



TO: Peter Kane, cc Alex Harrison

FROM: Jim Chesterman, Landscape Architect

DATE: 14<sup>TH</sup> June 2013

## LAND MANAGEMENT STAKEHILL SWAMP

### MESSAGE:

Peter

Following a site visit with yourself and Doug Macarthur I offer my views on the management and future development of Stakehill Swamp in Baldivis.

### BACKGROUND

Stakehill Swamp was the subject of a Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment some years ago, with a rezoning from rural to parks and recreation in the MRS. A ministerial condition for the granting of the amendment was the preparation of an environmental management plan over the subject land.

The WAPC duly prepared the plan, being mindful of the need for it to be compatible with DEC expectations for the site as it is envisaged that the land will be incorporated into the Rockingham Lakes Regional Park for management by DEC in the near future.

Accordingly, the plan provided low key recommendations for the land on the basis that visitation of the area by the public will be minimal in the short to medium term future, until such time as the remaining private land is acquired, and urban land in the general area is developed for housing.

The plan therefore gave broad recommendations for firebreak construction, with these providing use as management, contractor and public user access around and through the park. Informal public parking nodes in three locations are proposed with two picnic /parkland sites in proximity to two of the parking areas.

Whilst these developments are desirable, the low visitation rate at this time, and the privately owned land in the area preclude full implementation of the initiatives contained in the environmental management plan, with land management actions being confined in the short term to fencing, firebreaks, revegetation, slashing and fire and weed control.

### DISCUSSION

The Urban Bushland Council has written to the Minister for Planning on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013 with a complaint about the extent of and type of management practices being applied to Stakehill

Swamp by staff of the WAPC. Enclosed are a number of photos indicating firebreak works and weed invasion.

WAPC staff, comprising myself, Peter Kane and Doug Macarthur visited Stakehill on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June and inspected all areas of the swamp.

From my observations of the land, it would appear that the weed management of the subject land is at a satisfactory level, with areas indicated in the photos currently having a much reduced infestation level than the photos as provided would suggest.

Whilst there are further weed control actions required it is my view that the weed infestations at Stakehill are well within controllable limits, and further short term actions should eradicate the pampas grass, scotch thistle and cotton bush outbreaks in total.

The winter grass understory on the land is within manageable limits, and no worse than any other land under similar management control in the metropolitan area.

As there is need to consolidate firebreaks for multiple uses, rotary hoeing in future is not appropriate, with chemical application preferable until the trails are formally constructed as shown on the plan.

## **THE FUTURE**

The WAPC has committed to the full application of works described in the environmental management plan, however this will be implemented progressively as use of the park increases to justify the higher level of development and increased management costs that will inevitably follow. DEC, as future land managers would be consulted on these works.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is my opinion that the comments as presented in the letter from the Urban Bushland Council are incorrect, and do not reflect the current on ground situation. Whilst there is no doubt that the weed issues were more obvious at the time the photos were taken, the current situation gives me no cause for concern. My view is that the weed control problems are minimal and can resolved promptly and without significant attendant cost.