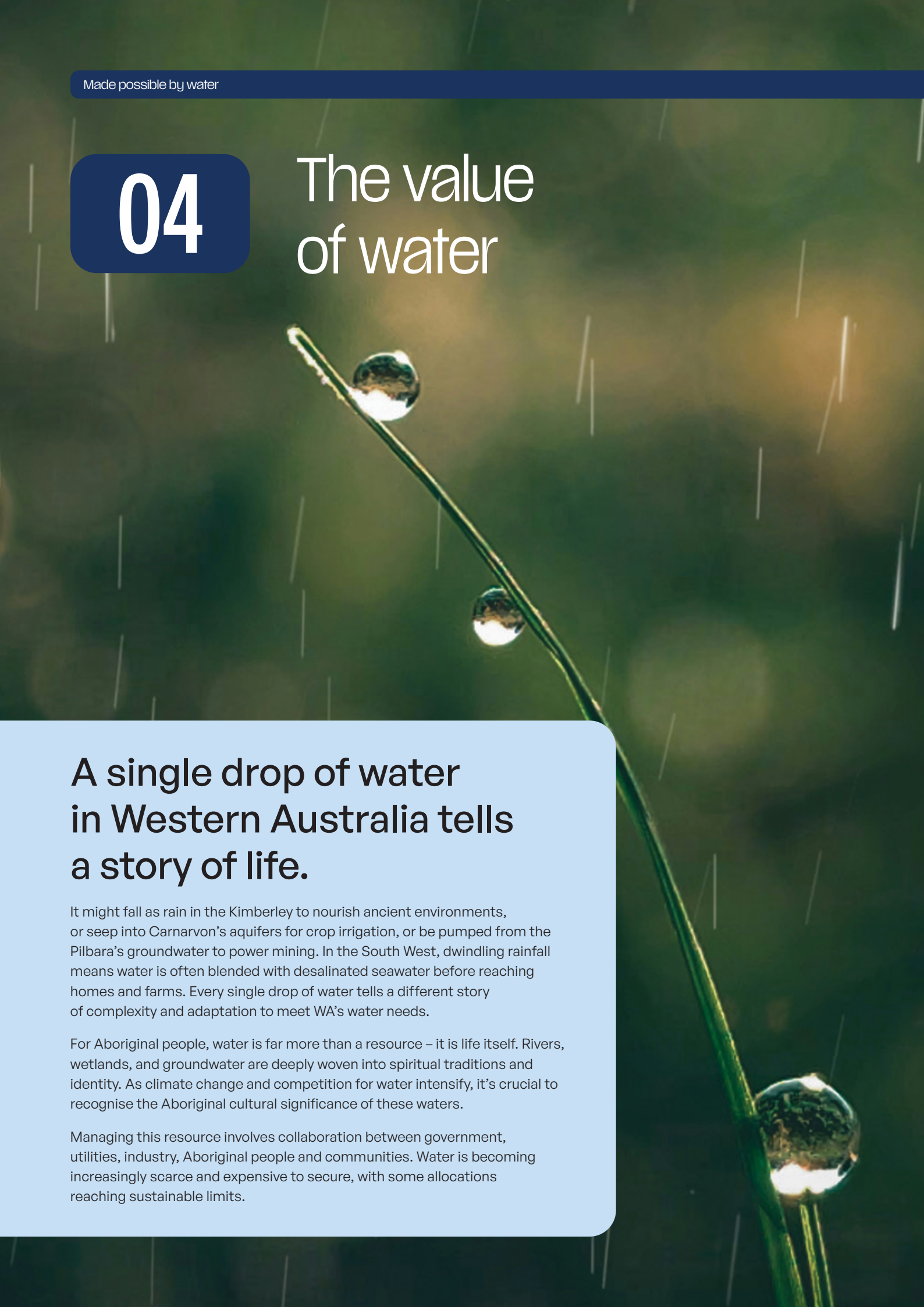
Environment

WA's waterways are protected and enhanced as valued community and ecological places.

Environment

Our drainage and stormwater systems are designed with environmental benefits.

04 The value of water



A single drop of water in Western Australia tells a story of life.

It might fall as rain in the Kimberley to nourish ancient environments, or seep into Carnarvon's aquifers for crop irrigation, or be pumped from the Pilbara's groundwater to power mining. In the South West, dwindling rainfall means water is often blended with desalinated seawater before reaching homes and farms. Every single drop of water tells a different story of complexity and adaptation to meet WA's water needs.

For Aboriginal people, water is far more than a resource – it is life itself. Rivers, wetlands, and groundwater are deeply woven into spiritual traditions and identity. As climate change and competition for water intensify, it's crucial to recognise the Aboriginal cultural significance of these waters.

Managing this resource involves collaboration between government, utilities, industry, Aboriginal people and communities. Water is becoming increasingly scarce and expensive to secure, with some allocations reaching sustainable limits.

To meet demand changes, WA has adapted with supply changes: turning to rainfall-independent sources like desalination and recycled water, which supply major towns but come with higher costs and energy use.

Currently, water remains affordable for most residents, thanks to government subsidies. Around $700 million in annual subsidies bridges the current gap between supply costs and revenue to keep water accessible for everyone, but this obscures the true cost of water services.

Water efficiency and innovation are critical for WA, alongside investment in new sources. Water security is not assured, so every litre saved reduces pressures on current infrastructure and enables water to be used across all sectors requiring water sources.

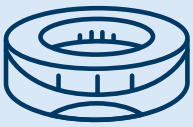
The true value of water lies beyond just price – it's about responsible use and aligning resources with social, cultural and environmental priorities.

To truly appreciate its value, it is important to acknowledge how water is allocated and used across sectors to power WA's economy and sustain our way of life.

How much water is that?

ONE
GIGALITRE (GL)
= one billion litres

Equivalent to the volume of Optus Stadium ~ 1 GL



ONE
MEGALITRE (ML)
= one million litres

Equivalent to the volume of 20 average WA backyard swimming pools ~ 1 ML

ONE KILOLITRE (KL)

= one thousand litres

Equivalent to the volume of four wheelie bins ~ 1 kL

Wungong Dam

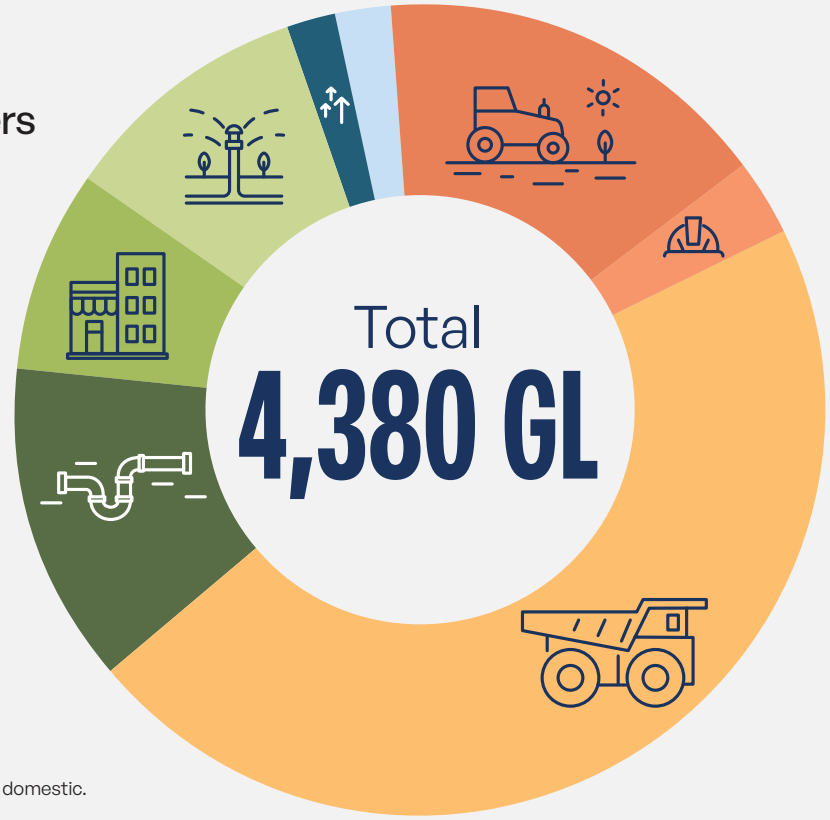
Western Australia's water users by sector (allocated volume)

Please note: The sector volumes (both individual and totalled) in each of these charts have been subject to rounding.

Total licensed volume by sector

- Agriculture: 692GL (16%)
- Industry and power generation: 124GL (3%)
- Mining: 2,000GL (46%)
- Public water scheme supply: 573GL (13%)
- Commercial and institutional: 363GL (8%)
- Irrigation scheme supply: 424GL (10%)
- Parks, gardens and recreation: 108GL (2%)
- Other*: 96GL (2%)

*Other contains environment and conservation, and stock and domestic.



Groundwater licensed volume by sector

- Agriculture: 484 GL (14%)
- Industry and power generation: 103 GL (3%)
- Mining: 1,975 GL (59%)
- Public water scheme supply: 253 GL (7%)
- Commercial and institutional: 363 GL (11%)
- Parks, gardens and recreation: 108 GL (3%)
- Other*: 91 GL (3%)

*Other contains irrigation scheme supply, environment and conservation, and stock and domestic.

Surface water licensed volume by sector

- Agriculture: 208 GL (21%)
- Industry and power generation: 21 GL (2%)
- Mining: 24 GL (2%)
- Public water scheme supply: 321 GL (32%)
- Irrigation scheme supply: 424 GL (42%)
- Other*: 5GL (<1%)

*Other includes stock and domestic, commercial and institutional, environment and conservation, and parks, gardens and recreation.

Numbers accurate as at June 2025.

05 The changing climate

Western Australia is among the world's driest regions, with climate change creating major challenges for water supply across its diverse landscapes.

Less rainfall leads to reduced groundwater recharge, leading to stress on our plants and wildlife. Higher temperatures and more frequent extreme weather events – heatwaves, bushfires and extended dry seasons – are putting pressure on communities, industries, and water infrastructure.

WA has long led the way on water efficiency, but as climate change intensifies, further action is critical. Continued education and efficiency measures, alongside significant investment in alternative sources such as desalination and water recycling, will be vital to secure the State's water supplies. These actions are needed now more than ever.

The WA Government also sets and enforces the protection of water for the environment to ensure rivers, wetlands and groundwater systems maintain healthy ecological function. Water quality and flow regimes are monitored to prevent over-abstraction and safeguard habitats.

The WA Government has committed to expand the Waterwise Program to regional urban centres via the Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan. Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan has already reduced water use and enhanced urban cooling in Perth and Peel, incorporating Aboriginal water knowledge. Extending this to regional areas aims to support liveability, Aboriginal cultural ties, and sustainable water management.

Climate change threatens agriculture, environment, health, and water security. Government, industry, and community sectors need to continue working together to manage demand and find new water sources.

Case study

Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan – working together for a climate resilient future

The South West of WA is significantly affected by climate change. Rainfall has declined over recent decades, and communities, industry and the environment are already feeling the effects.

In response, the State Government launched Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan: a long term program that brings together 10 government agencies, industry, researchers, Aboriginal communities and the wider public to conserve water, enhance liveability, and prepare for a drier future.

First developed in 2019, Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan is now in its third iteration, and is formally titled Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3, which launched in 2024. The plan continues to use the Noongar name meaning “water knowledge”, honouring Whadjuk and Bindjareb language and the Aboriginal knowledge systems that have guided water management on Country for millennia.

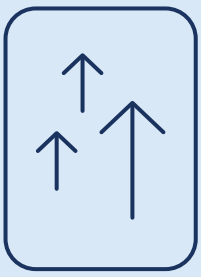
Led by DWER in partnership with Water Corporation, Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan has been recognised for its cross sector leadership.

The program won the Australian Water Association’s Western Australian Organisational Excellence Award at the WA Water Awards in November 2025.

The program is already delivering meaningful outcomes. Between 2019 and 2024, partners in Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3 achieved:

43 actions

including expanding the Waterwise Schools Education Program, partnering with local governments to improve safety and liveability around Water Corporation assets, and working with the commercial nursery and tree-farming sector to adopt waterwise standards across the industry. These actions are about directly addressing climate impacts through adaptive, waterwise initiatives.



19,477
trees planted
helping reduce urban heat and increase shade in local suburbs

34,565 megalitres of WATER SAVED

including:

- **579 ML** from retrofitting social housing with water efficient fixtures
- **1,336 ML** through household programs supporting climate adaptation
- **32,650 ML** saved by business and industry improving water use practices

Climate change across regions

NORTH WEST

Greater rainfall variability, longer dry seasons, and more intense cyclones, floods, challenging pastoral and mining operations

MID WEST

Declining winter rainfall, reduced groundwater recharge and stressed cropping systems

1.2 – 2.0°C
warming projections by 2050

PERTH

Shorter winters with less rainfall and longer, hotter summers, with more days above 40 degrees and longer heatwaves

1.3°C increase in WA temperatures since 1910

GREAT SOUTHERN

Less available groundwater and biodiversity loss during prolonged dry periods

SOUTH WEST

Rivers and dams now receive only a fraction of the water they once did. Significant drying has reduced groundwater and impacted dependent ecosystems.

Since the 1970s:

Up to **20%** South West rainfall reduction

Up to **80%** reduction in streamflow

Bunbury, Western Australia

Case study

Building climate resilience in South West WA

The South West of WA is one of the world's hotspots for climate induced drying. Since the 1970s, rainfall has dropped by 20 per cent and streamflow to dams by a staggering 80 per cent.

Where Perth's dams once received 420 billion litres a year, today it's often just 10-50 billion litres, equivalent to only 10-50 Optus Stadiums. Catchments have become so parched that double the rain is required for the same streamflow, and rising salinity is making some sources unusable. Meanwhile, population growth in Perth-Peel and key South West towns is driving water demand even higher.

The WA Government has rolled out a broad strategy to manage the South West's water supply and foster climate resilient communities. Key measures, some of which are being delivered in partnership with the Australian Government through the National Water Grid Fund, include:

- **Water efficiency:** Programs like Waterwise have helped households, businesses and councils cut water use. The Waterwise Business Program alone has saved over 157 billion litres since 2007, while the winter sprinkler ban saves around 5 billion litres each year.
- **Water recycling:** The *Bunbury Water Recovery Scheme** will deliver recycled water for local irrigation of public open space, easing pressure on groundwater. Future stages aim to recharge the local aquifer.
- **Desalination:** From Kwinana to Binningup, desalination plants now provide half of Perth's drinking water, in addition to many regional towns. The upcoming Alkimos plant will add 50 billion litres of climate resilient supply annually.
- **Groundwater protection:** New bores and recycled water recharge projects are reducing over-reliance on vulnerable sources. For example, the *Busselton Water Supply Improvement** project is securing water for 28,000 people and making 4,000 new connections possible.

*Delivered in partnership with the Australian Government, through the National Water Grid Fund

06

How water powers WA's economy

Water is the quiet engine behind WA's economy. Every job, from Goldfields miners to Gascoyne growers, is *made possible by water*.

This starts with WA's water sector. Together, DWER and WA's water utilities employ around 5,000 people across the state, and engage local contractors, suppliers and businesses through the delivery, construction and operation of water projects and services.

Mining uses more water than any other sector, and in places like the Pilbara, groundwater supplies are often vital. Groundwater is drawn not only to support mining activities but also for dewatering mines. Increasingly, this water is being reused or reinjected to help protect vulnerable ecosystems. Some sites turn to desalination or extensive pipelines, which demand substantial investments of capital and energy. Since most mining takes place in fractured rock aquifers, forecasting water availability and managing dewatering presents complicated challenges that require flexible strategies for the future.

Emerging sectors like green steel, hydrogen, and data centres are adding pressure, requiring water resources currently not accounted for. Integrated planning and investment in water recycling and alternative sources, along with network improvements, are vital to balancing economic growth with environmental protection. Strategic Industrial Areas, such as Kwinana, are key focal points, requiring significant water resources as WA aims to stay competitive on the global stage.

Tourism depends on water to sustain iconic attractions, accommodation, and recreation facilities to generate substantial revenue and visitor spend across the State.

The agricultural sector uses water for irrigation in the Gascoyne, Great Southern, Kimberley, Perth, Peel, South West, and Wheatbelt regions. Irrigation systems in Harvey and the Ord and Gascoyne regions have enabled the development of dairy, beef, cotton, horticulture, and other supporting industries, which will continue to grow with reliable water supplies.

Strong, clear rules for how water is taken and used are crucial to making sure cultural, environmental, industry and community needs are all properly balanced.

Western Australia's economic future hinges on securing reliable water supplies and effective water management, including the mining, agriculture, and tourism sectors.

Value of agriculture in WA

$8 BILLION

in Gross Value Added in 24/25

Total agriculture exports in 24/25

$12.3 BILLION

36,000 people employed in on-farm production in WA

17GL

potential annual water savings through agricultural sector upgrades with Harvey Water

WHEAT, BARLEY, CANOLA, AND MEAT PRODUCTS

major exports out of WA

Case study

Made in WA: Ord Irrigation Area Strategy

The Ord Irrigation Area Strategy aims to nearly double Ord farmland area from 28,000 hectares to 50,000 hectares, creating jobs, supporting Aboriginal people, and boosting a range of crops.

With over $420 million invested in the area in the last 20 years, the strategy will guide growth and agricultural development for the next decade. The WA Government is committed to the continued development of the Ord agricultural sector, including the realisation of opportunities for land development, processing, supply chain, and value-add integration.

Work is already underway on the $77 million Ord M1 channel expansion to boost water capacity and enable development of additional areas for crops like cotton, mangoes and melons.

Working with Kimberley Agricultural irrigators, Aboriginal people and local businesses, the goal is to create a world-class agricultural precinct for local and international markets, with Aboriginal people as key partners. This in turn creates jobs and prosperity for the residents of the East Kimberley and generates economic return for the State.

> The goal is to create a world-class agricultural precinct for local and international markets.

Ord Dunham Irrigation Area

Value of industry and commerce in WA

$15.9 BILLION
tourism Gross State Product in 23/24

120,000 jobs generated through tourism sector

$17.4 BILLION
spent by visitors to WA in 24/25

15,000
future roles to be created in emerging energy sectors

$22.5 BILLION
manufacturing revenue in 24/25

Value of mining in WA

MINING INDUSTRY ACCOUNTS FOR

9%

of labour force in 2025

$220 BILLION

the value of minerals and petroleum production in WA in 2024-25

138,000 PEOPLE

(FULL TIME EQUIVALENT) in mining and mineral exploration (24/25)

07 Communities and liveability

Water underpins daily life in Western Australia, supplying homes, schools, parks, and businesses.

Each year, urban areas consume about 550 gigalitres of water, with household gardens and bathrooms responsible for the majority. Local governments irrigate parks and sports fields, while commercial buildings, including hospitals and hotels, use another 14 per cent.

Per-capita water use is rising in WA, driven by both growing household sizes and an increase in individual water consumption. This trend requires water utilities to strengthen waterwise messaging.

As WA aims to build 130,000 new homes by 2029 and connect 150,000 households by 2030, the demand for water infrastructure is rising fast. Water utilities install more than 30,000 new connections annually, but booming suburbs and regional growth mean even more investment is needed.

Housing growth provides an opportunity to respond to the pressures on water resources and enhance the values that depend on them. This includes improving the amenity, liveability and economic viability of our cities and towns.

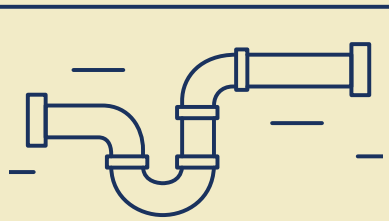
Government is taking a more active role in planning and delivering essential infrastructure for new housing. Through the Housing Enabling Infrastructure Fund, new water and wastewater services are being delivered to support the needs of growing communities.

With the State's population expected to reach 4.4 million by 2050, WA is facing mounting pressures, not only from growth, but from climate change, ageing infrastructure, and rising costs. Without continued decisive, coordinated action, all of these intensifying challenges threaten the sustainability of communities, industries, and environments, as well as the reliable supply of safe drinking water for all.

WA's urban water supply

38% self-supplied from bores

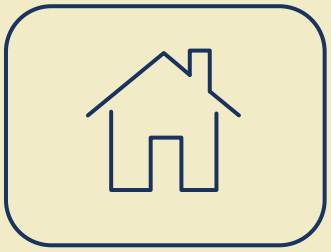
62% comes from public drinking water schemes



Overview of housing and urban water use in WA

By 2035, Perth alone will require up to 125 billion extra litres of climate resilient water, almost doubling current desalination production.

Less than
1%
of household water is used for drinking



22,736
number of new homes in 24/25

69%
of urban water use is for households

1.15 MILLION
total number of dwellings in WA

Over
52,000 KM
of drinking water and wastewater pipes servicing our towns and cities

490 ML
of wastewater is treated every day

08

Securing water for the future

WA's water utilities oversee an underground network longer than the earth's circumference.

Keeping pace with the renewal of existing infrastructure and rapid demand is challenging, especially as construction costs have soared by 40 per cent since 2019, nearly double WA's inflation rate. Upgrading these vast networks for climate resilience, integrating new supply sources, and supporting booming urban areas requires continued investment.

Challenges come with great opportunity. Upgrading water and wastewater networks not only protects supply and quality, it supports jobs and growth. Genuine community and stakeholder engagement can unlock a water-powered future for WA.

Over the past decade, the WA Government has responded to significant challenges by investing in a wide range of initiatives and projects across the State. These efforts have delivered important outcomes for communities and industries. However, we know the job is not done; we must continue to collaborate for a future *made possible by water*.

Key initiatives and projects

Statewide or multiple regions

1. Water efficiency offers across Perth and regional towns
2. Strategic Industrial Areas supporting industries and fostering economic growth
3. Housing Enabling Infrastructure Fund investing in priority locations across the State
4. Aboriginal communities water services program progressing upgrades across 141 remote communities over the next decade*
5. Goldfields and Agricultural Water Supply Scheme upgrade to support economic growth
6. Community water supplies partnership program and Agricultural Area Dams Program*
7. New water source investigations in Port Hedland, Pilbara, Exmouth*, Geraldton, Warren Blackwood, Albany*, Esperance*, Perth
8. State Natural Resource Management Community Stewardship Grants and Healthy Estuaries WA programs support community-led projects and partnerships
9. WaterSmart Farms will improve agricultural and regional communities through technology development and adoption*

Kimberley

10. Ord Irrigation Scheme upgrade increasing agricultural production in the Kimberley

Pilbara

11. Onslow seawater desalination plant to support economic growth

South West

12. Bunbury Water Resource Recovery Scheme which will irrigate 43 hectares of public open space and reduce reliance on the local aquifer*
13. Busselton Water Supply Improvement project to support sustainable supply*
14. Southern Forests Infrastructure Support Scheme supports farmers in the Warren-Donnelly region to prepare for the prospect of reduced water availability due climate change

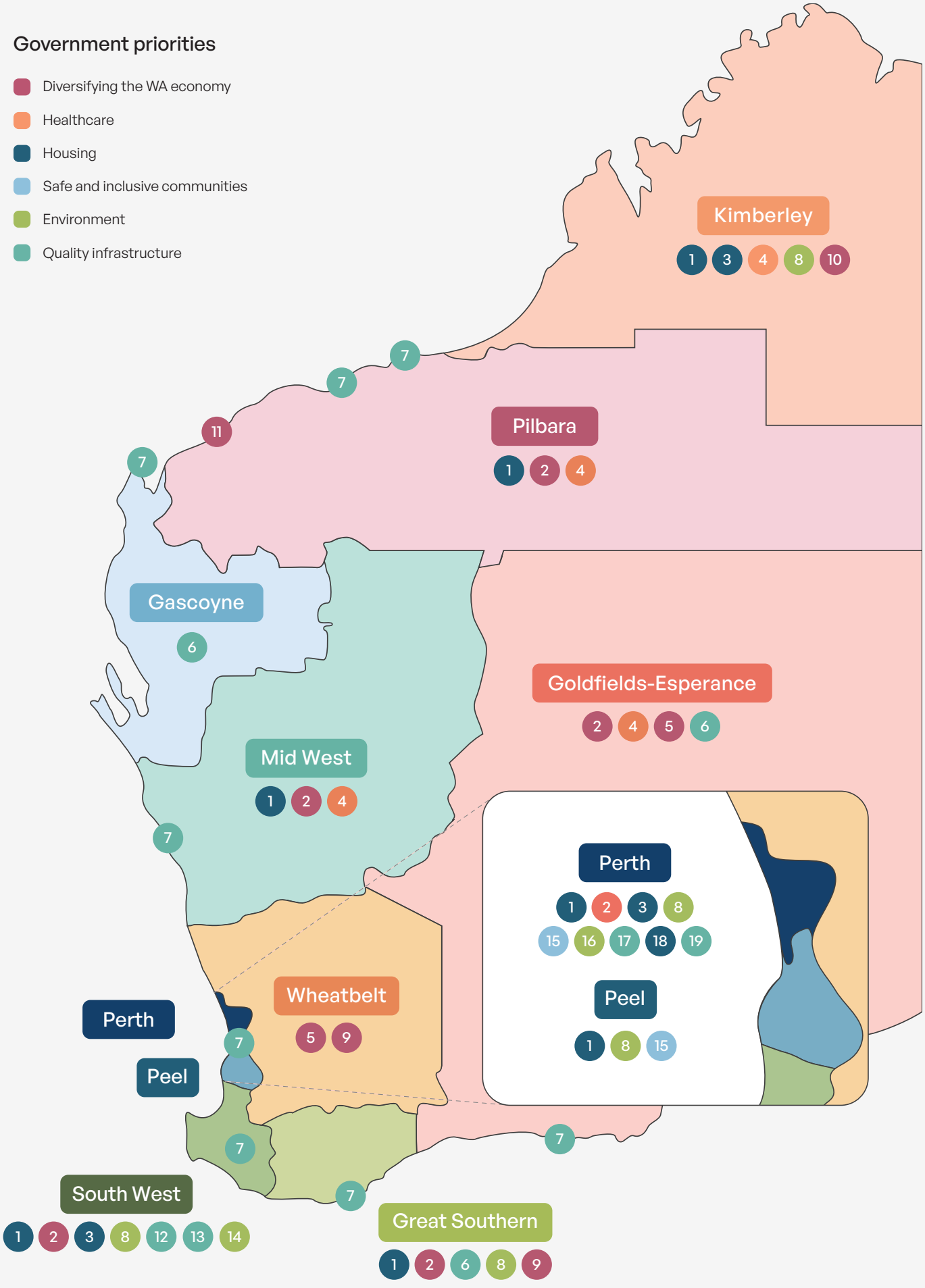
Perth-Peel

15. Kep Katitjin-Gabi Kaadadjan Waterwise Action Plan 3 supporting waterwise communities in Perth-Peel
16. Gnangara allocation plan reducing abstraction from this aquifer to protect ecosystems dependent on this water source
17. Alkimos Seawater Desalination Plant: a major new water source in Perth
18. State water infrastructure program supporting METRONET
19. Renewal of existing assets including water mains across Perth

*Delivered in partnership with the Australian Government, through the National Water Grid Fund

Government priorities

- Diversifying the WA economy
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Safe and inclusive communities
- Environment
- Quality infrastructure



09

Partnerships and shared stewardship

Government, industries, communities, and Aboriginal people each play a role in protecting and managing water.

New partnerships, like those working alongside Aboriginal communities, are enabling these communities to play a more active role in water management. Examples include supporting water monitoring and water efficiency education.

Under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the WA Government is working with Aboriginal people to secure a water future where Aboriginal people maintain a cultural, physical and economic relationship with land and waters.

WA will continue to build on the strengths of Aboriginal people, communities, and cultures, with meaningful engagement and collaboration in water planning and delivery. This commitment builds on the strategic directions of each party ensuring Aboriginal world views and knowledge systems shape WA's water future.

The WA Government is also sharpening its approach to water management, pledging efficient, fair, and sustainable allocations. Initiatives such as sprinkler rosters and winter switch-offs are already delivering big savings and easing environmental pressures, while also postponing costly infrastructure upgrades. To speed up delivery of water infrastructure, the WA Government is cutting red tape. New laws and reforms will fast-track climate resilient water projects while keeping health and environmental standards high.

The strength of the national economy depends heavily on WA's export-driven growth, so a continued partnership with the Australian Government on investing in water infrastructure is essential to safeguard the industries that underpin Australia's prosperity.

Case study

Working with Traditional Owners and industry to secure the Pilbara's water future

The Pilbara is one of WA's fastest-growing regions, but reduced rainfall has impacted the capacity of Harding Dam, increasing reliance on groundwater from the Aboriginal culturally significant Millstream aquifer.

To address these challenges, the WA Government, through Water Corporation and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, are partnering with Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation and Rio Tinto Iron Ore to:

- Relocate and upgrade bores to reduce pressure on the aquifer.
- Install solar-powered systems to minimise environmental impact.
- Ensure water abstraction respects Aboriginal cultural and ecological values.
- Progress the Dampier Seawater Desalination Plant, delivering climate independent water for communities and industry.

This collaboration demonstrates how government, Traditional Owners, and industry can work together to secure water for growth while protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage and the environment.

Millstream Chichester National Park

10 Technology and innovation

Innovation stands at the heart of Western Australia's water security drive, with new technologies and smart solutions key to tackling climate change and growing demand.

WA's water sector has invested heavily in research and development, partnering with universities locally and abroad. Collaboration among the water sector remains central, with ongoing pilots of emerging technologies, and industry partnerships delivering practical answers to water challenges.

Digital innovation is accelerating, with the rollout of smart water meters, advanced leak detection, and AI technologies improving networks. By sharing knowledge and highlighting successful trials, WA hopes to fast-track adoption of these digital tools, cutting water loss and providing customers and businesses with real-time, data-driven insights to use water efficiently and build a more resilient future. These innovations reduce waste, improve safety, and lower long-term costs.

Case study

Smart digital metering: a step forward for customers and utilities

Smart digital metering technology is transforming water management globally.

These devices provide near real-time water-use data, helping customers track consumption, detect leaks early, and avoid bill surprises, while enabling utilities to plan and manage networks more effectively. International studies show smart metering can deliver measurable water savings, reducing household use by 1–3 per cent and utility losses by up to 5 per cent.

Western Australia's water utilities are embracing this technology to improve efficiency and customer experience.

Over the next five years, Busselton Water is transitioning all customer meters (over 15,000) to smart digital meters.

Trials of three different types of meter and different connectivity options are underway.

Aqwest – Bunbury Water has been running a long-term digital meter study, confirming the durability, reliability, and accuracy of this technology over time. These results reinforce the potential for smart metering to support WA's water security by combining technology, data, and community engagement.

Water Corporation has installed tens of thousands of smart meters in regional towns like Kalgoorlie-Boulder and in the Pilbara, and is now piloting 16,000 meters in Perth. In Exmouth, where smart meters were installed in 2024, a community survey found 17 per cent of residents had reduced their water use.

11 The path ahead

Western Australia is one of the driest places in the world and every drop matters.

Therefore, the time for action is now. To secure our water future in a drying climate we will:

- Continue working closely with Aboriginal people to ensure Aboriginal world views and knowledge systems are reflected in water planning and management.
- Actively engage customers and communities to understand their needs and priorities, ensuring water management and planning reflects the values of the people we serve.
- Continue to provide robust regulation, compliance and long-term planning, supported by water servicing plans and ongoing sector-wide climate adaptation work.
- Expand on the success of Waterwise programs as they evolve.
- Continue working with the Australian Government on longer-term, strategic investment in climate resilient water systems across the state.
- Work to understand the true cost of water and ensure its value is understood, promoted and reflected in our actions and decisions.
- Work with industry to ensure the responsible use of water and innovation to minimise water use.
- Work with industry, investors, and local governments to explore partnership models for financing and delivering new water sources, recycling schemes, and integrated water planning.
- Continue to invest in climate resilient infrastructure that supports communities, industry and the environment, recognising the change required over coming decades, as tens of billions of dollars in renewals and new sources are required.

In Western Australia, the opportunities of tomorrow – strong communities, thriving industries, healthy environments, and cultural connections – will all be *made possible by water*. As we move forward together, it is our shared responsibility to protect, value, and steward this precious resource, ensuring it continues to sustain our way of life for generations to come.

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

WATER CORPORATION

AQWEST BUNBURY WATER

BUSSELTON WATER