
PP004 – Local Planning Policy 4 – Intensive Agriculture

1. Intention

To:

1. Ensure new Intensive Agriculture enterprises pose a low risk to Catchment water quality and are able to meet or improve Catchment standards for water quality improvement.
2. Encourage new types of Intensive Agriculture enterprises to the Policy Area which are compatible with Catchment water quality improvement standards.
3. Encourage high standards in Intensive Agriculture management practices in all parts of the local government area.
4. Ensure strategic and statutory proposals do not compromise existing well-managed intensive agriculture developments, or compromise the potential future development of relatively high capability areas.

2. Scope

This policy applies throughout the district.

3. Definitions

‘Bushland’ means land on which there is vegetation which is either a remainder of the natural vegetation of the land, or, if altered, is still representative of the structure and floristics of the natural vegetation, and provides the necessary habitat for native fauna (EPA, 2008b).

‘Catchment’ means the area around the wetland or waterway that contributes surface run-off or groundwater to the wetland or waterway.

‘Catchment Water Quality’ means the quality of water in ground and surface waters of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment (Figure 1) including drains, creeks, wetlands, rivers and estuarine areas. Water quality parameters include levels of phosphorus, nitrogen, organics, salinity, acidity and total suspended solids. Catchment Water Quality Improvement Standards The threshold levels of nutrients applied to land, or exported from land, as set in Appendix A of this policy.

‘Closed system (as in closed system hydroponics)’ means hydroponics system in which the nutrient solution is recirculated and the nutrient concentrations are monitored and adjusted accordingly. There is zero or minimal discharge of the solution or water to the environment.

‘Coastal Catchment Area’ has the same meaning as for Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment.

‘Intensive Agriculture (Agriculture - Intensive)’ has the same meaning as ‘agriculture - intensive’ in the Model Scheme Text.

‘Hydroponics’ means the process of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions, without soil. Although hydroponic systems do not involve soil, they may involve a wide variety of growing media, such as perlite, gravel, peat, sand, rockwool and other.

‘In-ground horticulture’ means horticulture where the crop is grown directly into in-situ soils and landforms, whether the soils have been amended or not.

‘Land capability’ refers to the ability of land to support a type of land use without causing damage.

‘Land suitability’ takes land capability information and other information (such as rainfall, environmental sensitivity) and looks at the overall suitability of a piece of land to accommodate a particular kind of development. It is useful for site selection and can also underpin the manner in which a particular type of development is carried out, so that the environmental limitations or constraints are fully recognised (EPA 2008b).

‘Nutrient Export Risk Assessment’ means an assessment of the nutrient export risk posed by a proposal on a specific site and production area. It should be carried out by a suitably qualified expert and able to be independently verified.

‘Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment’ means the catchment area defined in State Planning Policy 2.1 Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment.

‘Production area’ means the area under crop production (excluding non-production areas on the Lot or Site).

‘Site’ means the lot or lots on which the production area is located.

‘Site Management Plan’ means the plan prepared by the proponent to document how the production area and site will be managed over the lifespan of the operation to reduce nutrient export and manage all aspects of the operation in relation to the natural environment, pollution risk, visual landscape and maintenance of the amenity to neighbouring properties. A checklist to guide preparation of a Site Management Plan is included in Appendix E.

‘Soil-landscape systems of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment’ means Forrestfield System, Pinjarra System, Bassendean System, Vasse System, Spearwood System and Quindalup System.

‘Viticulture or vines’ means the growing of grapes for wine; or growing of low yield olives.

‘Watercourse’ means a river, stream, creek or manmade drainage features in which water flows in a channel, whether permanently or intermittently (EPA, 2008b).

‘Wetland’ means areas of seasonally, intermittently or permanently waterlogged soils or inundated land, whether natural or artificial, fresh or saline (EPA, 2008b)

4. Statement

4.1 Intensive Agriculture Proposals

In determining or providing advice on strategic or statutory Intensive Agriculture planning proposals, the following provisions shall apply:

1. Proposals should pose a low risk to Catchment water quality, the environment and land resources and aim to achieve the Catchment water quality improvement standards as set out in Appendix A.
2. All proposals for nurseries (potted plants) and closed systems (e.g. closed system hydroponics) should be accompanied by a Site Management Plan sufficiently detailed to ensure that the proposal will pose a low risk to catchment water quality and other environmental values and be well managed.
3. All proposals for annual and perennial horticulture and viticulture in the Coastal Catchment Area which are located on Soil-landscape mapping units which are not potentially suitable for the proposed type of Intensive Agriculture (Appendix B) should be accompanied by a Site

Management Plan which reduces nutrient export risks to achieve Catchment water quality improvement standards, and includes:

- (a) Site-specific soil testing
 - (b) Site-specific land capability assessment
 - (c) Nutrient Export Risk Assessment.
4. Outside of the Catchment area, where a risk is posed to Catchment water quality or other environmental values, the local government may on the advice of relevant state agencies, require proponents to provide site specific soil testing and land capacity assessment and a Nutrient Export Risk Assessment as part of the Site Management Plan.
 5. Unless otherwise demonstrated through site specific studies the Shire of Waroona shall consider a proposal likely to pose a significant risk to Catchment water quality and likely to substantially vary with the objectives and provisions of SPP2.1 and the Peel-Harvey Environmental Protection Policy where the site's soil-landscape unit(s) is not potentially suitable for the proposed annual or perennial horticulture or viticulture as denoted in Table 2, Column 5.
 6. Where on-site soil-landscape conditions vary from the mapped land units shown in Regional-scale soil-landscape unit mapping prepared by DPIRD, then this may be demonstrated through site-specific soil testing and site-specific land capability assessment for the proposed type of horticultural land use. This site-specific testing and assessment shall be included in the Site Management Plan, carried out by an appropriately qualified expert and supported by the relevant state government departments. The standards of soil testing and land capability assessment should be generally in accordance with Appendix C, or as otherwise advised.
 7. Based on all available evidence, proposals which pose a significant risk to Catchment water quality and are very likely to substantially vary with the objectives and provisions of SPP2.1 and the Peel-Harvey Environmental Protection Policy should be refused, even in a modified form, with reasons given. Available evidence includes Table 2, Site Management Plan including site specific soil testing and land capability assessment and the advice of relevant agencies.
 8. Due regard shall be given to the 'Other Considerations' listed in Appendix D and any other relevant matters, when assessing all proposals for Intensive Agriculture.
 9. When determining proposals, the local government may give consideration to imposing conditions, among others, so as to minimise the ongoing risk that the development may pose to Catchment water quality, such as:
 - (a) Placing a finite time limit on the Development Approval;
 - (b) Conditioning the ongoing operation of the development on the results of surface and groundwater monitoring.
 - (c) Conditioning the ongoing operation of the development on the implementation of contingency measures, as triggered by the results of surface and groundwater monitoring.

4.2 All Proposals

1. All strategic and statutory proposals should give due regard to the impact on existing enterprises, and should aim to protect potential future areas with relatively high capability soils.

2. Following a review of any relevant technical information or advice provided by a state government agency, where a proposal is likely to compromise the buffer requirements of an established operation then there should be a presumption against approval of the proposal unless the proponent can satisfactorily demonstrate that the proposal is compatible with the operation.
3. Due regard shall be given to accepted buffer requirements set by government, including:
 - (a) Guidelines for Separation of Agricultural and Residential Land Uses (Department of Health, 2012);
 - (b) Protection of buffer areas as set out in the Peel Region Scheme Strategic Agricultural Resource Policy and Greater Bunbury Region Scheme Strategic Agricultural Resource Policy.

5. Site Management Plan

The purpose of the Site Management Plan is to document how the production area and site will be established and managed over the lifespan of the operation to reduce nutrient export and manage all aspects of the operation in relation to the natural environment, pollution risk, visual landscape and neighbourhood amenity. In doing so, the Site Management Plan should demonstrate ongoing compliance with:

- Catchment Water Quality Improvement Standards (Appendix C), and
- Other Considerations (Appendix D).

Where appropriate, the Site Management Plan can be provided in the format of a Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plan, as potentially required by other decision-making authorities such as the Department of Water.

6. Nutrient Export Risk Assessment

The purpose of the Nutrient Export Risk Assessment is to provide evidence to the local government (and experts advising the local government) that given the specific site conditions, production system and management practices, the proposal will likely pose a low risk to Catchment water quality and other environmental values.

The Assessment should draw upon details specific to the site and proposal (or refer to other sections of the Site Management Plan where information can be found):

- (a) Site conditions:
 - (i) Soil types and mapping of soil types
 - (ii) Location of vegetation, watercourses and wetlands
 - (iii) Depth to groundwater in winter
- (b) Site-specific land capability assessment for the proposed land use
- (c) Crop and cultivation details
- (d) Fertiliser regimes, nutrient content and distribution methods
- (e) An analysis of nutrient pathways on the site and areas of greatest risk.
- (f) Soil and water nutrient monitoring regimes

- (g) Contingency actions to be undertaken by proponent if monitoring reveals site is exporting unacceptable nutrient loads. (i.e. What management actions will the proponent undertake to ensure nutrient export is reduced to an acceptable amount).
- (h) Links to the strategies in the Site Management Plan that will reduce nutrient inputs, increase nutrient harvesting or reduce nutrient exports from the production area or the site.

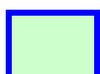
Where on-site soil-landscape conditions vary from the mapped land units shown in Regional-scale soil-landscape unit mapping prepared by DAFWA, then this must be demonstrated through site-specific soil testing and site-specific land capability assessment for the proposed type of Intensive Agricultural land use. The standards of soil testing and land capability assessment should be generally in accordance with Appendix C, or as otherwise advised by the Department of Agriculture and Food WA.

Where appropriate, the Nutrient Export Risk Assessment may be provided in the format of a Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plan (NIMP), such as in cases where a NIMP is required by other agencies such as the Department of Water. All information and claims presented in the Assessment should be able to be independently verified by an expert in an appropriate field such as agronomy, agricultural science, environmental science, natural resource management or related area.

7. Figures

Figure 1: Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment Area



 Boundary of the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment, and area to which State Planning Policy 2.1 applies

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Peel Harvey Catchment Water Quality Improvement Standards and Guidance

Appendix B: Table 1 Indicative risk of horticultural proposals to catchment water quality and soil resources

Appendix C: Suitability of soil-landscape mapping units in the Shire of Waroona for annual horticulture, perennial horticulture and viticulture

Appendix D: Other considerations

9. Legislative and Strategic Context

The *Planning and Development Act 2005* and the associated subsidiary legislation provide the broad framework within which this policy operates.

10. Review

This policy is to be reviewed every 5 years.

11. Associated Documents

Nil.

Division		Planning			
Policy Number		PP004			
Contact Officer		Manager Planning			
Related Legislation		Planning and Development Act 2005 Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015			
Related Shire Documents		Nil			
Risk Rating	Medium	Review Frequency	Every 5 years	Next Review	2024
Date Adopted		26/03/2019		OCM19/03/017	

Amendments		
Date	Details of Amendment	Reference
22/06/2021	Updated as part of major review and reformatted.	OCM21/06/071
Previous Policies		
PR009 – Intensive Agriculture		