

AN INFORMATION BULLETIN FROM HARVEY WATER

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RURAL WATER SERVICES

What is a Rural Water Service ?

A Rural Water Service (RWS) replaces what was previously known as a By-Law 11. An RWS is possible because of the introduction of the piped irrigation water system in Waroona in 2003 and in Harvey from 2006.

Under a By-Law 11, a landowner in the Harvey Water Irrigation Area could access water in an irrigation channel or drain for use as Stock & Garden water. Sometimes the water could be for irrigation if it was not possible to provide an irrigation supply at that point.

The important feature of the By-Law 11 was that it was not guaranteed in any way and there were no responsibilities for the irrigation water provider to make water available in any channel at any time.

The new pipelines are not being installed in the channels so there is still the possibility for a customer to remain a By-Law 11. The drawback is that there is likely to be very much less water in the channels than before.

In recognition of By-Law 11 customers wanting to access water in future, Harvey Water developed a class of customer called a Rural Water Service.

These customers have the opportunity to access the pipelines in a way which is equitable to cooperative members who have fully funded the system.

The conditions offered to Waroona RWS customers in 2003/4 were that:

- They can only have a 50 mm Supply Point suitable for a Stock & Garden supply.
- They cannot carry out surface irrigation from this supply point.
- The costs (2004/5) were:
 - Connection Fee - \$4000
 - Asset Maintenance Contribution - \$17.88 per year
 - Access Charge - \$420 per year
 - Consumption Charge - \$0.35 per kilolitre
- Water is continuously available under gravity head pressure from the dams but there is no guarantee as to supply, quality or pressure.
- RWS must agree not to use the water for potable purposes.
- Harvey Water loaned the Connection Fee for repayment over 5 years, in some cases.

Harvey Water is working to develop a Rural Water Services Company which will be a member of the irrigation cooperatives. This means that the RWS Co will have permanent access to water and the RWS members will have the same. This is much better than the previous system where they had no guarantees for water supply. The RWS Co will have one vote in the cooperatives, the same as other members.