

Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 Million

Future Use of Pine Plantations on the Gnangara Mound

As part of the Perth and Peel Strategic Assessment, the State Government is seeking Commonwealth approval for the harvesting of pines at the Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations.

The draft Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million (Green Growth Plan) outlines a strategic approach to the future land use of the Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations which balances multiple objectives, including:

- improved groundwater recharge to meet demands for drinking water supply and to support groundwater dependent ecosystems;
- compliance with contractual obligations for timber supply under State Agreements;
- availability of Carnaby's cockatoo habitat;
- supply of future urban and industrial land to meet the needs of the growing population; and
- supply of basic raw materials.

Water Supply

In 1996, the State Government approved the progressive harvesting and non-replacement of 23,000 hectares (ha) of pines at the Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations to increase water recharge to the Gnangara Mound. The Gnangara groundwater system is Perth's largest water source and provides approximately 30 percent of Perth's drinking water as well as water for agriculture, public open space, domestic gardens and water to support ecosystems such as lakes, wetlands and Banksia woodlands. Improved groundwater recharge to the Gnangara Mound is critical to supporting these varied demands for water.

Following harvesting of the pines, the draft Green Growth Plan proposes to convert 16,875 ha of the plantation area to low water use vegetation in order to maximise groundwater recharge. These areas are likely to have some recreational and other community uses that are compatible with the low water use vegetation and the requirement to protect the drinking water source.

The Gnangara Mound area supports many matters of national environmental significance other than Carnaby's cockatoo as well as State environmental values. The majority of these values are groundwater dependent, such as the aquatic root mat community in the Yanchep caves and wetlands and their associated flora and fauna. The future land use proposed under the draft Green Growth Plan will improve groundwater levels across significant areas of the Gnangara Mound, which is expected to benefit these values.

Timber Supply Obligations

Following the decision to remove the pines at the Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep plantations, the State concluded State Agreements for the sale of the harvested timber. Since 2004, the pine plantations have been progressively harvested to meet timber supply obligations under these agreements. By 1 January 2017 there will be approximately 8,000 – 8,500ha of plantation remaining, most of which is scheduled to be harvested by the State prior to 2020 as part of the supply of softwood under a State Agreement with Wesbeam Limited.



Carnaby's Cockatoo Habitat

Widespread clearing of Banksia woodlands, the predominant food source for Carnaby's cockatoo, has accelerated since the 1950's. The pine plantations have progressively replaced Banksia woodlands as a major food source for cockatoos in the region, mitigating some of the loss of native habitat.

The harvesting of pines in the Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep plantations is predicted to have significant impacts on Carnaby's cockatoo. These impacts are described in Chapter 15 of the draft Green Growth Plan's EPBC Act Strategic Impact Assessment Report.

To compensate for some of the loss of Carnaby's habitat associated with the harvesting of pines, 5,000ha of pines will be replaced by replanting pines in the Yanchep plantation area primarily for the purpose of cockatoo foraging habitat or through other mechanisms.

Further information regarding measures to support Carnaby's cockatoo are included in Action Plans E and H and the 'Carnaby's cockatoo' fact sheet.

Future Urban and Industrial Land Supply

Under the draft Green Growth Plan, 1,175ha of land will be investigated for future urban and industrial development in the plantation area. The sites that have been identified represent a logical extension of the development front and will further consolidate the northern metropolitan population, stimulate economic activity in the north-east and north-west subregions and improve the cost effectiveness of meeting demands for upgraded and new transport infrastructure in the area.

Action Plan E indicates where this development is allowed to occur. Urban and industrial development in the plantation areas may not take place for several years and in the interim this land will be retained as State forest tenure and managed in order to maximise groundwater recharge.

Although urban and industrial development on the Gnangara Mound is expected to increase groundwater recharge compared to other activities such as pine plantations, it is recognised that there is a need to

manage the risks to ground water quality in these areas that can arise from the introduction of more people, houses and infrastructure. Any development in these areas will be designed and managed to minimise the risks to ground water quality.

Supply of Basic Raw Materials (BRM)

The Gnangara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations overlay the Perth and Peel region's largest sand resource. Areas where BRM extraction is allowed to occur throughout the plantation areas are indicated in Action Plan E. Details of the approvals processes for BRM extraction and post-extraction requirements are included in Action Plan D.

