

Summary of reasons for decision – request to amend a referred proposal under s. 38C of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*

Proposal title: Abstraction of groundwater from the Millstream water reserve

Proponent: Water Corporation

Proposal referral date: 11-11-2024

Date request to amend referred proposal under s. 38C received: 20-06-2025

Environment Online Reference Number: APP-0029638

Existing referred proposal:

Water Corporation proposes to continue abstracting groundwater from the Millstream aquifer to supply West Pilbara Water Supply Scheme (WPWSS).

The proposal is to continue groundwater abstraction from the Millstream aquifer up to 6GL/a until 2032 with a contingency of up to 3GL/a until 2027.

Short description of amendment sought:

The proposed amendment is to:

- reduce maximum groundwater abstraction between 2028 and 2032 from 6 gegalitres per annum (GL/a) to 5.5 GL/a.

Table 1: Proposed amendment to the proposal

Timeframe	Referred Proposal	Proposed amendment
To 21/02/2027	Up to 6 GL/a with contingency of up to 3 GL/a	No change
2027 to 2028	Up to 6 GL/a	Up to 6 GL/a
2028 to 2032		Up to 5.5 GL/a

Decision:

Amendment to proposal as set out in attachment 1 is approved.

Environmental factors relevant to amendment(s):

- Inland water: Millstream wetlands
- Social surroundings: cultural heritage values, landscape values
- Flora and vegetation: riparian and groundwater dependent vegetation
- Terrestrial fauna: fauna habitat suitable for conservation significant species
- Subterranean fauna: habitat suitable for subterranean fauna.

Summary of likely changes to environmental impacts from proposed amendment

Amendment sought	Changes to environmental impacts
Reduce maximum groundwater abstraction between 2028 and 2032 from 6.0 GL/a to 5.5 GL/a	<p>Likely decreased impacts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inland waters, social surroundings, flora and vegetation, terrestrial fauna, and subterranean fauna – a reduction in the maximum volume of groundwater abstracted from the aquifer would ensure there is a greater amount of water available for ecological, cultural and spiritual requirements. <p>The proposed change does not alter the preliminary environmental factors likely to be impacted by the proposal, which will be considered in the EPA’s decision on whether to assess the proposal, or not.</p>

Summary of consultation

The original referral was advertised for 7-day public comment; 95 comments were received. Given the nature of the change and the comments previously received it is not proposed that a further 7-day public comment period is necessary.

The proponent has advised that they have undertaken additional consultation with the Chair of the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation, Yindjibarndi Water and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER).

Summary of consideration of amendment

The EPA has considered whether, if the proposal were already approved, the amendment would be a significant amendment. This has included considering the likely significance of:

- effects of the proposed amendment on its own
- effects of the proposed amendment in the context of the existing referred proposal
- cumulative environmental impacts
- holistic impacts

The EPA has considered whether it has sufficient information about the proposed amendment to be able to make a decision whether to assess the proposal as amended, and if so, to decide the level of assessment.

The EPA has considered whether the amended proposal will still be substantially the same character as the existing referred proposal.

Approval of requested amendment

The EPA considers the amended proposal to be substantially the same character as the existing referred proposal and does not consider that the amendment would be a significant amendment if the proposal were already approved. The EPA considers it has enough information to reasonably proceed to make a decision about whether the proposal should be assessed without a new referral being submitted.

Attachments

- Amended proposal content document

Appeals: Decision not appealable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Walsh', written in a cursive style.

Darren Walsh

CHAIR

Delegate of the Environmental Protection Authority

Date: 01 August 2025