PETITION NUMBER 14 – YALGORUP NATIONAL PARK

Thank you for your letter of 16 February 2009 seeking comment on the above-mentioned petition.

I provide the following comments on the subject matter of the petition that was submitted by the Chair of the Friends of Ramsar Action Group for the Yalgorup Lakes Environment Incorporated (FRAGYLE), and provide background information on relevant planning projects and development proposals.

FRAGYLE was formed due to concerns that possible future development in the coastal areas of Clifton Beach and Preston Beach could have unacceptable environmental impacts. The petition seeks support for the inclusion of existing rural holdings between the coastline and the Yalgorup Lakes within the Yalgorup National Park. However, this would require the acquisition of more than 4,000ha of private land, which would be cost prohibitive. Furthermore, a substantial portion of these rural holdings have already been modified to some degree, so there may be no significant benefit from an ecological viewpoint to purchase such large areas of rural land. (The Greater Bunbury and Peel Region Schemes’ zoning and reservations for the area are presented as Attachment 1).

The Coastal and Lakelands Planning Strategy (Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC, 1999)) is the current endorsed strategic planning document for the section of coastline between the Dawesville Channel and Binningup. (The structure plan contained in the Coastal and Lakelands Planning Strategy is presented as Attachment 2.) This Strategy recommended a future urban expansion to the south of the existing Preston Beach townsite to accommodate 800 dwellings and a total of 1,600 dwellings for the townsite.
During the past few years some development concepts have been put forward for rural land holdings between the coastline and the Yalgorup Lake system. Background information on the Preston Beach Townsite Strategy and the Cape Bouvard Investments (CBI) development proposals is provided below.

**Cape Bouvard Investments Development Proposals**

The location of Cape Bouvard Investments (CBI) rural land holdings at Clifton Beach is shown on Attachment 2. The subject landholdings have a total area of approximately 1,000ha. CBI has previously put forward some development concepts for its rural landholdings at Clifton Beach. In 2007, CBI put a development concept for a new coastal settlement of 3,000 dwellings and an ocean marina. However, CBI did not proceed with this proposal following advice from the WAPC Chair, Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) and the City of Mandurah.

CBI is now pursuing a proposal to subdivide their landholdings into 24 rural properties, ranging in size from 20ha to 80ha. The EPA has set the level of assessment for this rural subdivision proposal at a Public Environmental Review (PER) level. The proponents are now preparing their PER document.

**Preston Beach Townsite Strategy**

In 2006 the Shire of Waroona commenced a project to prepare a Preston Beach Townsite Strategy. The project study area for the Townsite Strategy is indicated on Attachment 2. One of the proposed outcomes of the project is to make a recommendation to Council and the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) on what should be the maximum number of dwelling units for Preston Beach. In November 2008 the WAPC advised the Shire of Waroona and other stakeholders, including FRAGYLE, of the specific regional planning matters and requirements that need to be addressed for any proposal to expand the existing Preston Beach townsite (A copy of the letter to the Shire of Waroona is presented as Attachment 3).

The Shire of Waroona, in conjunction with the Satterley Property Group and Mirvac (the proponents of urban development at Preston Beach), has commenced work on addressing the matters specified by the WAPC. Further planning and environmental investigations are to be undertaken for the Preston Beach Townsite Strategy. Subject to Council and WAPC approval, a draft Strategy should be released for public comment either at the end of this year or early next year.

Investigations for determining which environmentally significant areas at Preston Beach should be protected and examination of the most appropriate mechanisms to protect such areas, will be undertaken as part of the Preston Beach Townsite Strategy. Through the consultation processes for the Preston Beach Townsite Strategy, the community, Waroona Shire Council and the Environmental Protection Authority will all have an input on which areas they consider should be protected and how such areas should be managed.
Shire of Waroona Local Planning Strategy

While the strategic planning for Preston Beach proceeds, the Shire of Waroona's Local Planning Strategy (LPS) will be completed. The LPS is a strategic planning document that sets out the long-term planning directions for the Shire of Waroona. The LPS has been advertised for public comment and adopted by Council. It is expected that the WAPC will adopt the LPS in March 2009.

The LPS shows the rural holdings north and south of the Preston Beach townsite as an 'area subject to Preston Beach Townsite Strategy'.

Environmental Protection Authority Policy Advice

On a broader strategic policy level, later this year the Environmental Protection Authority expects to release some policy advice relating to the coastal strip from Binningup to the Dawesville Channel. The Department of Environment and Conservation officers, who are working on this EPA policy project, are consulting with DPI and relevant local governments in the preparation of such EPA policy advice.

To conclude, FRAGYLE’s proposition that all of the rural land holdings between the coast and the Yalgorup Lake system should be acquired for inclusion within the Yalgorup National Park is not supported as:

- it would be cost prohibitive;
- significant portions of the rural holdings have been cleared and would most likely have no significant ecological value;
- there would be substantial cost in rehabilitating any modified rural land and implementation of any required park management plans required for the inclusion of substantial areas of rural land within the existing Yalgorup National Park; and
- the owners of the rural land would most likely oppose the acquisition of their land by the Government.

I hope this helps to clarify the situation and appreciate you taking the time to inform me of your views.

Yours sincerely

JOHN DAY
MINISTER FOR PLANNING; CULTURE AND THE ARTS

10 MAR 2009
Dear Mr Curley

PRESTON BEACH TOWNSITE STRATEGY

I refer to my previous letter of 2 September 2008 advising that the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) will provide more specific advice on the strategic regional planning considerations and requirements for any proposals to expand the Preston Beach settlement.

On 17 October 2008 the Peel Region Planning Committee of the WAPC considered the regional planning and environmental considerations that would be associated with any proposal to expand the existing Preston Beach settlement. The committee also received presentations from the Satterley Property Group, Mirvac and FRAGYLE (Friends of Ramsar Action Group for the Yalgorup Lakes Environment Inc).

The committee came to a position in respect to Preston Beach, as expressed in the draft minutes below. I expect the draft minutes will be confirmed at the next committee meeting on 12 December 2008.

The Western Australian Planning Commission resolved:

1. Following consideration of the regional environmental, sustainability and planning issues relating to the expansion of the existing Preston Beach settlement, to adopt the following policy position concerning further urban development at Preston Beach.

   a The future population of Preston Beach will be limited, for the long term, by the constraints and assumptions in the Coastal and Lakelands Planning Strategy (WAPC, 1999) and the opportunities and constraints listed below, with the actual planned size of the settlement being determined through a strategic planning process which seeks the optimal outcome based on regional priorities.
Under the Coastal and Lakelands Planning Strategy (WAPC, 1999) urban development at Preston Beach, in the long term, is limited to a total number of dwellings, including existing dwellings, of 1600 dwellings. The effect of the opportunities and constraints listed below will determine whether this total size is increased or reduced.

The maximum size of the settlement will be that which achieves material improvements in the quality of surface and groundwater flows into Lake Preston, for instance through improvements to the existing stormwater drainage system and the tertiary treatment of all sewage from existing and new dwellings which impact on the lake.

The maximum size of the settlement will be that which avoids any further detrimental impacts on any of the lakes or wetlands and Yalgorup National Park, and which, through additions to the park and comprehensive management measures (such as control of feral animals and pets) improves the long term biodiversity status of the park.

The maximum size of the settlement will be such as to attract a specific demographic which maintains an economic base for the settlement while minimising the proportion of the population dependent on jobs in the district or further afield and thus minimising long distance commuting.

The maximum size of the settlement will be that which can be satisfactorily served by the existing Preston Beach Road as a two-lane, single-carriageway road, and does not, now or in the future, generate a need for either a second coastal route, or an expansion of the capacity of Preston Beach Road or of its intersection with the Perth Bunbury Highway.

The maximum size of the settlement will be that which can be served by a single neighbourhood or local centre with a maximum net lettable area of 4 500 m².

The maximum size of the settlement will be sufficient to support a single primary school without generating the need for additional educational resources or an overflow to another primary school in the district.

The maximum size of the settlement will be defined by a permanent boundary between urban land and land which is included in, or added to, the regional open space reservation, or which is otherwise committed to, and managed for, long term biodiversity conservation purposes.
2. To support the Preston Beach townsite strategy process, whilst acknowledging that any proposals for the expansion of the Preston Beach settlement need to adequately address and respond to a range of regional and local planning and environmental constraints and requirements.

3. To reaffirm its support for the study area of the Preston Beach townsite strategy to be shown in the Shire of Waroona's local planning strategy as an 'Area subject to Preston Beach townsite strategy'. This enables the Shire's local planning strategy to be finalised, as opposed to awaiting the final outcome of the Preston Beach townsite strategy project, which may take some time to complete.

4. To agree that a draft environmental policy statement for the coastal areas between Dawesville and Binningup will be prepared in parallel with the draft Preston Beach townsite strategy, principally by the EPA Service Unit, in conjunction with officers from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, Department of Water and relevant local governments.

If you have any further enquiries regarding the above please contact Mr Cameron Bulstrode at the Peel Region Planning Office on (08) 9586 4606.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Dawkins
Chairman
Western Australian Planning Commission

*November 2008*