

## **SUBMISSION**

On

Consultation Draft Native vegetation policy

For Western Australia

August 2021

While supportive of the general policy context, guiding principles, strategies, outcomes, goals and approaches I believe that the timeframe for action is too long. In the meantime native vegetation will continue to be destroyed. There is enough information to begin acting to address the destruction and decline of native vegetation in the wheatbelt immediately.

### **Purpose**

The policy

The urgent need is to prohibit further clearing of areas that have already been extensively cleared.

This policy maybe a first step but it will likely be too little too late. Take the example of the WA Wheatbelt.

The Wheatbelt of Western Australia is the most extensively cleared zone.

In 2021 land clearing continues on private and public land in the wheatbelt.

Recording and reporting the amount, location and type of vegetation being cleared in the wheatbelt should be happening on a yearly basis and the information provided to the public.

There is enough historical and current data/evidence available to immediately prioritise the remaining remnants of wheatbelt vegetation for protection.

The ideals of protecting extinction of threatened species and areas of high conservation value are important but at the same time inadequate, given the nature of what remains in the wheatbelt-“The remainder distributed among literally thousands of patches of varying sizes, shapes, positions in the landscape; biotic composition, ownership, management histories and degrees of degradation” Reference Birds of Southwestern Australia An atlas of changes in distribution and abundance of the wheatbelt fauna Saunders and Ingram

### **Scope**

Are we given to understand that revegetation using native species to address impacts of clearing is included in the policy?

## Policy statement

Second dot point-Add intergenerational equity.

An example of the challenge of sustainable native vegetation management in WA is the sandalwood industry which on its current trajectory is unsustainable with the harvesting of the resource exceeding its rate of renewal.

Third dot point- inspire and support **the whole community** not just 'various sectors to conserve and restore native vegetation' etc

Eighth dot point- Yes, improve mapping and monitoring of vegetation and availability of spatial data but in addition, more on-ground vegetation surveys are needed to better understand condition.

## Context

In the publication Science and Solutions Biodiversity published by CSIRO 2014 there is discussion of 'ecosystem services' under four broad categories; *provisioning*, the production of food, fibre and water, *regulating*, the control of climate and diseases; *supporting*, nutrient recycling and crop pollination, and *cultural*, such as spiritual and recreational benefits. I would like to see mention of the fact that the native vegetation of WA is 'culturally and spiritually significant to Aboriginal people' **and** all people.

## Table 1.

### Organisations, businesses and individuals

By 'enable' and 'support' do we mean education, extension to inform native vegetation managers on why native vegetation is important, how it can be managed etc. Can we expect to see, for example DPIRD resourced to enable officers to work in the field with land managers like farmers and LGA's to provide information on resource management threats associated with native vegetation decline, more human resources in the regions for the DBCA Land For Wildlife Off-Reserve Conservation program or similar etc ?

### Areas of State Government responsibility

- Include Road Safety under 'Transport planning and delivery' Note State of Environment report Western Australia 2007 P201
- Add Natural Heritage to this list Note State of Environment Report Western Australia 2007 P224 it stated that there was no formal state register for natural heritage-is this still the case? There should be recognition of 'natural heritage' in WA, with the potential to include bushland ecosystems, landscapes etc. Intergenerational equity-that future generations may enjoy some of the special areas of native vegetation that stand to be lost if we do not act now.

## **Goals and approaches**

viii) Add the threats of illegal clearing, altered hydrology from poorly planned groundwater drainage, disease, insect pests and weed invasion.

## **Roadmap: Priorities and opportunities**

1.4 Add DPIRD

1.6 Add DPIRD and DBCA

a) Include Regional and Sub Regional NRM Groups

b) broad acre agricultural innovation and wheatbelt ecological condition alternative to 'regenerative agriculture'

c) Add DPIRD-the spread of roadside weeds through poor road management practices/clearing of roadside vegetation is a HUGE issue for agriculture Note the GRDC publication "Emerging summer weeds are spreading far and wide within Western Australian wheatbelt-a GRDC survey

1.7 Add DBCA Include, amongst others representatives from Regional and Sub-regional NRM Groups.

3.4 Add DPIRD Much of the remaining remnants of native vegetation are on agricultural land and DPIRD should have a role in strategy development.

4.1 Add DPIRD. Seek historical information about the Remnant Vegetation Protection Scheme (30 year covenants to protect native vegetation) operated by the Department of Agriculture during the Decade of Landcare?

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