

Peel Community Briefing on the Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million Q and A

- Can you clarify: what the expected clearing of Carnaby's Black Cockatoo in ha?

Avoidance of environmental impacts had been a key consideration in the development of the draft Green Growth Plan, with major reductions in potential environmental impacts in comparison with development contemplated through the WAPC's *Directions 2031* and draft sub-regional strategies (August 2010), the *Economic and Employment Lands Strategy: non-heavy industrial* (April 2012) and the regionally significant basic raw materials mapping (Department of Mines and Petroleum, June 2012 and January 2013).

The Green Growth Plan allows for the clearing of a maximum of 9,700ha of Swan Coastal Plain feeding habitat and 24,400ha of pines habitat. However, 5,000ha of pines will be replaced in the northern plantations and areas of pines cleared as a result of basic raw materials extraction are expected to be rehabilitated, resulting in a net loss of 18,000ha of pines feeding habitat.

- How effective are offsets? I haven't seen anything that shows this method is effective?

Offsets are an accepted element of both State and Commonwealth environment policy and are created to compensate for the residual adverse impacts on the environment after measures to avoid and minimise impacts have been undertaken. Offsets can help achieve long-term environmental outcomes, for example by maintaining habitat for a species or reducing any future threats.

- Will development of the Green Plan mean "in fill" accommodation will have to increase? If infill land development will increase under the Green Growth Plan, will this not create a social problem – in so much as e.g where do children play?

The Green Growth Plan has been and will continue to be developed in collaboration with the Western Australian Planning Commission's sub-regional planning frameworks. These frameworks have a strong focus on consolidation and are intended to support an infill target of 47% by 2050 for residential development. In addition to commitments to retain native vegetation and expand the conservation reserves network, WAPC and local government policy relating to public open space will continue to apply.

- Who does the State Government supply timber to? Why?

The State Government supplies timber to a number of companies including Wesbeam Pty Ltd and Wespine, under State Agreement Acts. This timber is used to produce a range of products including housing and building materials.

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- Do the conservation commitments meet or exceed the standards set out in the State and the Commonwealth's offsets policies?

A significant number of conservation commitments are aimed at avoiding and minimizing environmental impacts in the first instance. The conservation program contains commitments aimed at addressing the residual impacts and these have been developed consistent with State and Commonwealth policy.

- Is the imminent release of GIS mapping of urban rural residential = sub-regional structure planning?

The GIS mapping to be released shortly outlines a spatial representation of the conservation and environmental commitments included in Action Plans F and G as they relate to the urban, industrial and rural residential classes of action. Mapping related to the draft sub-regional planning frameworks has already been released and is available from the Department of Planning's website.

- Why isn't the housing industry encouraged to develop different ways of building that are not dependant on sand and limestone?

The demand for basic raw materials generated by development in low lying areas was a significant consideration in developing the draft Green Growth Plan and draft WAPC sub-regional planning frameworks and influenced decisions not to support urban expansion in many low lying areas. Building construction methods are beyond the scope of this assessment and are addressed under other state policy processes. The GGP has triggered discussion of potential reforms in these areas.

- How does the streamlining of approvals allow for checking any changes e.g. movement of Carnaby's population? I.e. What are the triggers for action plan changes?

Action Plan I outlines the environmental condition monitoring program that will occur under the Green Growth Plan. In regards to the monitoring of the Carnaby's cockatoo this is proposed to occur annually and will be an extension of existing programs such as the Great Cocky Count. The Action Plan also includes 14 other monitoring programs for environmental conditions and 5 separate monitoring programs to track the performance of the Green Growth Plan.

The plan will have an adaptive management regime that allows for the Action Plans to be updated, with approval from the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment, when this need is identified under the monitoring regime.

The monitoring program and adaptive management regimes will be key influences of the five yearly review which will be conducted as part of the assurance framework in Action Plan I.

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- How will emerging effects of decreased rainfall be accommodated in the future – i.e. Drop in groundwater and effect on vegetation in Northern Jarrah Forest and Swan Coastal Plain

Both the Commonwealth and State Impact Assessment Reports include an assessment of vulnerability of threatened species and ecological communities in the Strategic Assessment Area to climate change impacts. The Western Australian Government already incorporates consideration of climate change into a number of its policies and decision making processes. The Strategic Conservation Plan includes commitments for addressing potential climate change impacts, including building resilience in ecosystems and implementing ongoing adaptive management.

- How will the public have access to information/be assured that proponents actually implement in a manner that is consistent with the class of action (and conservation commitments e.g. avoidance at the site scale)?

Action Plan I sets out the framework for the proposed monitoring and reporting activities that will be undertaken to provide assurance that the Strategic Conservation Plan for the Perth and Peel Regions is being delivered effectively. The Action Plan will be updated periodically to reflect any changes. Section 4.1 and 4.2 of Action Plan I provides specific information on what information will be captured and how it will be reported, including to the public. Section 5 describes the Compliance Program and Section 6, the suite of reporting components.

- The description of the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar site shows that we lack at least one third of the necessary data needed to inform effective decision-making. How will these data gaps be addressed? Will they be addressed before development under the Green Growth Plan commences?

The Green Growth Plan has been developed utilising the best data and resources available to government. This data has formed the basis of decisions and initiatives proposed as part of the draft Green Growth Plan for the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar site and broader Peel Harvey catchment. Submissions are welcome during the public consultation process and can assist in providing additional data and other information.

- Will the public comment period be extended if the detailed maps/spatial data are not provided to the public at least 28 days before the closing date (8 April)?

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The State Government is very conscious of the requests for the release of additional spatial mapping and a related extension to the timeframe for public submissions. Further clarification will be provided shortly.

- Is the EPBC Act 'turned off' across the whole strategic assessment area or is it turned off in the areas shown in the class of action footprints?

Based on the draft GGP documents, the intention is that Parts 7-9 of the EPBC Act will be switched off inside the class of action footprint. This means that projects in this area which meet the definition of the Class of Action will not require referral, assessment and approval under Parts 7-9 once the GGP is in operation. Importantly, it also means that proponents will not be able to seek an alternative conservation outcome to that specified in the GGP for those areas.

Proposals within the Perth and Peel area outside of the Classes of Action will continue to be subject to Parts 7-9 of the EPBC Act once the Green Growth Plan is in operation.

- How will the State's financial situation affect the GGP?

The State's financial situation has been a consideration in the development of the draft Green Growth Plan, including in the design of a cost effective conservation program. Examples of this include targeting a reduction of nutrient inputs to the estuaries at their source (rather than once they are in our waterways) through mandatory soil testing and delivering biodiversity outcomes through reservation and management of existing native habitat rather than through large scale revegetation, which is several orders of magnitude more expensive.

- When will the structure plans come out?

The Western Australian Planning Commission's final Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million sub-regional plans are anticipated to be released in the second half of 2016. The final documents will be closely informed by environmental considerations raised as part of the Green Growth Plan.

- What is the cost of managing this new conservation reserve on a per/ha basis?

The cost of managing the new conservation reserves on a per/ha basis varies significantly across the Perth and Peel Regions. Factors that can determine the cost of managing conservation reserves include the area's biodiversity values, existing and future threats and disturbance, community use, and location in relation to population centres and availability of goods and services. Also where the Green Growth Plan has placed specific additional management requirements on a new area (e.g. to actively improve the condition or quality of an area), this additional level of work will require funding. The government is currently refining estimates of the likely management costs for managing the proposed conservation reserves under the Green Growth Plan.

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- Will funding also extend to existing conservation reserves e.g. Lake Clifton and the endangered Thrombolite community?

Funding may be made available to existing conservation reserves, particularly where areas are degraded and the GGP has identified the requirement to improve the condition of the reserve. Also where the GGP has placed extra management requirements on an area (i.e. in addition to 'standard' management actions), this additional level of work will require funding. Additional funding for reserves that form part of a Ramsar site, such as Lake Clifton, is being considered under the GGP.

- Acquisitions for Bush Forever – does it expand to Peel Bioplan?

The Green Growth Plan proposes the creation of the Peel Regional Park which will include significant Peel Regionally Significant Natural Areas. Other Peel Regionally Significant Natural Areas that contain specific conservation values might also be considered for acquisition/transfer to the conservation estate under the GGP as part of the 20,000ha of private land acquisitions proposed as part of Phase 2 Conservation reserves in the GGP's Conservation Program. The government is considering funding options to implement the GGP including the acquisition of land. A funding options paper is being drafted and is planned to be released for public comment.

- Funding – [will there be an] increase in DPAW resources? One of the key benefits of the initial package of sites is stated as "all areas will be protected with secure conservation tenure and managed for long term conservation". Will the state commit adequate funding to do so?

The State is currently investigating funding options for the implementation of the Green Growth Plan. It is proposed that a variety of funding mechanisms will be utilised to ensure adequate funding towards the ongoing management of the new conservation reserves and delivery of other elements of the Conservation Reserve Program.

- The public's ability to evaluate the success of the draft Green Growth Plan relies largely on the detail. Will the overarching objectives and outcomes be made more specific and measurable in the final version of the documents?

Specific and measurable conservation commitments can be found in Action Plan F (MNES conservation commitments) and Action Plan G (State environmental commitments). Action Plan I details the Assurance framework and the monitoring and reporting obligations required of the State to give confidence to the Commonwealth that the Green Growth Plan objectives and commitments will be met. By endorsing the Green Growth Plan, the Commonwealth has agreed

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that the Green Growth Plan effectively satisfies obligations under the EPBC Act for all future development within the classes of action. It is likely further refinement of the outcomes, objectives and commitments will occur in the finalisation of the GGP.

- Can you confirm the approach for how proposals that are at variance to the classes of action will be dealt with through the state planning and environmental approval process?

Proposals that fall within the classes of action that do not conform to the processes and commitments contained within the Green Growth Plan will not proceed. Proposals that fall outside the classes of action will be required to be referred to the Commonwealth and State environment regulators for individual assessment, as currently occurs.

- How will the community have confidence that the areas outside the class of action footprints won't be developed?

Development proposals that fall outside of the classes of action, for example horticulture, can still occur. These proposals are required to be referred to the Commonwealth and State environment regulators for individual assessment and approval. These developments do not fall under the streamlined approvals proposed under the Green Growth Plan. It is expected that the Commonwealth and State regulators will take Green Growth Plan outcomes and objectives into consideration in the assessment of proposals that fall outside the classes of action.

- Carnaby's Cockatoos are the only species specifically mentioned as beneficiaries of the Conservation Program (see 3.4 Measures to Support Carnaby's Cockatoo). Why weren't the other black cockatoos (Baudin's and Forest Red-tailed) and other endangered and threatened ecological communities and species – flora and fauna – included too?

Commitments have been made in action plans F, G and H that are aimed at all MNES and State environmental values present within the strategic assessment area. Many of these commitments can be achieved through broad offsite measures such as the creation of conservation reserves and management of those reserves which will ensure adequate protection of multiple species which is a major focus of the conservation program. Specific mention of the Carnaby's Cockatoo was made in the conservation program due to the scale of impacts proposed and the expected extent of interest in this particular species.

- What will be done to compensate for the significant impacts on other conservation significant species as a result of the proposed developments, in terms of replacing lost habitat?

A range of broad measures are proposed within the Conservation Program to ensure commitments are met for all MNES and State environmental values that are the subject of the strategic assessment. This includes protecting large contiguous areas of remnant ecosystems in

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secure conservation tenure, management of these conservation areas and targeted on-ground measures such as rehabilitation and replanting.

- Once approved, will proponents still be required to refer their proposal under the EPBC Act? And will the decision-making function be delegated to the state under the proposed approval bilateral?

Please refer to answer to: “Is the EPBC Act ‘turned off’ across the whole strategic assessment area or is it turned off in the areas shown in the class of action footprints?”

- How will implementation ensure management resources allocation is maintained over time?

The State is in the process of determining the implementation mechanisms and governance arrangements for the Green Growth Plan. This involves identifying appropriate funding mechanisms to ensure the commitments within the Green Growth Plan will be met over the 30 years that the plan is in operation, including the ongoing management of new and expanded conservation reserves.

- Conservation corridors - are they based on rigorous scientific evidence?

Part C of the Commonwealth Impact Assessment Report details the methodology used in the selection of areas to expand the conservation reserves network within the Perth and Peel Regions and surrounds. The Green Growth Plan has enabled the State to make strategic decisions about where development can and cannot occur. If endorsed, the Green Growth Plan will result in a contiguous network of large conservation areas and corridors throughout the Perth and Peel regions and surrounds. The ability to consider cumulative environmental impacts at the front end of the next 30 years of development and under take the landscape scale conservation planning that underpins the GGP would not be possible under the current system.

- When will a similar plan be applied south of Waroona to Shire of Harvey and beyond?

There is no current commitment to extend the strategic assessment to other areas of the South West of Western Australia.

- Won't this plan simply give developers carte blanche to do more development?

Future growth of the Perth and Peel regions to a population of 3.5 million is inevitable. If the Green Growth Plan is not endorsed, developments will occur as they currently do, in an ad-hoc fashion whereby overall cumulative impacts to species cannot be identified and addressed. The strategic approach proposed under the Green Growth Plan ensures that environmental impacts

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are identified and adequately addressed early in time allowing landscape scale decision making to occur.

- Will developers still be required to provide 10% of the development for public open space? If so, is this included within the “Green Plan” or is it in excess to such plan?

Existing requirements under the Planning and Development Act still apply, in addition to the obligations that need to be met under the Green Growth Plan.

- Mandatory soil testing will only result in a decrease of nutrient export if the landholder acts on the advice of the agronomist following testing. Under the proposed regulation, there is no compunction for the landholder to do so. What measures will the State use to make sure the soil testing activities result in a measurable change in nutrient loads on the ground?

The proposed program consists of four parts; soil testing, agronomic advice, reporting, and an extension program. Landholders covered by the regulations every three years will be required to:

1. Undertake and submit a valid soil test;
2. Receive and submit independent agronomic advice; and
3. Report fertiliser application rates.

It is also proposed that the regulation will be accompanied by an extension program. Extension programs involve collaborative and peer to peer work with farmers to improve understanding of farming best practice.

Previous voluntary programs indicate that where soil testing is undertaken in combination with agronomic advice and extension programs, the majority of landholders act on the advice. The benefit of the proposed option is it allows farmers to continue with on farm decision-making but with significantly better information to make these decisions. Research suggests that if phosphorus was applied based on soil testing calibrated for local soil types then phosphorous losses from agriculture in these coastal plain catchments could be reduced by 25%.

Government has chosen to propose an approach through MST that involves working with landholders to achieve positive outcomes for both the environment (less fertiliser runoff and leaching) and for the farmer (potential cost saving). If the health of the environment was to continue to decline due to agricultural runoff, government could revisit this program and consider alternative management approaches.

A number of measures will be undertaken through the monitoring and assurance framework, including the monitoring of water quality and estuary health of the Peel Harvey and Swan Canning Catchments. These monitoring programs will be an indication of the fertiliser runoff entering these systems and the efficacy of the related conservation commitments set out in the GGP.