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Nature Reserves Preservation Group, Inc.		

Address: Shire of Kalamunda

Date: 19 April 2013

To: Clayton Higham, Acting Chief Executive Officer

CC: Sue Bilich, Shire President

Subject: Forthcoming referendum

Dear Clayton,

Whilst a majority of the executive is opposed to the concept of amalgamation, seeing little or no significant benefits to ratepayers or staff, our membership is largely concerned with achieving positive environmental outcomes. At an environmental level we could see benefits from an amalgamation with Shire of Mundaring.

Our neighbouring LGA in Mundaring provides, through its strategies and schemes, better and more effective protection for reserves, natural areas, corridors, greenways and linkages. On this front, despite the best efforts of Kalamunda's environmental staff, Kalamunda lags well behind Mundaring. Comparing the local planning schemes and strategies of the two authorities leaves us in no doubt as to which provide the best protection for these natural areas. NRPG's efforts to have such areas identified, clearly defined and effectively protected in Kalamunda's schemes and strategies have had little success.

In 2011, expressing our concerns to the incumbent CEO, we stated: "NRPG is deeply concerned at the lack of emphasis placed on the value of the natural environment within the Shire. Whilst many of these concerns were expressed in our submission on the Local Planning Strategy, it is necessary to reinforce the general feeling of disquiet felt by the group. Whilst the Shire has, in the past, introduced environmental initiatives, we feel that it may now be content to rest on its laurels."

The concerns remain and the comment still stands. Before promulgating any referendum advice to members, it would be appropriate to be able to include assurances that Kalamunda Shire would, if remaining a discrete entity, give the protection of our natural environment the highest priority.

Regards,

Tony Fowler
 President/Chair NRPG