

Environmental Protection from litter across the Walpole Nornalup National Park

I have taken personal responsibility for the cleaning of Highway 1 which bisects the Walpole Wilderness, on a weekly basis for the past 18 years. This work preceded Keep Australia Beautiful 'adopt a spot' programme by four years and was used as a model for its inception. Currently, it is considered the largest and longest implemented 'adopt a spot' site in WA, if not the nation.

In 2005 the town of Walpole had the confidence to declare itself 'Litter Free' and was considered to be the first to do so in Australia. Up to a quarter of a million visitors per year form their initial and final impression of the region on that Highway and so discarded litter and unsecured loads have no place in a wilderness environment.

This section of Highway 1, bisecting the Walpole Wilderness from Denmark to Manjimup, lies at the heart of the South West Edge tourism initiative and, as such, is of concern to the Minister of Tourism. It contains over twelve official rest areas which I clean on a fourteen day rotation, removing all tissues, nappies, vomit and litter. Therefore, this then becomes a concern to the Minister of the Environment; naturally the road verges fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Transport – this issue is broad-based.

In early April 2022 the Premier Mark McGowan announced the creation of a Main Roads Hub to be situated in Manjimup, employing 20 permanent staff. As I have now turned 77 and have completed the equivalent of three circumnavigations of the planet in road patrolling (at a substantial cost to myself) having created and maintained what is generally regarded as the cleanest section of Highway 1 in Australia, it is time to approach the State Government with this petition.

At this time of international concern with climate change, carbon capture and plastic pollution, the overall standards of a highway bisecting a designated wilderness area should be of concern.

As stated in the initial 'Litter Prevention Strategy' for WA, covering 2006-09, I quote:

In fact, current research suggests that an environment that is kept clean is less likely to attract litter...this strategy aims to ensure the continuation, expansion and increase in community participation.

In conclusion as stated before, I have created what is generally considered to be the cleanest comparable section of highway in Australia. It would be a tragedy to allow it to return to its original condition, namely one of the dirtiest, most littered in Western Australia.

Mr Michael Filby

2007 State Environment Awards – category 10 Litter Prevention

2008 Dame Phyllis Frost, individual award – Hobart

2010 Inaugural Waste Authority Champion WA

2010 Outstanding Service Award from the Minister of the Environment

2021 Senior Citizen of the Year Shire of Manjimup