



The Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water

The Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water is a non-statutory inter-departmental committee that operates under the chairmanship of the Department of Health. Amongst other functions, the Advisory Committee provides advice to the Ministers for Health and Water on protecting, monitoring and managing drinking water quality and fosters inter-agency co-operation on related matters.

The history of the Committee

The Committee was originally established in 1925 to address drinking water quality issues and to provide a link between the then Department of Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage and the Department of Health. It was comprised of senior officers from each department and was empowered to communicate directly to the then Minister for Works.

From the first meetings, the Advisory Committee identified the importance of secure catchment areas and adequate chemical treatment processes and sought representation from senior officers from the Departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Land Management and the Chemistry Centre of Western Australia.

In response to the water industry reforms of 1995, the Advisory Committee resolved to transfer the Chair and Secretariat to the Department of Health, to amend its terms of reference and to provide advice to the Minister for Health. Additional members from the Department of Water, the Economic Regulation Authority, AqWest, Busselton Water Board and Parsons Brinckerhoff were invited to join the Committee to better reflect the water industry in Western Australia.

With the implementation of the 2004 "*Australian Drinking Water Guidelines*", the Advisory Committee created two specialist sub-committees – one focussing on source protection and catchment management, the other focussing on drinking water sampling, results and monitoring. Both sub-committees provide additional expertise to review, monitor and advise the full Committee on any issue affecting drinking water supplies within the State, from catchment to consumer.

The Advisory Committee continues to evolve, reflecting the diverse and complex issues associated with the provision of drinking water in a changing environment. However, its primary role of ensuring that Western Australians have access to safe drinking water which they can trust remains unchanged.





What is the role of each Committee?

The main role of the Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water is to provide sound health-related advice pertaining to the quality of drinking water to both the Minister for Health and the Minister for Water. In this role the Advisory Committee determines the water quality compliance requirements for all drinking water providers across the State.

The Minister for Health has the lead responsibility with respect to issues of health, however it is customary for both Ministers to jointly accept the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

Members are at liberty to discuss matters openly and frankly. Issues that may be commercial and in-confidence are dealt with accordingly.

The Results Sub-Committee and the Source Protection Sub-Committee have been established to provide specialised support for their respective areas of interest. To ensure close liaison, the Chair for each sub-committee is a member of the full Committee and the secretariat attends all meetings. Advisory Committee members may attend sub-committee meetings at any time.

The terms of reference of the Advisory Committee and the Source Protection Sub-Committee and the current membership details are listed in this document. It should be noted that the Committees do not have an incident management or emergency response role.

The Committees operate in accordance with applicable record keeping, conduct and privacy provisions for the Western Australian public sector.

When do the Committees meet?

Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water	
Frequency	Four times each year
When	Six weeks after each financial quarter
Duration	Three hours approx.

Results Sub-Committee	
Frequency	Four times each year
When	Four weeks after each financial quarter
Duration	Two hours approx.

Source Protection Sub-Committee	
Frequency	Monthly
When	First week in each month
Duration	Two hours approx.



How is drinking water regulated in Western Australia and where does the Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water fit in?

Regulation of drinking water in Western Australia is divided into licensed and non-licensed providers, with the Advisory Committee an integral part of the monitoring framework.

The Economic Regulation Authority licenses larger water service providers such as the Water Corporation, Aqwest and Busselton Water, as well as Rottnest Island Authority, Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd, Robe River Mining Co Pty Ltd and Aquasol Pty Ltd. As part of the license arrangement each licensed water provider is required to establish a binding Memorandum of Understanding for Drinking Water Quality with the Department of Health.

All other non-licensed drinking water providers, such as caravan parks, roadhouses, camps, small or remote communities and mine sites are monitored directly by the Department of Health, through either Local Government environmental health officers or by direct reporting by mine sites or the Department of Housing (under the Remote Area Essential Service Program).

Through both sub-committees the Advisory Committee reviews all drinking water monitoring and catchment management activities undertaken throughout the State. Combining this information with scientific and industry knowledge, the Advisory Committee is able to identify and respond to longer term trends and anomalies that may affect public health in Western Australia.

Would you like more information?

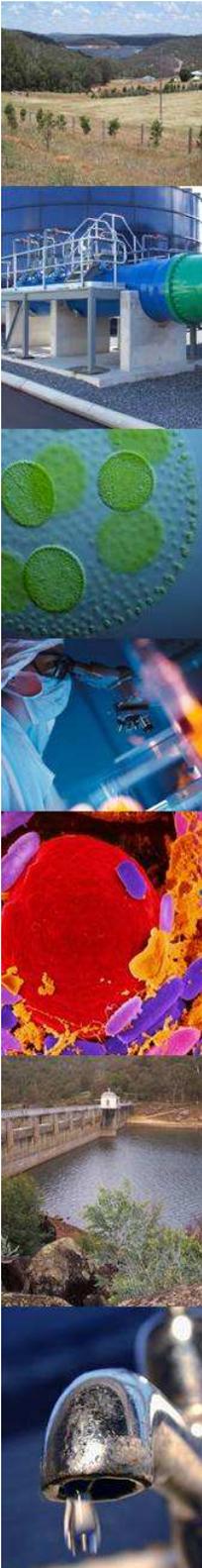
For more information about any aspect of the Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water please contact:

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http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Healthy-WA/Articles/A_E/Drinking-water-in-Western-Australia





Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water - terms of reference

(as endorsed by the Minister for Health on 15 April 1998)

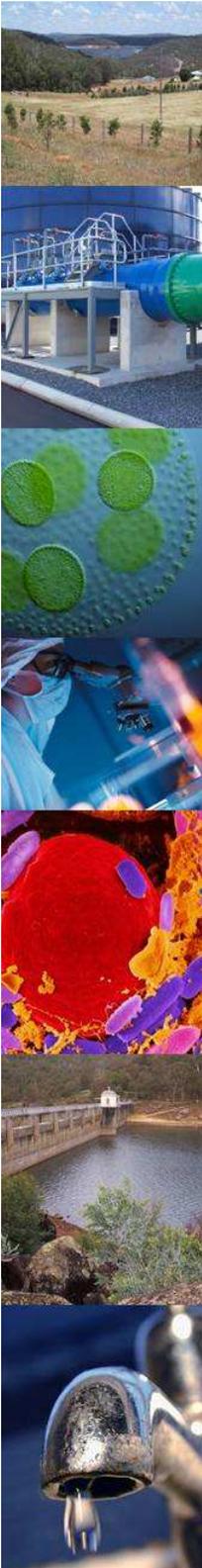
- To advise the Hon Minister for Health and the Executive Director Public Health on matters relating to the regulation of drinking water quality.
- To advise the Ministers for Health and Water Resources on any matter effecting the quality of drinking water that is referred to the Committee by either Minister or initiated by the Committee.
- To report to the Ministers from time to time on any matter arising out of these Terms of Reference that the Committee considers should be brought to their attention.
- To recommend alternative quality criteria or guideline values for drinking water in various parts of the State, where those recommended by the National body may be inappropriate.
- To regularly review the results of the routine and any special tests carried out by any water provider, the Health Department of Western Australia and local governments on drinking water supplies available to the public from both public and private sources.
- To review and advise on arrangements and procedures adopted for monitoring the quality of drinking water.
- To keep under review trends or practices that might adversely affect the quality of catchment run-off or groundwater used or available for use.
- To consider and advise on proposed developments or practices that might affect the quality of catchment run-off or groundwater used or available for use for drinking water supplies.
- To advise on special studies or surveys relating to the quality of drinking water to receive reports on such studies or surveys, and recommend any actions considered necessary.
- To foster inter-departmental cooperation for the efficient carrying out of action taken under the above Terms of Reference.
- To seek advice and Committee input as required and from specialist organisations to accomplish the above Terms of Reference.



Drinking Water Source Protection Sub-Committee - terms of reference

(as endorsed by the Advisory Committee on 8 August 2011)

- To assist the Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water to protect Public Drinking Water Source Areas, consistent with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines catchment to consumer risk based multiple barrier framework.
- To receive and provide advice on water quality monitoring data in Public Drinking Water Source Areas.
- To ensure that source protection issues of concern are passed on within respective agencies for appropriate action.
- To provide feedback on the nature and extent of agency responses to source protection issues or incidents.
- To provide input to the development of agency protocols dealing with source protection issues.
- To keep all agencies informed of relevant source protection developments.
- To provide advice on legislative changes that may have an impact on drinking water quality issues.
- To consider the implications of State, National and International policy and practice in relation to the protection of drinking water quality in Public Drinking Water Source Areas.



Membership details - 2015

Advisory Committee for the Purity of Water

Senior representatives from:

Department of Health (Chair and Secretariat)
Department of Agriculture and Food
Department of Parks and Wildlife
Department of Housing
Department of Water
Economic Regulation Authority
Aqwest (Bunbury Water Corporation)
Busselton Water
Water Corporation
Chemistry Centre of Western Australia

Source Protection Sub-Committee

Representatives from:

Department of Water (Chair and Secretariat)
Department of Health
Water Corporation

Results Sub-Committee

Representatives from:

Department of Health (Chair and Secretariat)
PathWest Laboratory Medicine
Department of Housing
Parsons Brinckerhoff
Water Corporation
Chemistry Centre of Western Australia

