



PASTORALISTS & GRAZIERS ASSOCIATION
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

PGA Update: Fitzroy Derby Water Plan – Ministerial Meeting & Industry Field Day

9 June 2026 – Meeting with Minister for Water, Hon Don Punch MLA

PGA representatives met with Minister Punch to discuss the *Fitzroy Derby Water Management Plan (Draft)*. The Minister firmly reiterated two key Government positions:

- **No dams or in-stream structures** on the Fitzroy River.
- **No further surface water allocations** for extraction.

He noted that while the PGA considers the proposed groundwater allocation (75.7 GL/year) too low, current uptake of groundwater licences remains minimal. He implied that if sufficient proponents came forward, the Government would consider releasing further allocations.

The PGA responded that the licence application process is overly complex, groundwater mapping is insufficient to guarantee return on investment, and bureaucratic delays actively deter investors. We stressed that **economic development of the Fitzroy basin** must be the key driver.

Minister Punch stated he intends to "fight hard" for economic development in the region. The PGA will hold the Government to this commitment – advocating for faster approvals, better hydrogeological data, reduced red tape, and dedicated staff to assist pastoral businesses through the application process.

12 June 2026 – DWER / DPIRD Industry Field Day, Gogo Station

DWER and DPIRD hosted a field day at Gogo Station to discuss proposed water resource management and the future of irrigated agriculture in the Fitzroy Basin.

The discussion broadened to regional employment, industry development, and community empowerment. A key example was the **Kimberley Meat Company** abattoir – closed for two years due to lack of year-round cattle supply. Locally grown fodder could remedy this, but the cost of pumping groundwater (the only source Government is willing to make available) is prohibitively expensive.

Surface water – which flows in vast volumes to the Indian Ocean each wet season – is the only economically viable option for fodder production. Allowing pastoral properties to harvest and store surface water on-property would enable reliable irrigated fodder, support the abattoir, create local jobs, and open export opportunities to Indonesia and other neighbouring countries.

Without access to surface water, the Kimberley Meat Company cannot operate. WA should be proud of its beef contribution to South-East Asia – and by collaborating with pastoralists, Government can ensure this vital trade continues with reciprocal benefits.



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Summary

If the PGA can encourage and facilitate responsible agricultural development, the Government will be forced to acknowledge the contribution Fitzroy agriculture can make – and ultimately, the need for more accessible water licensing and affordable development.

The PGA will continue to advocate for science-based, equitable, and development-enabling water management in the Kimberley.