



HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region
Shadow Minister for Emergency Services; Regional Health;
Road Safety; Volunteering; Regional Cities

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Via email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

9 March 2023

Dear Committee Members

Petition No 77 – Litter Bisecting the Walpole Wilderness

I write to support efforts to clean-up litter along the section of Highway 1, particularly the South Western Highway between Manjimup and Walpole, and the South Coast Highway between Walpole and Denmark, which bisects a group of significant conservation zones, collectively known as the Walpole Wilderness Area.

I note this petition was backed by more than 1,400 Western Australians in a petition tabled in the Legislative Council on 14 February 2023.

This petition expresses concern at the current management of the Highway 1 clean-up in this region; and notes global and local concern around climate change, carbon capture and plastic pollution.

As Committee members may be aware, the clean-up of this highway is predominantly managed by a sole volunteer, Mr Michael Filby, of Walpole, who has been undertaking clean-up of the highway on a regular basis, as often as weekly, for the past 18 years. As a result of his hard work and dedication, Mr Filby has been recognised as a Keep Australia Beautiful ambassador and awarded with a State Environment Award in 2007 for his efforts in litter prevention.

While Mr Filby's efforts to reduce and clean-up litter along Highway 1 are a significant achievement, the clean-up of litter alongside a major highway which bisects several National Parks and Nature Reserves must not fall to the efforts of a sole volunteer.

I refer to the Main Roads WA *Policy Guidelines for Rest Areas* Section 7, which outlines "mandatory minimum" facilities for each rest area. I note that while litter management is deemed mandatory for minor, major, and heavy vehicle rest areas, I understand neither Main Roads nor any local government area provide any rubbish bins along this section of highway at any of the twelve rest areas.

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With a Main Roads regional office being established in Manjimup, there may exist greater scope for Main Roads personnel in this region to provide increased support for litter management in this region.

The Walpole community is proud of its “litter free” approach, and in 2007 was recognised as WA’s Tidiest Town. The community has also undertaken a number of initiatives, often solely driven by volunteers, including the recent creation of a litter picking guidebook to inspire young people to keep their towns tidy.

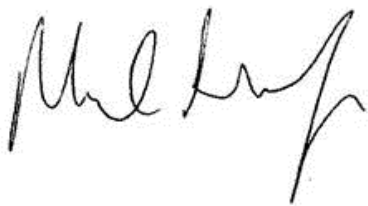
On 26 November 2022, the Minister for Environment, Hon Reece Whitby MLA, stated: “Litter is not only unsightly, but harmful to wildlife through poisoning, choking and entrapment. It also draws animals out onto the road, creating a danger for both them and motorists.”

I also note that while the population of Walpole is just 500 permanent residents, it attracts more than 150,000 visitors by road each year.

Supporting measures to reduce litter along Highway 1 and to improve the clean-up of this region is therefore likely to have positive impacts for tourism, road safety, and conservation.

I thank you for considering the request to examine the issues raised in this petition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Aldridge', written in a cursive style.

HON MARTIN ALDRIDGE MLC
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