



Department initiated Amendment

Part V Division 3 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*

Licence Number	L6316/1991/13
Licence Holder	Water Corporation
File Number	DER2016/000916~3
Premises	Wagin Sewage Facility 1801 Cowcher Road WAGIN WA 6315 Legal description – Lot 1801 on Plan 175363 As defined by the Premises maps attached to the Revised Licence
Date of Report	23 June 2023
Decision	Revised licence granted

Stephen Checker
MANAGER WASTE INDUSTRIES
REGULATORY SERVICES

an officer delegated under section 20 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (WA)

Table of Contents

1. Decision summary	3
2. Scope of assessment	3
2.1 Regulatory framework	3
2.2 Background	3
2.3 Amendment summary	4
3. Consultation	4
4. Conclusion	4
4.1 Summary of amendments	4
References	5

1. Decision summary

The Delegated Officer has determined to make amendments to Licence L6316/1991/13. The amendments are administrative in nature therefore they do not alter the risk profile of the Premises, providing that activities, emissions and receptors as stated in existing approvals remain unchanged.

This Amendment Report documents the amendments made pursuant to section 59 and 59(B) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act).

2. Scope of assessment

2.1 Regulatory framework

In amending the licence, the department has considered and given due regard to its Regulatory Framework and relevant policy documents which are available at <https://dwer.wa.gov.au/regulatory-documents>.

2.2 Background

Licence L6316/1991/13 is held by the Water Corporation (Licence Holder) for the Wagin Sewage Facility (the Premises), located at 1801 Cowcher Road, Wagin.

The Premises relates to the category and the assessed production/design capacity under Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection Regulations 1987* (EP Regulations) which are defined in existing Licence L6316/1991/13.

The Premises has been in operation since 1991, with sewage pumped into the WWTP via pipeline and treatment occurring through a three-stage pond system. The Premises is currently authorised to accept and treat sewage at a rate of 260 m³/day per annual period. Treated sewage is discharged, via a 200m PVC pipe, into an open drainage channel that slopes north to southeast from the Kersley Road reserve and through adjacent lands towards the Slippery Lake A-Class Nature Reserve. The Slippery Lake A-Class Nature Reserve is located approximately 600 m southeast of the PVC pipe discharge point. The lake is also subject to agricultural runoff, airport runoff, discharge of groundwater abstraction from around the Wagin townsite and potentially leachate from a Class II landfill located less than 100 m to the west.

In 2018, the Licence Holder submitted an amendment application for the premises to remove redundant within the Licence preamble and align environmental improvement conditions with commitments made in a new draft Environmental Improvement Plan. As a part of this amendment assessment, DWER undertook a review of the foreseeable risk events to public health, amenity, water resources and the environment from the acceptance and treatment of sewage waste at the Premises.

Through the 2018 review, DWER determined that the discharge of treated sewage presents:

- a high risk to the environment due to the potential for nutrients within the discharge of treated sewage from the sewage facility to result in cyanobacterial blooms within Slippery Lake and cause short term impact to ecosystem services; and
- a high risk to public health due to the discharge periodically significantly exceeding 1000 cfu/ 100 mL *Escherichia coli* and potential for pathogens to impact human health.

Industry Regulation (IR) determined that the high risk to the environment was not consistent with the conservation of flora and fauna of the Slippery Lake A-Class Nature Reserve and based on the information available the risk from the on-going discharge of treated sewage at the current quality and quantity was unacceptable.

Based on this risk assessment, a revised Licence was granted on 14 September 2018. In consideration of the risks from the discharge of treated sewage, conditions were placed on the

Licence to limit the discharge of treated sewage from the sewage facility. The limit required that treated sewage is not discharged to the environment after 30 June 2023 at the current quality and quantity due to the unacceptable risk to the environment.

2.3 Amendment summary

On 20 September 2022, the Licence Holder submitted an application to the department to amend Licence L6316/1991/13 under section 59 and 59B of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). Under this application, the Licence Holder is seeking to authorise ongoing the discharge of treated sewage from the WWTP to the discharge channel (discharge area).

The department is undertaking an assessment of this amendment application to determine whether supporting information provided by the Licence Holder is sufficient to demonstrate that the discharge of treated sewage is not having any detrimental effect on the surrounding environment or the Slippery Lake A-Class Nature Reserve. The assessment is subject to input by technical experts within the department who are reviewing / have reviewed the supporting information. Due to the complexity of supporting information and departmental operational constraints, extended timeframes have been required by technical experts to appropriately assess supporting information and provide advice to IR to inform DWER's risk assessment.

Consequently, on 6 June 2023, the department initiated an amendment to Licence L6316/1991/13. The amendment is limited to extending the discharge cease date of 30 June 2023 by six months to 30 December 2023. The extension of this date will permit DWER additional time to undertake a detailed risk assessment on the suitability of the ongoing discharge, whilst ensuring the Licence Holder remains compliant with their licence conditions.

The Delegated Officer considers that there is no evidence of additional risk to surrounding receptors as a result of permitting the discharge to continue for another three months, and that additional time will ensure DWER has obtained the required information and advice to undertake a more thorough assessment of the ongoing risk of the discharge to the surrounding environment.

3. Consultation

On 21 June 2023 the Licence Holder waived the comment period.

4. Conclusion

Based on the assessment in this Amendment Report, the Delegated Officer has determined that an amended licence will be granted, subject to conditions commensurate with the determined controls and necessary for administration and reporting requirements.

4.1 Summary of amendments

Table 1 below provides a summary of the proposed amendments and will act as a record of implemented changes. All proposed changes have been incorporated into the Revised licence as part of the amendment process.

Table 1: Summary of licence amendments

Condition no.	Proposed amendments
Condition 11	Discharge cease date extended to 30 December 2023.

References

1. *Department of Environment Regulation (DER) 2015, Guidance Statement: Setting Conditions, Perth, Western Australia.*
2. *Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) 2020, Guideline: Environmental Siting, Perth, Western Australia.*
3. *DWER 2020, Guideline: Risk Assessments, Perth, Western Australia.*