

In my role as a Natural Resource Management Officer in the WA Central Wheatbelt farmers relate the following observations:-

In recent years the weather is less predictable than before with winter rainfall (the crop growing period) receiving less rain and therefore more severe frosts, while more rain is experienced in summer (harvesting time) often resulting in degraded harvests and an increase in summer weeds which require an additional herbicide program.

Not much summer rainfall reaches storage dams as the ground is usually dry and evaporation rate high.

Dams providing water for Perth are now only 31% full, at this stage the remaining water becomes more costly to purify. the Mundaring dam which provides water to most central wheatbelt towns and Kalgoorlie is only 16% full. and it is likely to be May to August before rainfall supplies this dam.

There is concern that weather/climate changes may be too rapid that native fauna and flora will not be able to adapt.

Clearly we all need to take urgent steps to minimise these impacts and also minimise pollution of air, water and soil.

One positive is that the saline groundwater is generally at its lowest for many years.

Adrian Price, NRMO and WA Local Hero-Australian of the Year 2004.