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**Nature Reserves Preservation Group of Kalamunda, Inc.**

9 Dec 2024

**TO:** Dept of Planning, Lands, Heritage [regionplanningschemes@dplh.wa.gov.au](mailto:regionplanningschemes@dplh.wa.gov.au)

**CC:** Environmental Protection Authority [info@epa.dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@epa.dwer.wa.gov.au)

**SUBJECT:** Submission to Metropolitan Region Scheme Amendment 1388/57 –  
Wattle Grove South (WGS)

The NRPG makes this submission in regard to the proposed transfer of approximately 123.5 ha of land in Wattle Grove from the 'Rural' zone to 'Urban' under the MRS Amendment, to allow for future subdivision, development and use of and for residential and associated purposes.

We oppose the proposed re-zoning to "Urban" for the following reasons:

**Loss of Environmental Protection:**

The Amendment would remove environmental protection regulations for rural land, likely leading to loss of any biodiversity in the area. Furthermore, the typical density of urban developments results in very little retention of trees and vegetation.

**Hydrological Impact on Brixton St Wetlands, Kenwick Wetlands and Alison Baird Reserve:**

The surface and groundwater flows from WGS move in a south-westerly direction toward the Kenwick Wetlands and Brixton Street Wetlands, and hydrological changes threaten degradation of the nearby downslope Brixton Street Wetlands and Alison Baird Reserve.

The Brixton Street Wetlands, Kenwick Wetlands and Alison Baird reserve are already under threat from the cumulative effects of development and industrialisation all around from MKSEA developments without adequate buffers.

These critically-valuable areas, existing nowhere else on this planet, and labelled the "Jewel in the Crown of a Global Biodiversity Hotspot", are incredibly unique and will be affected by further isolation (loss of connectivity), hydrology and by increased heat island impacts. This proposed Amendment will add to the increasing cumulative threats to their survival, and at some point, this ecosystem will degrade and or collapse.

**Loss of potential wildlife corridor/s:**

Kalamunda has had a 'Wildlife Corridor Strategy' which was carefully developed to permit our wildlife to move via streams, waterways and natural-vegetation linkages. Unfortunately, over the years, many of these corridors have been lost or destroyed through successive developments and highway building occurring with little or no regard to the importance of connectivity.

Although this rural area of Wattle Grove South is not well vegetated, it still can serve to allow wildlife to move around. If this area is developed, it will be impossible for wildlife to travel as fencing, roads and other barriers are installed. Many animals inevitably end up as 'road kill', which further threatens our rapidly declining native animals and ecosystems.

Fragmentation and loss of corridors connecting natural areas is a prime cause of their eventual destruction, as well as the loss of animals which inhabit them.

#### **Increase in urban sprawl:**

Perth metropolitan plans have long called for more infill developments to reduce urban sprawl. Wattle Grove South has no public transport such as rail in the vicinity and therefore traffic congestion will increase, putting further pressure on our roads and highways. It would be significantly more beneficial to increase urban infill in areas where commuter rail network and other infrastructure already exists.

A demographic survey by former Planning Minister McTiernan in 2000 (in consultation with the Public on "Dialogue with the City") showed that 40% of the population preferred to live in medium to high density accommodation, and that the housing stock at the time which met this need was only 15%. This demonstrates that there is a significant win-win opportunity to meet that deficiency by offering multi-story housing/apartment living, in infill locations near public transport and amenities, while also improving 'liveability'.

Approving urban zoning in this location will set a precedent for further urban sprawl into surrounding rural areas, and defeat long-term strategies to reduce this problem.

#### **Urban/Commercial Development and Heat Island effect:**

Typical new developments leave little or no room for trees and vegetation to mitigate the heat island effect from the concrete and asphalt.

As the rural area currently exists, it has remnant trees and other vegetation which reduces the heating in summer in this area and surrounding areas.

Numerous studies (including those referenced in the City of Kalamunda's Urban Forest Strategy) show that areas with 5-10% tree canopy coverage can be 8-10 deg C hotter than those with 30% or more coverage, which translates into around double the air conditioning demand and energy costs. The impacts of global warming causing our climate pattern in WA to shift southwards is already resulting in higher average temperatures, which further emphasises the need to avoid and mitigate heat island effects.

Rezoning this area to urban will further increase this problem, and its impacts on surrounding areas, both populated and for nearby Brixton Street Wetlands.

Sincerely,

Steve Gates,  
President.

[admin@nrpg.org.au](mailto:admin@nrpg.org.au)

[Nature Reserves Preservation Group – in the City of Kalamunda](#)