

EAST WANNEROO DEVELOPMENT — IMPACT ON CARNABY'S BLACK COCKATOO

1398. Hon Lynn MacLaren to the Minister for Child Protection representing the Minister for Planning

The draft East Wanneroo Structure Plan that is currently out for public comment proposes the re-zoning of some Carnaby's habitat from rural to urban. Comparing the current zoning on p20 to the proposed Structure Plan map on p 26, and compare each against the map of estimated Carnaby's Black Cockatoo Habitat in the City of Wanneroo, the habitat under threat is clearly visible, mostly just south of the lake at Jandabup.

The plan points out that 'any clearing over one hectare of Carnaby's habitat is likely to require referral to DEWHA' and 'Preservation of habitat areas will be a key requirement for areas subject to urban development and relevant approvals will need to be gained from the Federal Department for Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Clearing of habitat areas may require offsets to be provided for, in consultation with DEWHA'.

- (1) Is the Minister aware that the East Wanneroo Draft Structure Plan (currently open for public comment until 16 December) proposes to re-zone some areas of likely Carnaby's cockatoo habitat from rural to urban?
- (2) Does the Minister think it is appropriate to create more uncertainty for landowners and developers by zoning land containing habitat for a Matter of National Environmental Significance as urban, in the knowledge that any development proposal taking place on that land will need to be referred to the *EPBC Act* for assessment?
- (3) How is it appropriate to consider making changes to the current zoning of known Carnaby's habitat prior to the finalisation of any negotiations with the Commonwealth around a Conservation Agreement and/or Strategic Impact Assessment?
- (4) How does the draft Structure Plan comply with the Minister's vision outlined in Directions 2031 in which the promise was made to balance urban growth needs with the goals to protect our natural ecosystems (p.iii)?
- (5) How does the draft Structure Plan comply with the principles of Theme 6: Responsible Planning as described in Directions 2031, including the principle to 'prioritise the development and use of land that is already zoned urban or urban deferred'?
- (6) How does the draft Structure Plan comply with the principles of Theme 5: Green as described in Directions 2031 (page 11), including the principle to 'protect and manage significant natural resources'?
- (7) How does the further clearing of urban bushland and known habitats for threatened species as outlined in the draft Structure Plan comply with the proposal in Directions 2031 to introduce a Green Network, which promises to protect and manage significant biodiversity areas, protect water supplies, protect our coastline, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use, promote the reduction of the amount of waste generated and promote reuse and recycling, improve air quality, integrate natural resource management into land use planning, and expand and enhance our open space network (p.32)?
- (8) When will the Minister halt the clearing of bushland and wetlands within the Perth Metropolitan Region and the South West of Western Australia in line with the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005?
- (9) Is the Minister aware of the work currently being done in the United Kingdom by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (the UK Government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space) on Green Infrastructure, in which a region-wide approach has been taken to embed wetlands, urban parks, wildlife corridors and street trees in to the urban environment and which is considered as critical infrastructure alongside transport, waste, energy and water?

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:

- (1) The Draft East Wanneroo Structure Plan reflects proposals in the Future of East Wanneroo (2007) and the Gngalara Sustainability Strategy (2009), which identify future areas for urbanisation while minimising impact on the environment.

The Structure Plan identifies native vegetation in good or better condition, which is the most sustainable approach to protection of habitat for the Carnaby's Cockatoo and other native species. Specifically, the Structure Plan (refer to Figure 11, page 26) and Implementation Guide (refer to Figure 13, page 34) incorporate the retention and protection of priority local natural areas and ecological linkages, which accommodate the Carnaby's habitat.

- (2) The East Wanneroo Structure Plan itself will not rezone land to urban; rather, it provides a framework for future amendments to the Metropolitan Region Scheme and local planning scheme. The Structure Plan outlines environmental matters that require further investigation and assessment, including protection of the Carnaby's habitat. All future scheme amendments will require referral to the Environmental Protection Authority, and where appropriate, also to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, to determine a level of assessment.

The Structure Plan and Implementation Guide incorporate the retention and protection of priority local natural areas and ecological linkages (which accommodate the Carnaby's habitat), and thus provide certainty regarding the proposed urban structure. The Structure Plan also identifies areas to be retained for Bush Forever. It provides further certainty by indicating the processes that need to be followed prior to rezoning (refer to Section 5: Implementation). Land owners and developers should be clear that this plan does not imply land use rights.

- (3) This Structure Plan has been developed over a period of some years, and the notion of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) on a regional scale is a fairly recent suggestion by the Commonwealth. Consequently, the Commonwealth's suggestion of incorporating an SEA process was received at a late stage in the East Wanneroo Structure Plan process. Notwithstanding this, it is the Department of Planning's view that the elements of an SEA process were already materially incorporated in the planning process.
- (4) The draft Structure Plan complies with the Minister's vision as outlined in *Directions 2031*.
- (5) *Directions 2031* confirmed that East Wanneroo should be investigated to determine its future potential urban development profile (refer to page 44).

*Directions 2031* states a preference for development on land that is already zoned Urban. Taking account of sustainability issues and infrastructure provision, there are strong sustainability arguments to support urban development in East Wanneroo, including the broadening of the narrow urban coastal corridor to increase the catchment size and proximity to existing centres, services and infrastructure.

The Structure Plan does not propose to urbanise the entire study area, with significant natural and horticultural areas to be conserved and upgraded, while development within the study area is required to meet sustainability criteria.

- (6) Ecological systems are a key component of the plan and are analysed and discussed in the Context section (pages 11-15). Environmental issues are an integral component of the area's vision and objectives (page 23) and are a key structuring element in the plan (pages 26 and 29-31). Various actions and policy principles in the Implementation Section also address Theme 5 as described in *Directions 2031*.
- (7) The Structure Plan incorporates the retention and protection of Bush Forever areas, Conservation Category and Resource Enhancement Wetlands, ecological linkages, and priority local natural areas (which contain native vegetation in good or better condition). The plan identifies the need to protect these priority biodiversity assets while allowing future urbanisation, in order to meet broader objectives of sustainable development.

A key component of the Structure Plan is the provision of a Green Network, incorporating reserves, open space and rural land.

The Structure Plan is consistent with the Gngangara Sustainability Strategy, which recognises the need to limit groundwater abstraction and maximise recharge to the Mound in the East Wanneroo area.

The managed urbanisation of East Wanneroo is considered an appropriate response to the need to protect groundwater supplies (reducing abstraction for horticulture), reducing greenhouse gas emissions (improving proximity to employment and existing infrastructure and services) and expanding the open space network.

- (8) Bushland and priority natural areas are an integral component of the urban structure and, rather than preventing all development, the structure plan sets out to determine how appropriate development should take place in each particular setting. The East Wanneroo Structure Plan includes an appropriate planning framework to guide the more detailed planning and development towards a sustainable outcome.
- (9) The Minister is aware of this work in the United Kingdom, and the Department of Planning places strong emphasis on a sustainable approach to embed Green Infrastructure via a regional approach, i.e. at a metropolitan and regional planning level.