

PREFACE

1. Is the invitation for public to comment on this issue, just an opportunity to "tick the box" to confirm that the public has been invited to present comments, OR will the submissions be read, considered and perhaps be included in the final government document?
2. If/when there are regulations introduced, what authority/funding will there be to enforce regulation? What penalties will be implemented? Will they be sufficient deterrent for organisations and public to comply?
3. I have had 70 years to sadly watch the ever steadily decreasing quantity of remnant native vegetation in WA.
4. I have also lived next to Mininnup Tuart Forest National Park since 1984, watching destruction by kangaroos of this previous diverse ecosystem. Regeneration here is impossible without fencing out kangaroos.

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CLEARING

1. Before any more clearing is permitted, areas need to be set aside NEVER TO BE CLEARED!! eg. UK, Europe
2. At present little by little clearing encroaches on native ecosystems. People say, "Just my little patch", I want to clear for.... eg economic purposes, fire safety or numerous other reasons. Gradually jig-saw pieces slot together until district(s) are totally cleared.
3. When native WA vegetation is cleared, diversity of interdependent species is lost, rehabilitation is impossible.
4. In last 100 years, vast, almost immeasurable clearing in SW WA has taken place, never replaceable.
5. Ecosystems are intertwining of species eg flora species need various species of insect pollinators.
6. When flora species are severely impacted (in decline or disappearing) insects are in decline, leading to food chain limitation for insect eating birds.
7. When flora species are severely impacted (in decline or disappearing), birds which require a nectar food source disappear/die. These intertwining, interdependent ecosystems can not easily regenerate, if ever.
8. Permission was given for harvesting/felling of huge forest trees. Usually biggest trees were taken first. No thought was given for need for keeping large trees as "seed" trees. See 100 yr old photos to see tree size. Permission has continued to be given to "harvest"/fell remnant trees. Each time, largest trees are felled, until now trees in remnant areas are only a small fraction of the size of trees there in early 1900s. Many of the present forests have very scrawny trees struggling to survive, compared with trees that grew there in 1800s.
9. Now, it is no longer possible to see forests, in SW WA, comparable to those in photos of 100 years ago.

KANGAROOS

1. In 1920s there were no records taken to show there were few/no kangaroos in coastal areas of SW WA.
2. In 1930s appearance of kangaroos in fertile flats of Elgin, near Capel were such a novelty, Capel people drove out to see kangaroos, which had previously been restricted to bush/forest areas of Darling Scarp.
3. Government Departments did not keep such records then, so there is no "official data" to substantiate this.
4. Before 1970s, kangaroos were not seen in the coastal areas of present Tuart Forest National Park, (TFNP).
5. Since 1970s, despite culling, kangaroos have increased to several thousand in 3 parts of Tuart Forest Nat Pk.
6. Since 1990, every seedling of native vegetation germinating in autumn in TFNP, has been eaten by kangaroos by the following summer. Regeneration of this area, without kangaroo proof fencing, is impossible.
7. 6 grazing kangaroos eat as much as = 1 grazing cow.
8. In 1990 WA Government banned cattle from occasional (once a year) grazing in Mininnup TFNP. Since 1990 grazing kangaroos have done far more damage than cattle did before.
9. In 2019 in properties near Mininnup TFNP, 600 roos grazing daily in SW property + 400 roos grazing daily in NW property + 200 roos grazing daily in NE property + 200 roos grazing daily in SE property = 1200 roos = 166 cattle.
10. Professional shooters prefer to cull large male kangaroos, leaving females and young to breed and grow.
11. If there are 500 female roos having 1-2 joeys each year numbers quickly escalate, even with culling.
12. In 2018 the owner of property NW of Mininnup TFNP with 400 kangaroos grazing daily on property, applied to Bunbury DBCA for 200 tags per year to cull kangaroos. They are only permitted to cull 20 roos per year, a true example. DBCA policies and practices protects kangaroos rather than protecting flora and forest ecosystems.
13. Escalating numbers of kangaroos cause overgrazing, severely impacts, even clear many flora species in SW WA.
14. In some areas kangaroos are predators on the existing ecosystems, preventing sustainable regeneration.
15. Government departments are custodians of these areas previously identified as "Not to be Cleared", therefore given status of National Parks. However, by refusing to stop kangaroos from overgrazing on these areas, the Tuart Forest National Parks are becoming increasingly more desolate, this problem also exists elsewhere.
16. Some large Eucalypt trees (Tuart/Marri/Jarraah) are being continuously ringbarked by kangaroos until they die.

17. What policy is there to restrict continuation of ecosystem destruction and escalation of this process?
18. Why is there so much emphasis by WA Government authorities on protecting kangaroos resulting in destruction of 100s of species of plants, insects, birds, reptiles, small mammals in bush/forest ecosystems?
19. When kangaroos have destroyed their vegetation food source in forests, they will move/jump elsewhere, leaving a devastated landscape and destroyed ecosystem of non-existent interdependent species.
20. Present monitoring of kangaroo numbers is by fixed winged aircraft flying in office hours. This means many kangaroos are resting in shade of trees and not seen or counted. Present counting method is totally flawed.
21. Unless there is MAJOR improvement in monitoring and management(culling) of kangaroos, and fencing forests, the interdependent ecosystems in SW bushland WILL NOT remain viable nor be able to regenerate.

NATIVE VEGETATION POLICY

1. Past policies have mostly only been put in place, when there has already been major destruction, as a response to noticeable decline in healthy native vegetation ecosystems.
2. Future policies need to be forward looking enough to safeguard against future decline of native vegetation.
3. There needs to be a major policy of preserving areas of high quality remnant vegetation, not only promoting tourist attractions.
4. There must be a major policy of preserving high quality remnant vegetation, instead of what may be seen as a minor project to "gather data".
5. Tourism is emphasised, but not sufficient emphasis on protecting unique bush that tourists want to see.
6. SW of WA is only area in Australia recognised as worthy of world recognition as "biodiversity hotspot", yet local, State and Federal Australian governments do not value this area as being of highest value demanding highest priority. So much of this area has already been cleared in the last 50-100 years, there is very little remnant left, yet even what remains is constantly being cleared. Why???????

MAPPING AND MONITORING

1. How exact are overall clearing records?
2. Can remnant native vegetation areas be described such as "Pristine", "Must save", "Severely degraded".

IMPROVING REGULATORY PROCESSES

1. What policies and funding will enable enforcement of policies?
2. At present there are inconsistency of regulations.
3. A major obstacle with regulations, is the lack of collaboration between government department who are given the responsibility of being custodians of WA native vegetation eg. For the Bunbury DWER 2nd December meeting for Community Consultation, DWER did not send advice of the meeting to the Bunbury office of Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). Neither the SW Manager of DBCA nor the Senior Botanist of DBCA knew of the meeting. They should have been invited to have valuable local input into this meeting. Why promote theory of Bioregional approach, if there is no action?
4. With high turn over of staff within government departments, agreements that are made with certain staff are "lost, misplaced, ignored" by subsequent staff. How to train incoming staff to maintain consistency of understanding of regulations and enforcement of policies???

BIOREGIONAL APPROACH

1. There needs to be both bioregional approach and total overview approach.
2. See point 3 of above regarding regulations. If there is a local regional approach, there also needs to be collaboration and co-operation at the state level of relevant government departments.

Yours sincerely



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Formerly Secretary of Capel Land Conservation District Committee
In this role from February 2005 to December 2018.

