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**Submission to Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage  
on the Metropolitan Region Scheme (MRS)  
Amendments 1404/41: Roe 8 Remainder and Roe 9**

The Urban Bushland Council (UBC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the WAPC rezoning proposal for the Roe 8 and Roe 9 Corridor. We note that this proposal is to rezone small fragments of land as **Parks and Recreation** and the remainder of the corridor as **Urban**.

UBC is the peak WA community organization for urban bushland recognition and protection. UBC is an incorporated, not for profit organization registered as a charity. We are a voluntary group with an active membership of almost 90 volunteer Friends groups and an additional 100 supporter members, all with a common interest in conservation and protection of urban bushland across WA.

UBC calls on the WA government to adopt a more visionary approach to the Cockburn Green Corridor in line with its own Native Vegetation Policy to:

- **Conserve** and protect all existing native vegetation along the Roe 8/9 corridor, and
- **Restore** ecosystems along the corridor to create viable ecological connectivity.

The UBC strongly supports the community's expressed wishes for a green corridor to create a vibrant and connected nature link from the Beelihar Wetlands to the Indian Ocean, restoring ecological function to the remnant and fragmented bushland and wetlands.

UBC joins with many other conservation groups and members of the public to urge the State Government to:

1. Rezone the **ENTIRE Roe 8/9 corridor as Parks and Recreation (P&R)**. While we acknowledge that the proposal includes several slices of land to be rezoned P&R land, this is not enough.
2. **Establish an ecological green corridor (Wetlands to Waves)** extending from the Beelihar Wetlands to the Indian Ocean and incorporated into the **Beelihar Regional Park**.
3. Incorporate the land at the intersections of Forrest Road with North Lake Road and Stock Road into the Green Corridor and rezone as P&R. This land is some of the highest quality bushland along the Roe 8/9 corridor and **MUST NOT** be cleared or disturbed.
4. Extend the Green Corridor to incorporate the land in the Fremantle Rockingham Access Corridor (at the north and western edge of Manning Park) and rezone P&R.
5. Comply with local, state, federal and international environmental legislation, agreements, policies, and guidelines that affect our urban ecology (see below).
6. Identify and protect Aboriginal heritage and cultural values in the area.

## RATIONALE

The Cockburn Green Corridor (Roe 8/9) offers a unique opportunity to implement the [WA Native Vegetation policy](#) to:

**Conserve:** *Protect native vegetation from harm, loss or change (and)*

**Restore:** *Supporting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed. Includes revegetation, rehabilitation, repair of ecosystem processes and management of threats.*

We note that in the [DPLH Preliminary Consultation](#) in 2022, 75% of respondents commented on the need to “protect the environment” and more than 50% “advocated for a wildlife corridor”.

The Cockburn Green Corridor vision recognises this community support, and will provide benefits to all in perpetuity:

1. It has **unique native vegetation** that has been largely lost from greater Perth. The corridor contains seven distinct ecological zones including wetlands, paperbark forest, banksia/tuart woodlands and three dune systems, much of which is in good condition. (Source: R. Zelinova paper). It **MUST** be protected.
2. Within the reserve there exist two Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) protected under the Federal *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* and the *WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*:
  - **Tuart woodlands** are listed as Critically Endangered (EPBC) – Mapping of the area by Cate Tauss has identified around 20ha of Threatened Tuart woodlands on both sides of Forrest Road and in the Blackwood Road bush. Another 5ha containing Tuarts is found at Dixon Park and Clontarf Hill.
  - **Banksia woodlands** of the Swan Coastal Plains are listed as Endangered (EPBC) – Several banksia species live throughout the corridor and sustain thousands of birds, reptiles and insects.
3. Native vegetation in the area supports the survival of several **Threatened and Endangered species** (*EPBC Act 1999*), especially Black Cockatoos, and 52 other bird species that depend on large areas of connected vegetation. The area also contains populations of rare and threatened species such as quenda and ringtail possums and possibly chudditch.
4. **The Carnaby's and Forest Red-Tailed Black Cockatoos** will greatly benefit from this green corridor. The increased habitat will support the Carnaby's recovery plan and habitat restoration projects (such as the Keep Carnaby's Flying project at Murdoch University). A Cockburn Green Corridor is exactly what Birdlife WA research demonstrates is needed, that Carnaby's black cockatoos will fly further just so they can fly over bushland.
5. If restored as a strong ecological linkage, the Corridor will support genetic exchange for more resilient flora and fauna species in line with the [national standards for ecological restoration](#) (Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia, Edition 2.2, 2021). Professor Kingsley Dixon's [presentation](#) and the recovery wheel is available on the [UBC website](#).)

## CONTEXT – LAWS, REGULATIONS, POLICIES PLANS

The call for a Cockburn Green Corridor is also in line with a vast range Local, State, Federal and International laws, regulations, policies and plans.

### Local Government

#### **Planning & Development Act 2005 (WA)**

Schedule 7 outlines valid local planning strategies, including: *‘The conservation of the natural environment of the scheme area, including the protection of natural resources, the preservation of trees, vegetation and other flora and fauna, and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.’*

#### **City of Cockburn**

- [Public Open Space Strategy](#) (2014-2024) supports ecological corridors and standards expected of developers when rehabilitating sites.
- [Sustainability Policy](#) (June 2021) says: *“Council will protect strategically identified remnant bushland, wetlands, the coastal environment, **ecological corridors** and associated eco-systems to ensure the integrity of these systems is conserved and enhanced for future generations.”*
- [Natural Areas Management Plan](#) and [Urban Forest Strategy](#) identify existing and potential ecological corridors within the LGA.
- Supports the Wetlands Centre in the Beeliar Park Precinct.

#### **Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA)**

WALGA policies encourage biodiversity conservation:

- [Guidance for the Integration of Biodiversity Conservation into Local Planning Strategies and Schemes](#)
- The WALGA Perth Biodiversity Project used a mapping framework to identify priority natural areas for biodiversity conservation and connectivity. Using this framework, a report published in 2020 (R. Zelinova “Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor proposal in the context of regional connectivity planning”) concluded that the Roe 8/9 road reservation was the best option for a connected green corridor in the south metropolitan suburbs.

### State Government

#### [Native Vegetation Policy 2022](#)

The Native Vegetation Policy commits the government to a net gain in native vegetation, through conservation and restoration of natural areas. Currently this is not happening, and WA is experiencing a *net loss* of native vegetation and biodiversity. A net gain requires a halt to land clearing and serious efforts to restore native vegetation. The Cockburn Green Corridor offers a unique opportunity to implement the policy: *To protect and enhance native bushland with the intent of long-term protection of biodiversity and environmental values.*

#### [Better Urban Forest Planning – Perth and Peel](#)

The WA Planning Commission has developed a tree canopy mapping tool and guidelines to assist better Urban Forest Planning.

#### [Perth to Peel @3.5million](#)

The aims of The Perth and Peel@ 3.5 million (2018) planning strategy include to “protect areas with regional conservation and landscape values” and “encourage and guide increased connectivity through an integrated green network”.

### [Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016](#)

The Biodiversity Conservation Act provides protection for threatened species and ecological communities, including penalties for illegal actions.

### [State Planning Policy 7.0 Design of the Built Environment Liveable Neighbourhoods](#)

The distinctive characteristics of a local area include its prominent natural and built features, social, economic and environmental conditions, the overall qualities of its built environment, local Aboriginal culture and history and significant post-settlement heritage.

Restoring natural and Aboriginal Heritage here as a functional green corridor restores a sense of place which has been largely lost due to urbanisation.

### [State Planning Policy 2.8 Bushland Policy for the Perth Metropolitan Region](#)

Aim: To protect and enhance native bushland with the intent of long-term protection of biodiversity and environmental values.

Seeks to protect and manage significant urban bushland, including Bush Forever sites, and assist conservation planning and assessment.

### [Conservation & Land Management Act 1984 \(WA\)](#)

Enables sites to be designated as conservation parks (Section 6.4 and 8B.2). The entire Cockburn Corridor should be granted conservation status.

Relevant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage (ACH) legislation. Note UBC is aware of the progress to repealing the *AHAC Act 2021* with Amendments to the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

Several registered sites are located on the corridor and within the Fremantle-Rockingham Access road extension and must be protected:

- Bellion Drive Hill is a registered indigenous women's site
- Clontarf Hill and Dixon Park Precinct are registered Aboriginal site 18322
- Connecting the Beeliar wetlands to the coast is a significant statement for protecting a traditional cultural Noongar route in suburbia which is important to all West Australians, particularly first nations people.

### [Environmental Protection Act 1986 \(amended Dec 2021\)](#)

The Environmental Protection Act seeks "the prevention, control and abatement of pollution and environmental harm, for the conservation, preservation, protection, enhancement and management of the environment..."

Relevant EPA resources are:

- Schedule 5: Principles for clearing native vegetation
- [Statement of Environmental Principles, Factors and Objectives](#) (October 2021)
- [EPA Guidance for planning and development: Protection of naturally vegetated areas in urban and peri-urban areas](#) (December 2021).

## **The Water Corporation**

The Water Corporation is working with Naturelink Perth and others to promote green corridors and healthy streams along Perth's drains and waterways.

## **Federal Government**

### [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act \(EPBC\) 1999](#)

The EPBC Act includes directories of listed threatened species and listed threatened ecological communities. The Cockburn Green Corridor contains two Threatened Ecological Communities ([banksia woodlands](#) and [tuart woodlands](#)) and habitat for several threatened species. The EPBC

guidelines address both protection and restoration actions to increase the remaining extent, condition and landscape scale connectivity (including with other surrounding native vegetation types).

#### **Minister for the Environment Plibersek's commitments:**

- Dec 2022 – Pledged to implement the [Samuels Review of the EPBC Act \(2019\)](#) to enact stronger laws and a stronger Agency to protect the environment.
- Oct 2022 - Launched an updated [Threatened Species Action Plan](#) that aims for 'no new extinctions'. Based on [the 2019 Wintle Report](#).

#### [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(AIHW\)](#)

AIHW is a Federal government agency producing information to support better policy and service delivery for better community health and wellbeing. A July 2022 report found that: Nature provides:

- **health benefits** by filtering harmful air pollution;
- **economic benefits** through avoided incidences of disease and health care costs; and
- **improved physical activity** that can lead to better physical and mental health.

### **International Context**

Australia is party to several global agreements committing to halt the dangerous loss of biodiversity with the United Nations, the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), International Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and RAMSAR Convention of Wetland Protection.

UN COP15 Biodiversity Conference (Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework) adopted [an agreement to protect](#) 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030, **to restore** degraded ecosystems, and to end extinctions by 2050. The Australian Government led the way.

2021-2030 is the [UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration](#) that aims to prevent, halt **and reverse** the degradation of ecosystems across the world.

The standard text is [International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration](#) (Society for Ecological Restoration, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2019).

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The Urban Bushland Council calls on the government to listen to the community and deliver on its policies including the WA Native Vegetation Policy by:

1. Rezoning the **ENTIRE Roe 8/9 corridor as Parks and Recreation (P&R)**.
2. **Establishing an ecological green corridor** (Wetlands to Waves) extending from the Beelihar Wetlands to the Indian Ocean and incorporated into the **Beelihar Regional Park**.
3. Incorporating the land at the intersections of Forrest Road with North Lake Road and Stock Road into the Green Corridor and rezone as P&R.
4. Extending the Green Corridor to incorporate the land in the Fremantle Rockingham Access Corridor (at the north and western edge of Manning Park) and rezone P&R.
5. Complying with local, state, federal and international environmental legislation, agreements, policies, and guidelines that affect our urban ecology.
6. Identifying and protect Aboriginal heritage and cultural values in the area.

The UBC supports and strongly commends to you the comprehensive submission made by the Cockburn Community Wildlife Corridor Inc (CCWC ), which proudly is also one of our member groups. As you are aware, CCWC has contributed significant knowledge, expertise, time, hands-on care and voluntary dedication as local community members to the City of Cockburn for many years.

We also welcome the opportunity to further discuss our vision.

Yours sincerely

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