

**A proposal to change government conditions
regarding industrial effluent discharges
into Princess Royal Harbour, Albany**

**Report and recommendations of the
Environmental Protection Authority**

**Environmental Protection Authority
Perth, Western Australia
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1. Introduction

On 7 March 1990, the "Albany Harbours Environmental Study 1988-89" report was released to the public for an eight week public submission period. The report made recommendations to significantly reduce the load of pollutants discharged into Princess Royal Harbour (PRH) by March 1992. In August 1990, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) released Bulletin 442 "Recommendations of the Environmental Protection Authority in relation to the Environmental Problems of the Albany Harbours". This report endorsed the recommendations of the "Albany Harbours Environmental Study 1988-89" report and specified, in Recommendation 3, industrial effluent discharge concentrations and loads to be met by March 1992. On 13 August 1990 Cabinet approved, in principle, a submission outlining the recommendations of the EPA. In accordance with the Cabinet decision, the Albany Industrial Waste Disposal Working Party (AIWDWP) was established to determine the best way to achieve these targets. In addition, the AIWDWP was directed to determine the economic impact of increased waste treatment on the foreshore industries and the social and economic consequences of this within the Albany region. In February 1991, the AIWDWP reported to Cabinet. The report recommended the construction of a centralised waste treatment plant.

On 18 March 1991, the Cabinet decided that:

- (i) the Water Authority of Western Australia (WAWA) was to fund 50% of the capital cost of a centralised waste treatment plant;
- (ii) participating industries and the Albany Shire fund the remaining 50%;
- (iii) WAWA to assume the role of project manager and owner of the asset;
- (iv) participating industries would be required to commit themselves to pay CPI-indexed operating and maintenance charges and replacement cost depreciation for an initial period of 5 years; and
- (v) in the event that any of the major industries decline to participate, the proposal was to be resubmitted to Cabinet.

2. Proposal to change government conditions

On 13 May 1991, the EPA received a 'Proposal to Change Government Conditions' from WAWA, regarding a 12 month extension of the March 1992 EPA deadline on industrial discharge to PRH. This extension was considered to be necessary to allow sufficient time for the WAWA to construct and commission a centralised waste treatment plant. On 17 May the EPA discussed this issue and was briefed on the environmental implications of a twelve month delay in reducing pollution loads from the Albany foreshore industries on the 'health' of PRH. The main effect of a delay was considered to most likely result in a slowing of the rehabilitation of the harbour rather than cause any long-term effects. Following this meeting, the EPA directed the WAWA to seek the views of the community of Albany to the proposed extension so that these views could form part of EPA's recommendations to Government. On Wednesday 29 May, following a request from WAWA, the Albany Waterways Management Authority convened a public meeting to discuss this issue.

2.1 Outcome of public meeting and public submissions to EPA

The meeting was chaired by Matt Stephens, Chairman of the Albany Waterways Management Authority and the format consisted of 5 speakers followed by 5 minutes of question time each with a general question time at the end. The speakers were Mr Peter Moore, WAWA; Mr Rick Grounds, Great Southern Development Authority; Mrs Annette Knight, Mayor, Town of Albany; Mr David Deeley, Waterways Commission; Dr Chris Simpson, EPA.

The meeting was well attended with about 120 people present. Peter Moore outlined the the WAWA proposal, Rick Grounds stressed that a clean environment and viable industries were both important for Albany's future as did Annette Knight, Dave Deeley outlined the current

status of the health of the harbours and Chris Simpson outlined the EPA process concerning this issue and urged the community to respond in writing to EPA within a week.

The general consensus of the meeting was that if an extension was needed to build the plant then an extension should be granted, provided this did not significantly effect the long-term rehabilitation of the harbour. It was pointed out that significant long-term effects were very unlikely, with the most likely effect being that the rate of rehabilitation would be slower. In addition, several people at the meeting made the point that, if an extension was granted, the industries should be required to make a firm commitment, to the WAWA, that they would be involved in the centralised treatment plant.

Votes (show of hands) were taken on two issues with the following results:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| (i) Grant an extension? | 60-70 yes; 4 no. |
| (ii) Industry commitment to WAWA? | 30-35 yes; 20-25 no. |

Summary of written submissions:

- | | |
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| (i) Petition signatures in favour of extension: | 446 |
| (ii) Submissions in favour of extension: | Individual (3), Town of Albany, Albany Woollen Mills, Albany Waterways Management Authority |
| (iii) Submissions in favour of extension with industry commitment: | Individual (2), Albany Shire Council |

3. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Environmental Protection Authority endorses the "Proposal to Change Government Conditions" by the Water Authority of Western Australia to extend, by twelve months, the compliance date for the foreshore industries in relation to EPA Bulletin 442 Recommendation 3, to allow the Water Authority of Western Australia to construct a centralised waste treatment plant. This will provide a compliance date of 31 March 1993.

Recommendation 2

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the extension be reflected in the licence conditions of the industries which will require the licensee to:

2.1 Provide a commitment to participate in the centralised waste treatment plant by 1 August 1991; or

2.2 Install pollution control equipment which will meet the EPA recommended discharge limits in Bulletin 442, Recommendation 3, by 31 March 1992.