

Deputation to Ordinary Council Meeting 26/4/2016

Tony Fowler, 10 Marie Way Kalamunda

- As President of Nature Reserves Preservation Group, (an environmental lobby group within the Shire of Kalamunda, operating for the past 27 years) I voice our concerns over the declining environmental record of the Shire, in going from an environmentally forward-thinking local Government to a reactive and complacent entity.
- I am puzzled why, given that the Green Growth Plan is to have such impact on our Shire over such a long timeframe, the Shire has not been more active in advising residents of the importance of this Plan.
- Even accepting the failure of the Department of Premier and Cabinet staff to ensure hard copy documents were delivered to Kalamunda Library in good time, for public perusal, one would have thought more effort could have been made by Shire staff and Councillors to alert the residents to this important document. Perhaps the widest-ranging and important document ever to come before this Council for endorsement.

We find the item **10.3.6** almost ‘buried’ in a very full agenda and given little more emphasis than Item **10.3.4** - ‘Review of Joint Development Assessment Panels’ and far less emphasis than Item **10.3.5** – ‘Proposed Telecommunications Mast.’

The Shire’s detailed background to this submission in the agenda, highlights the difficulties posed for those wishing to make submissions.

To briefly recap on the complexity of the topic, we have:

- Directions 2031 (2010)
- Strategic Assessment Perth Peel Region, initiated, between State and Feds. (2011) Under the EPBC Act of 1999,
- Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million (incl. NE Sub-reg. Framework) (2015),
- Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million (also 2015). This is the submission for endorsement tonight.

Adding to this complexity - the Shires 2013 Local Planning Scheme, Forrestfield North District Structure Plan, Forrestfield High Wycombe Precinct, 3 MRS amendment.

Perhaps too much is going on at the same time?

Last year, the Shire’s submission on Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million, to the Department of Planning, clearly demonstrated where the Shire’s main interests and concerns lay. Of the 23 recommendations, NONE referred directly, or indirectly, to the need to preserve the Local Natural Areas within the Shire. Nor was there any comment on the dangers of failing to protect such areas.

Given that these Local Natural Areas (2110 ha remaining in 2008) “form the focus of the Local Biodiversity Strategy”, we would have liked to see some reference to them in the 2015 submission.

Whilst that submission included environmental assessments of Investigation Areas and Sites and, “...the study suggests that adequate protection CAN be provided...through the structure planning process.” Only in the Environmental Consultants’ report is there a list of recommendations on “management and mitigation” of possible impacts.

Returning now, to the current submission.

Councillors are being requested to endorse this tonight.

I see, in this submission, the same lack of concern for the fate of the areas of natural vegetation remaining within the Shire. Little or no concern is shown for the proposed (and potential) loss of valuable habitat for endangered and vulnerable species (under the EPBC Act).

Whilst the Shire's main concerns seem centred around a lack of consultation from State Departments and lack of consideration of local schemes, plans and policies, our concerns are for the continued loss of valuable habitat under this Plan.

We echo the widespread criticism of the mapping provided. Informed comment based on these maps is virtually impossible.

We also echo the concerns of the EPA over the timing of these initiatives and have doubts that environmental concerns raised (but not addressed at this strategic level) will be effectively addressed at the local level.

I repeat, perhaps too much is going on at the same time?

Whilst other concerns over the Plan involve:

- The implications, for the environment, of streamlining development processes.
- The “switching off” of Part 9 of the EPBC Act, should the Plan go ahead, leaving the State responsible for managing the impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance

These will form part of our own submission on this Plan and do not require expansion.

I ask Councillors:

- Do you feel you have been given sufficient time to absorb all the details and implications of this submission?
- Do you feel you can endorse this submission tonight, or are there questions that remain unanswered?

Whilst admittedly, the submission is on a DRAFT Plan,

- Do you anticipate having further input to this topic when the final Plan is revealed?

For perhaps the third time in this chamber, I conclude with the final paragraph from your 2008 Local Biodiversity Strategy.

“The Shire of Kalamunda has a unique environment. By acting now in a strategic and consistent manner, this biodiverse landscape will be maintained long into the future for many generations to come.” (Conclusion. p. 104)