

# Native Vegetation Policy Submission

forwarded by



In considering the draft policy, we make the initial point that no matter how worthy or laudable its aims and/or content, unless the policy is imbedded in legislation it may warm the heart ...but it is of absolutely no legal or binding consequence. Our own local government authority serves to illustrate our concerns.

We live in a Hills local government authority (the City of Kalamunda ) with a published mantra of a 'Home in the Forest '. Unfortunately, nothing can be further from the truth.

A draft review of the Kalamunda Local Biodiversity Strategy 2008 (143 pages) showed that damage to the environment within the city has reached crisis proportions, with local government mismanagement wholly to blame.

Most significantly, it states the city has protected a mere 2.2 hectares of local natural areas since 2005 while wiping out 730 hectares of tree canopy and local biodiversity over the same period, including areas mapped as Threatened Ecological Communities

Of the total 23,552 hectares of native vegetation originally mapped in the city, only 2,445 hectares remain as local natural areas – with most of this in rural-zoned areas of the city.

Worryingly, the review shows that the rate of environmental destruction is accelerating, with native trees and vegetation disappearing from the city at a rate of 53 hectares a year.

It is possible to conclude from the draft that the biggest single impact in the environmental disaster that is unfolding is the city's failure to adopt any local planning policies focusing on retention on tree canopy or biodiversity (draft, p. 3).

The review points out that the greatest single opportunity to protect what little biodiversity remains is illustrated in Figure 2 of the technical report – **retention of existing rural zonings within the city** (p. 51).

This is the core of our submission. If the government is truly serious about wishing to retain our native forests and combating climate change, we **must** place a moratorium on the rezoning of all rural lands in the metropolitan area. Any rezoning, despite the early promises of developers, always results in the removal of all environmental protections under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 thereby locking in for all time, environmental loss.

We would strongly recommend that the Perth Hills and foothills be considered as a coherent whole for land use planning considerations with there being a clear and legislated presumption against the rezoning of rural lands, in order to protect what little remains of the native vegetation of the Hills.

Thank you for considering our submission.