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4 February 2009

TO: James Trail
CC: Rory O'Brien
Giles Glasson
Karen Britza

**SUBJECT: SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, TREE REMOVALS,
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS,**

Dear James,

The Nature Reserves Preservation Group would like to thank you for the meetings with you late last year, and look forward to working with both you and Rory. We would appreciate your review and approval of the minutes which we emailed to Barbara on 19 Dec, for future reference. There are a few questions and suggestions we would like to ask as a result of recent events:

CEAC and the new Environment and Sustainability Committee:

After being advised at our recent meeting, that the replacement for CEAC, the new Environmental and Sustainability Committee, would be looking for committee members, the NRPG has just learned that the advertisement was made and nominations have closed. The advertisement has not been noted by the NRPG committee, and disappointingly, nor was NRPG (as the umbrella group for environmental concerns) notified directly of this. We hope to be able to participate regardless and would appreciate your suggestion as to how this can occur?

Tree Removals in the Township:

We notice that last week, a prominent tree was removed from the west side of the Kalamunda library. The removal of this tree follows the loss of a number of other native trees in the township over the years, which is progressively changing the streetscape and results in reduced shade and higher temperatures. It is well known that the transpiration of trees and vegetation cools the air and this is quite noticeable when travelling from the less-treed areas of High Wycombe up the hill to Kalamunda. The NRPG would appreciate knowing why the continued loss of trees has occurred, if there are plans to replace them, and discuss ways to avoid this in future?

High-density Residential Developments:

The trend over the past few years is toward infill and higher density developments, which we understand is allowed by DPI planning policy. However, the way in which these are being achieved in Kalamunda Shire is largely by single-storey self standing housing, and due to the limited size of blocks, precludes any vegetation. The NRPG believes (and Members have suggested at prior Shire forums/workshops) that 'cluster' and/or double-storey housing is an effective way to allow for the higher density while at the same time, space for significant vegetation and trees to exist. Issues with elderly residents accessing double-storey residences might be addressed by including a lift/stair elevator. We would appreciate your feedback on the potential for implementation of this?

Additionally, it is apparent that many new buildings are being constructed with black-colour roofs and no eaves. This is condemning the occupants not only to higher energy costs (and greenhouse gas emissions) but also the additional energy absorbed further increases temperatures of the local environs. How can these poor practices be allowed in light of the fact that Kalamunda Shire is part of the cities against climate change, and how can this be addressed?

Commercial & Road Developments:

New developments are tending towards very tall lighting poles and minimal vegetation. The consequence of tall lighting is significant light pollution particularly onto neighbouring residents and bushland. A recent example is the new High Wycombe shopping centre. NRPG is pleased to see that native trees have been planted in the parking lot, but it appears the height of the lighting will be above them, not only contributing unnecessarily to light pollution, but partially defeating the purpose by shading the above lighting.

An example of alternative lighting can be seen in Bassendean near the Bassendean oval.

Sincerely,

Steve Gates,
President, Nature Reserves Preservation Group