



20 August 2009.

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Approvals and Wildlife Division

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

GPO Box 787

CANBERRA ACT 2601

**EPBC reference number 2009/5031**

**Main Roads Western Australia/Transport-land/Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road/Roe Highway extension/Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road, WA.**

The Urban Bushland Council, WA, (UBC) is grateful for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. We are strenuously opposed to the proposed extension of Roe Highway (Stage 8) through North Lake and Bibra Lake, part of the Beeliar Regional Park and submit that the whole proposal be rejected outright.

The Urban Bushland Council endorses and commends to you the comprehensive submission prepared by the North Lake Residents Association. Further we draw your attention to their informative website.

## **SITE OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**The significance of the site is recognised in the following.**

- 1. Bush Forever site 244:** These are regionally and nationally significant bushland and wetland areas and are recognised as such by the State Government as Bush Forever sites and in Beeliar Regional Park. The area of North Lake and Bibra Lake and the environment around the lakes is invaluable and irreplaceable.
- 2. Register of the National Estate:** North Lake and Bibra Lake have been interim listed on the Register of the National Estate by the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) because of their environmental and heritage significance, *file number - 5/12/007/0027*.
- 3. EPBC Act.** Bush Forever site 244 is subject to protection under the EPBC Act (see later section)
- 4. 1988 assessment:** In 1988, the State Planning Commission and Main Roads Department of Western Australia commissioned a report which looked at different Roe Highway options through North Lake and Bibra Lake. The report clearly asserts that this area is of national importance in its comparison with Kings Park and states the following on its conservation values:  
*“As a fairly functioning system within the metropolitan area, suitable as a conservation reserve, the study area is without parallel. **Kings Park** barely fulfills this aspect and many other locations are fragmented, small, isolated and structurally simple.”*  
(Sinclair Knight & Partners, LePROVOST Semeniuk & Chalmer, 1988, p29)

## 5. EPA Bulletin 1088 (2002):

It is unacceptable that Main Roads WA referral for the Roe Hwy extension in section 7.3, has neither acknowledged nor mentioned any reports, including the 2002 EPA Assessment Bulletin 1088 of the Roe Highway, Indigenous Reports and their own previous Roe Highway reports (eg as above) which are all relevant to the proposal.

Reports from Government Agencies recommend that the proposal **should not proceed**, and yet in the West Australian newspaper of 20 August 2009, there is an advertisement from The Government of Western Australia, Main Roads and industry partner AECOM under the logo of SouthmetroConnect.

The advertisement states that *the project development has commenced with the forming of our Project Development Team, 'South Metro Connect.'* This development team, *made up of personnel from Main Roads WA and AECOM, has been established to specifically work on the Roe Highway Extension project to develop design options, determine a preferred alignment and continue with the approvals processes already initiated by Main Roads WA. These processes will be undertaken through engaging the community and stakeholders at the highest level.*

The UBC is aware that developers proceed with plans concurrently as environmental referrals are made and are being considered, but the not unreasonable conclusion is that the proponents of this project are blinkered to environmental destruction, Aboriginal heritage loss and loss of ecological linkages.

The advertisement goes on to state under "What this means to you";

*You the community will play an important role in the project and your views will help us in shaping the design and alignment of the extension to produce an excellent outcome.*

**The only excellent outcome will be no extension of Roe Highway.** The tone of the advertisement is totally unacceptable and presumes that the project will proceed. Under the WA Environmental Protection Act for s 38 referrals, the decision-making authority (in this case Main Roads WA) must await authorization by the (State) Minister and *'shall not make any decision that could have the effect of causing or allowing the proposal to be implemented'* until the assessment process is completed. Main Roads WA should not be preparing advertisements as above.

Whilst this is not a matter of consideration under the EPBC Act, it is relevant background concerning precipitous action by Main Roads in an area regarded by the community as conservation lands and which are formally recognised as significant by the State Government by inclusion in Bush Forever and current management as conservation areas.

## Wetlands and acidification

As the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is aware, at least 80% of our wetlands have been destroyed due to clearing and infilling. Much of the remaining wetlands are heavily modified. So the wetlands which remain must be valued and protected. North Lake, Bibra Lake and Horse Paddock Swamp are all protected under the 'Environmental Protection (Swan Coastal Plain) Lakes Policy 1992'. Horse Paddock Swamp is entirely a Conservation Category Wetland. Roe Swamp is part CCW and part Multiple Use Wetland.

Whether the lakes are part Conservation Category Wetlands, part Resource Enhancement Wetlands and/or part Multiple Use Wetlands, is not a matter of degree as to the need for protection. The intersection of the chain of wetlands by a 'highway or freeway standard road' would have a huge and devastating impact.

Disturbance of Acid Sulphate soils in the wetlands is another significant factor which would have very significant impacts on both aquatic and terrestrial flora and fauna. Acidification on

Bassendean landforms is a major environmental issue which is not receiving the attention it deserves. Both Bibra and North Lakes are sites of high risk and this proposal would have severe impacts. Such high risk sites are best left undisturbed and this is reason alone for the proposal to be rejected.

Engineering solutions are inferred in the referral, but the impact would still be totally unacceptable.

### **Bush Forever site 244, North Lake and Bibra Lake, North Lake/Bibra Lake**

- This site is “subject to protection under the Commonwealth EPBC Act 1999” (Bush Forever, Vol 2 p245)
- The Roe Highway Extension will dissect Bush Forever Site 244.

*North Lake, Bibra Lake, Bush Forever Site 244 and Beeliar Regional Park are all Environmentally Sensitive Areas. (Source: Government of Western Australia, 2000) (Referral of proposed action.)*

- The site is also part of Greenway 90.

Bush Forever is a whole of government-endorsed policy. Protecting Bush Forever sites from development should be a priority of government.

As the EPA Bulletin 1088 February 2003, page 10, states

*The vegetation within this area is varied and complex, with the overall ecological condition considered to be reasonable. The vegetation within this area is not well represented within the eastern chain of the Beeliar Wetlands. As a result, it is considered to be regionally significant in relation to its structural complexity, floristic assemblages, gradation from wetland to upland as well as the ecological pattern it represents.*

### **NATIONALLY LISTED SPECIES**

- **Carnaby's Cockatoo** *Calyptorhynchus latirostris* EPBC status – EN
- **Baudin's Cockatoo** *Calyptorhynchus baudinii* EPBC status – VU
- **Carpet Python** *Morelle spilota imbricate* EPBC status – P4
- **Black-striped Snake** *Neelaps calonotos (Vermicella calanotos)* EPBC status – P3
- **Lined Skink** *Lerista lineate* EPBC status – P3
- **Graceful Sun Moth** *Synemon gratiosa* EPBC status – EN

*(Department of Environment & Conservation (2009b) Threatened Fauna Database; DEWHA Protected Matters Search Tool <http://www.environment.gov.au>)*

### **Carnaby's Cockatoo**

North Lake bushland was assigned as an offset for loss of bushland for the Fiona Stanley Hospital. Carnaby's Cockatoos use the bushland for feeding and as so much bushland, especially Banksia woodlands and Eucalypt forests, has been and still is being cleared, Carnaby's Cockatoos are being picked up starving. (Glenn Dewhurst pers. comm.2008).

Carnaby's cockatoos (listed under the EPBC Act as endangered) are a Perth icon species and their numbers are in serious decline. Over the last eight decades, the population size has declined by more than one half. (Gnangara Sustainability Strategy bulletin 14)

Work on Carnaby's Cockatoos by Geoff Barrett, Regional Ecologist, Swan Region DEC, in collaboration with Birds Australia, has indicated that where pine trees are removed, numbers of Carnaby's Cockatoo decline. This research was only started in March 2009 and we will look to results yet to be published as to effects of bushland clearing on numbers of Carnaby's Cockatoos.

However it is obvious that Carnaby's are losing large areas of feeding habitat with the clearing of Pines on the Gnangara Mound and elsewhere in the Perth region. Pine clearing is now being accelerated in order to control the European House Borer. Light and noise pollution, hazards from traffic and loss of feeding and roosting areas are bound to affect Carnaby's Cockatoos. Thus the UBC advocates that there be no more clearing of natural bushland habitat for Carnaby's (as well as being habitat for another score of small resident bird species under threat in the Perth region)

## **Migratory Species**

### **1. International migratory species**

North Lake and Bibra Lake have many recorded international migratory birds that come under the JAMBA, CAMBA and ROKAMBA International Governments Agreements and therefore their habitat at North lake and Bibra Lake should be protected by the EPBC Act:

- Cattle Egret *Ardeola ibis* JAMBA, CAMBA
- White Egret *Egretta alba* JAMBA, Red-Necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata* JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA
- Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA
- Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA
- Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA
- Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* JAMBA,
- Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta* JAMBA,
- Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* JAMBA,
- Little Greenshank *Tringa stagnatilis* JAMBA,
- Great Egret *Ardea alba* CAMBA
- White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* CAMBA
- Great Egret *Egretta alba*, (*Ardea alba*) CAMBA
- Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* CAMBA
- Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* JAMBA, CAMBA, ROKAMBA

Reference: *North Lake Birds 1980 – 2002* Wynton Maddeford  
*Birds Australia / W.E.C Birdwatching Group North & Bibra Lake*, Shaw M. 2005-2009  
*Wetlands Conservation Society*, Norm Godfrey and Jennifer Higbid  
*Sinclair Knight & Partners, LePROVOST Semeniuk & Chalmer*, 1988, p22.  
*The Cockburn Wetlands: An Environmental Study*. Murdoch University for National Estates and Town of Cockburn. Newman, P. (1976) p48

### **2. National migratory species**

The following listed species deserve to have their habitat protected at both Lakes:

- Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops omatus*,
- White Ibis
- Straw-necked Ibis
- Yellow-billed Spoonbill
- White-headed Stilt
- Red-necked Avocet *Recurvirostra novaehollandiae*
- Black-fronted Dotterel *Charadius melanops*

- Grey Teal
- Blue-winged Shoveler
- Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*
- Australian Wood Duck *Chenonetta jubata*
- Mountain Duck
- Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

*Reference: The Cockburn Wetlands: An Environmental Study. Murdoch University for National Estates and Town of Cockburn. Newman, P. (1976) p48*  
*North Lake Birds 1980 – 2002 Wynton Maddeford*  
*Birds Australia / W.E.C Birdwatching Group North & Bibra Lake, Shaw M. 2005-2009*

### **Loss of fauna, vegetation, flora and fungi**

Any further loss of bushland and wetlands, including water contamination, is to be condemned. Threats to the natural heritage of Beeliiar Wetlands have been documented.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Because of the national significance of the sites in the Beeliiar Regional Park, the UBC believes that the proposal will have an unacceptable environmental impact of national significance. We therefore recommend that the Minister for the Environment Hon Peter Garrett rejects the proposal outright as environmentally unacceptable.*

*Further, this proposal was rejected by the former State Labor Government in response to the overwhelming environmental risks and impacts and the incredible community opposition to construction of a highway through highly valued wetlands. The current Liberal Premier is proposing to reverse this and waste millions of taxpayers funds on a project of nothing less than massive environmental destruction. The UBC implores DEWHA to bring this sequence of events to the attention of Minister Garrett.*

**We can only state that the proposal for Stage 8 of Roe Highway and the drive to get this unnecessary road built is extremely concerning.**

**Well might Terry Pearce, Project Manager Main Roads state that “Main roads expects that this project will generate a considerable amount of public interest”. This public interest will not be focussed on ‘the project scope, road alignment and width, and construction methodologies’ but on “No Roe Highway, stage 8”.**

Representatives of the Urban Bushland Council are happy to meet with you if DEWHA Officers are coming to Perth. I may be contacted directly on phone 08 9271 5707 or by leaving a message in our office 08 9420 7207.

Thankyou for your consideration,

Yours sincerely

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