

Public record pursuant to s. 39 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*

Proposal title: Walpole New Source Borefield Water Abstraction Trial

Proposal location: Walpole

CMS number: APP-0000440

Date referral received: 24-07-2023 **Date more information received:** 09-10-2023

Referrer: Water Corporation **Proponent:** Water Corporation

Potential significant effects:

There are potential impacts on flora and vegetation and inland waters from the abstraction of groundwater and associated declines in groundwater and surface water levels, and quality.

Public comment on referral information:

Do not assess:		0
Assess:	a) Referral information	2
	b) Environmental review - no public review	0
	c) Public environmental review	1
	<i>Total submissions:</i>	3

Decision: s. 38G(1) – Not Assess - Advice Given

Referral Examined, preliminary investigations and inquiries conducted. Proposal not to be assessed under Part IV of the EP Act – Advice given.

Explanation of decision:

The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) considers that the likely environmental effects of the proposal are not so significant as to warrant formal assessment because the proposed groundwater abstraction will be limited to a six-month trial. The proposal involves minimal rates of abstraction, the predicted zone of groundwater drawdown will be small in extent and magnitude. The proposal will utilise existing infrastructure and avoids the clearing of native vegetation.

The EPA is of the view that the potential impacts of the proposal can be adequately managed through the implementation of the proposal in accordance with the referral documentation, the proponent's management and mitigation measures, including monitoring, management triggers and thresholds and associated contingencies.

Appeals: This decision is appealable. Appeals close 06-11-2023. Appeals are administered by the Office of the Appeals Convenor.

Public Advice:

The EPA notes that the proposed six-month trial has been developed to collect environmental information in order to assess the long-term viability of a new water source for Walpole. Any proposal for ongoing groundwater abstraction (beyond this trial) will require a separate referral to the EPA.

The EPA also notes the proponent's early development of environmental management plans and supports Water Corporation's commitment to further refine the relevant management plans to ensure information from the trial can inform the environmental assessment of any future plan for an ongoing water source for Walpole. The EPA expects that the Water Corporation will continue to consult with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation regarding the further refinement of the monitoring locations, associated triggers and contingency measures, and also studies to better understand the potentially affected environmental values.

At the conclusion of the trial the EPA recommends that the Water Corporation publish the results and outcomes of the trial, particularly information on any exceedance of triggers and analysis of potential responses to groundwater drawdown and analysis of changes to vegetation health.

**Prof. Matthew Tonts**

CHAIR

Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority

Date: 12 October 2023