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STATE PLANNING POLICY 2.10

## SWAN-CANNING RIVER SYSTEM

PREPARED UNDER SECTION 26 OF THE  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2005  
BY THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

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**1. CITATION**

This is a State planning policy made under section 26 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*. This policy may be cited as the State Planning Policy 2.10 Swan-Canning River System.

**2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The Swan-Canning river system is one of the treasured natural features of the Perth Region and the State of Western Australia. In addition to its environmental significance it is valued for its pleasing landscapes and for the many and varied recreational activities associated with the water and adjacent foreshore areas.

The State Government has recognised the importance of the Swan-Canning river system by legislating specifically for its planning, protection and management by the *Swan River Trust Act 1988*. This act established the Swan River Trust management area and set up a specific administrative process for decision-making.

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC), the Swan River Trust and local governments are responsible for the effective planning and management of land use and development within and adjacent to the Swan River Trust management area.

Planning decisions concerning such a regionally significant area should be made in the context of agreed and adopted guidelines to ensure that decisions are consistent and contribute to improving the quality of the river and the river experience. With this as the goal, the WAPC and the Swan River Trust jointly commissioned studies that established a community vision for the river, guiding principles and a framework for more detailed precinct plans.

The vision statement has been prepared and endorsed by community leaders and identities, and the guiding principles have been endorsed by the WAPC and the Swan River Trust. This policy identifies the key issues that should be taken into account in planning and decision-making in relation to the Swan and Canning rivers. The policy contains guiding principles for future land use and development and a policy statement for different parts of the river.

To assist in the implementation of this policy, plans should be prepared on a collaborative basis by the Swan River Trust, WAPC and the relevant local governments. The plans should generally be based on the precincts identified in the Swan River System Landscape Description (which was published by the Swan River Trust in 1997). The comprehensive information contained in that document can serve as a foundation for developing a coherent strategy for the Swan and Canning rivers.

The boundaries of the precincts are not intended to be rigid and should be adapted where necessary to recognise the natural, physical and social attributes of the locality. In this regard a precinct plan may consist of several smaller or more focussed plans, some of which may focus on development control, while others may focus on strategies or actions that can be implemented over time. It is not the intent of this policy to use local government boundaries alone to determine the precinct boundaries.

Precinct plans should include all private and public land and may address development within the waters of the Swan and Canning rivers. Plans should include provisions to address land use and development control, including height, setback and building design, open space, access and parking provisions, jetty structures and mooring envelopes, flood management and protection, pollution and erosion control, environmental management guidelines, and such other matters applicable to the particular locality.

The WAPC and the Swan River Trust will have regard to this policy statement when planning, providing recommendations or determining proposals that may affect the river. Local governments are required to take this policy statement into account when preparing and amending local planning schemes and shall take it into account when determining proposals that may affect the river.

**3. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to the Swan and Canning rivers and their immediate surroundings, as described in the Swan River System Landscape Description. However, this policy does not apply to precinct 1 (Fremantle Harbour), due to its differentiating characteristics and the operation of the *Port Authorities Act 1999*.

The precincts depicted in figure 1 provide a geographic framework for the preparation of the area based plans. The boundaries of the area to which this policy applies may be more specifically defined in precinct plans once they have been adopted by the relevant local government(s), the WAPC, the Swan River Trust and, where desired, other government agencies.

This policy does not replace any other operative and applicable policy, including State Planning Policy No. 2.9 Water Resources, but seeks to provide additional guidance for the development of the areas to which it applies.

Any reference in the policy to development also infers a reference to subdivision and strata subdivision.

**4. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide a regional framework for the preparation of precinct plans based on the precincts identified in the Swan River System Landscape Description;
- provide a context for consistent and integrated planning and decision making in relation to the river; and
- ensure that activities, land use and development maintain and enhance the health, amenity and landscape values of the river, including its recreational and scenic values.

**5. POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS**

This policy contains:

- a vision statement for the future of the Swan-Canning river system;
- policies based on the guiding principles for future land use and development in the precincts along the river system; and
- performance criteria and objectives for specific precincts.

**6. VISION STATEMENT**

Decisions should be made in the context of the vision statement:

Our vision for the river and its setting is that it displays its true worth as a sustaining resource to Aboriginal society over many millennia and as the foundation of European settlement in Western Australia.

We are committed to protecting and enhancing the river by respecting its environmental values, social benefits and cultural significance. We will guide adjacent land use, civic design and development to ensure that the value of the river and its setting to the community is maintained. The vision statement and guiding principles were prepared from studies jointly commissioned by the WAPC and the Swan River Trust. The guiding principles have been endorsed by the WAPC and the Swan River Trust.

The following policies elaborate the guiding principles endorsed by the WAPC and the Swan River Trust. These policies are to be taken into account when planning and determining proposals that may affect the river.

**7. POLICIES BASED ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES****7.1 SOCIAL BENEFITS****Maintaining the river and its setting as a community resource**

- 7.1.1 Development proposals and plans should recognise that the river is a public resource that should be available to the community in perpetuity. Any proposal for a use or development within the public realm that may affect the river and its settings should demonstrate a benefit to the community that offsets any detrimental impacts on the environment.
- 7.1.2 Implementation of plans and development proposals may require ongoing management strategies to monitor and minimise adverse impact on the river.

**Securing public access to the river**

- 7.1.3 Public access to the river and its foreshores should be maintained and enhanced while protecting the river.
- 7.1.4 Development proposals should avoid restricting or negatively impacting on public views to or from the river, particularly from vantage points.
- 7.1.5 Access to the river for recreation, tourism and transport should be available subject to the biological and ecological limitations of the river system and in accordance with any adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan.
- 7.1.6 Jetties and similar structures over and abutting the river should only be permitted where they do not restrict public access along the foreshore.
- 7.1.7 Commercial jetties and similar structures constructed on Crown land or water bed lease areas should provide a community benefit by providing public access to the jetty or similar structure. This includes providing public access around commercial facilities, such as restaurants, or onto commercial jetties (or parts thereof) for added community benefit.
- 7.1.8 Club facilities for water-based sports should only be permitted adjacent to the river where there is a demonstrated public benefit, public access to the river and its foreshore is not restricted, and membership of the club is open to all members of the community.

**Maintaining a sense of place**

- 7.1.9 Proposals to develop land should ensure that the essential qualities that give each precinct in the Swan and Canning river system its distinctive character, as described in the Swan River System Landscape Description and the various Swan-Canning precinct plans, are protected and enhanced.

**Providing opportunities for water transport**

- 7.1.10 The importance of the river as a transport network for commercial and recreational use should be acknowledged and taken into account when planning and determining proposals within the river area.

- 7.1.11 Access to river foreshores should be secured through the establishment of uninterrupted foreshore reserves, with associated walking paths and cycleways, and public motor vehicle parking areas, where appropriate to local conditions.

## **7.2 Environmental values**

### **Protecting the natural environment**

- 7.2.1 The dynamic nature of the river, including its waters, floodplain, sustaining vegetation and habitats, should be taken into account when planning land use and development so as to ensure the long term health and value of the river.
- 7.2.2 The river receives water from urban areas through natural and constructed drainage systems. Urban development changes the water cycle. Proposed land use changes should be managed to minimise sediment transport and to prevent the mobilisation of nutrients or contaminants from the site to the river. Land use changes should not result in further water quality degradation but should, if possible, improve the situation.
- 7.2.3 Any subdivision and development in the vicinity of the river should recognise the possibility that acid sulfate soils may be present. Prior to any development being approved, proper investigations should be conducted and the proposed development should include measures to minimise the possible risks associated with acid sulfate soils.

### **Protecting fringing vegetation**

- 7.2.4 Fringing vegetation serves an important biological function and adds value to the river ecosystem. There is a general presumption against the clearing of native and other vegetation within the river area unless otherwise determined by a precinct plan or if there is a demonstrated problem such as weed invasion.
- 7.2.5 The protection and re-establishment of fringing riparian vegetation should be promoted as a means of stabilising river banks, providing wildlife habitat, intercepting nutrients, providing shade and improving river water quality.
- 7.2.6 The protection and re-establishment of wetlands, tributaries and bushland associated with the river should be promoted.

### **Minimising dredging and channel disturbance**

- 7.2.7 Dredging and deliberate channel disturbance is to be prevented or minimised.
- 7.2.8 Dredging will only be supported to maintain river function, re-establish former water conditions and maintain existing navigation channels. In all instances dredging must not result in disproportional adverse impact on the health of the river and will require a development approval.

### **Implementing responsible stormwater management practices**

- 7.2.9 Water sensitive urban design principles should be incorporated in proposed developments. In doing so, natural flow regimes are to be generally preferred over artificial systems.
- 7.2.10 Stormwater management systems should be designed in a manner that will enhance the environmental quality of the river through the use of water sensitive urban design. The Stormwater Management Manual for Western Australia (Department of Environment, 2004) and Decision Process for Stormwater Management in WA (Department of Environment and Swan River Trust, 2005), provide guidance on this matter.

### **Response to river function, topography and landscape**

- 7.2.11 Development proposals should take account of the natural processes of the river system, including the floodplains, wetlands, saltmarshes and fringing vegetation.
- 7.2.12 Development should not be permitted where it will restrict the flow of water during flood events.

## **7.3 Cultural and natural heritage**

### **Conserving the cultural and natural heritage of the river and its setting**

- 7.3.1 The natural and cultural heritage values of the river should be protected and enhanced.
- 7.3.2 Consideration of Aboriginal and European based cultural and natural heritage values should be taken into account when planning and determining proposals within the river area.

## **7.4 Design and development**

### **Promoting sensitive design and built form to complement the river landscape**

- 7.4.1 Development should maintain and enhance the quality and setting of the river.
- 7.4.2 Proposals for development should be considered in the context of the river setting and the characteristics of the development site, particularly in regard to building height, bulk, scale, form, orientation and location.
- 7.4.3 The selection and use of external finishes and materials should generally be based on materials and hues naturally occurring or predominantly used in the locality.
- 7.4.4 Design should take account of the social, cultural, physical and historical setting of the river, as described in the Swan River System Landscape Description and adopted Swan-Canning precinct plans.

**Encouraging appropriate development**

- 7.4.5 Active recreation areas and associated development should occur in selected and suitable nodes where it achieves better access to and enjoyment of the river by the whole community.
- 7.4.6 Proposals for development adjacent to, or over the water, may be supported in locations identified as transport, commercial or recreation nodes in an adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan, subject to sub-clause 7.4.7 being taken into account.
- 7.4.7 Proposals for development will be considered in the context of the extent to which:
- the development is pertinent to the river;
  - public access is improved;
  - the public's use and enjoyment of the river experience is enhanced;
  - the visual landscape character of the river is maintained or improved;
  - views to and from the river are maintained or improved;
  - the long term health, amenity and landscape values of the river are sustained; and
  - the natural ecosystem of the river is protected.

**Creating and maintaining foreshore reserves**

- 7.4.8 Land adjacent to the river should be available for public access, recreation and conservation of the river.
- 7.4.9 Foreshore reserves should be secured in public ownership. Where there is a nexus between subdivision or development and the need for the foreshore reserve, or it is otherwise appropriate having regard to environmental characteristics of the land, such land should be ceded free of cost to the Crown at the time of subdivision or development. Foreshore reserves are to be provided in addition to any required local public open space contribution. In other circumstances the necessary foreshore land may be acquired.
- 7.4.10 Limited term private or public authority exclusionary control and rights to use portions of the river or the river foreshore may be acceptable in limited or special circumstances, provided the reason for the exclusionary control is for a wider public interest and the power to bring the land back to public control, if deemed required, is not compromised, and where acceptable alternative public access and circulation arrangements are implemented as part of a proposal.
- 7.4.11 Where public acquisition of private land planned for future foreshore reserve purposes is not likely to occur in the short-term, development should not be permitted within the area of reservation if it is likely to impact on the natural qualities of the land, or if it would prejudice its timely transfer to the Crown in the future.
- 7.4.12 River foreshore reserves should be planned with sufficient distance between the waters of the river and urban development to allow for:
- protection from inundation caused by a 1 in 100 year flood event;
  - conservation of the estuarine environment, including riparian vegetation;
  - public access and recreational use of the foreshore and the river;
  - installation or placement of essential public infrastructure;
  - commercial, transport and recreation nodes and associated facilities in accordance with adopted Swan-Canning river precinct plans, or other relevant plans;
  - views of the river from public places, and views of the foreshore from the river;
  - landscape protection and enhancement where needed; and
  - adequate separation distance from nuisance insects or disease-causing organisms.

- 7.4.13 Adequate setbacks to development should be specified in local planning schemes, and other plans and proposals, to allow for natural estuarine processes, conservation of environmental values, significant landscapes, public access and to maintain views to and from the river.

- 7.4.14 In the case of subdivision, private development should be separated from foreshore reserves by a public road.

**Creating linkages and natural vegetation corridors**

- 7.4.15 Linkages and natural vegetation corridors incorporated into plans and development proposals are encouraged where they:
- provide important wildlife habitat and connections between habitat;
  - provide for public recreational movement and provide for natural water flows and stormwater; and
  - connect known destinations and identified nodes to enhance the community's recognition or sense of place of the river.

**8. Policy statement for parts of the river**

The following policies set out performance criteria and objectives to be achieved by proposals and plans within the various sections of the river depicted in figure 1. These policies are to be taken into account when preparing the Swan-Canning precinct plans and when planning and determining proposals in the respective parts of the river.



**8.1 Blackwall Reach****8.1.1 Description**

This section of the river is characterised by steeply sloping limestone landforms, a variety of residential development and land uses and a wide range of water-based activities. The river narrows and is flanked by high limestone bluffs sparsely covered with natural vegetation. The area exhibits a relatively enclosed landscape, with axial and sequential views unfolding along the deep waters and course of the river towards Fremantle. This results in a greater sensitivity of the landscape to urban development scale, density and proportions than in the wider parts of the river.

There are a number of different land uses in this area. Residential development, comprising a mixed tapestry of architectural styles, colour, form and scale, and extensive active and passive recreational areas are predominant. The river and foreshore is intensively used for commercial, recreation, transport and marine activities and access and enjoyment of this part of the river by the public is paramount.

**8.1.2 Policy**

Planning decisions in this area should:

- protect view corridors from public vantage points, in particular from Chidley Point, Point Roe, Minim Cove Park, Rocky Bay, Blackwall Reach, Greenplace Reserve and Point Walter;
- integrate new development with the distinctive limestone landforms and native vegetation of the area, giving particular consideration to the scale and proximity of limestone cliffs on each side of the river;
- avoid substantial impact on the landscape qualities of the foreshore and minimise the removal of natural foreshore vegetation, major changes to natural ground levels or the erection of dominant structures protruding from cliff faces and along the foreshore;
- ensure that waterlines and ridgelines are maintained as the predominant visible parameters of the river;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the State heritage register and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places; and
- ensure that commercial uses and associated development on or adjacent to the river foreshore are confined to existing established nodes and proposed nodes identified in an adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan.

**8.2 Melville water****8.2.1 Description**

This section of the river is characterised by broad expanses of water, being the widest part of the river system. This allows extensive views of the residential suburbs either side of the river and long views across the water to the Perth central business district, Mount Eliza and Kings Park. This area is less sensitive to scale than Blackwall Reach because it has a much more open visual character.

However, around Freshwater Bay, from Chidley Point to Point Resolution, the landform features steeply sloping limestone cliffs, which create a moderate degree of visual enclosure. The southern aspect of these cliffs results in a shadowed margin to the river and the skyline is depicted by silhouette and form rather than colour and texture.

Residential development is the predominant land use on both sides of the river and foreshore reserves are generally extensive and developed as formal active and passive recreation areas with some pockets of natural vegetation along cliff edges and wetland bays. The area is also notable for a number of commercial, institutional and recreational landmarks. These include: the and Raffles hotel sites, the Sunset Hospital site, the University of Western Australia, Heathcote, Santa Maria, Methodist Ladies and Christchurch colleges and the Royal Freshwater, Nedlands, Royal Perth and South Perth yacht clubs. The Kwinana Freeway, Canning Bridge and Mounts Bay Road provide continuous views of the river to a large number of travellers on those roads.

**8.2.2 Policy**

Planning decisions in this area should:

- protect views, in particular the long axial corridors from public vantage points such as Pelican Point, Nedlands foreshore, Keanes Point, Attadale foreshore, Point Heathcote, Canning Bridge, Mounts Bay Road, and the intermediate views in Freshwater Bay, Matilda Bay and Alfred Cove;
- improve opportunities for public access and use of the river, particularly between Chidley Point and Keanes Point, parts of Freshwater Bay and Point Resolution on the northern side, taking account of the terrain, public risk and recreational opportunities;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the State heritage register and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places;
- ensure urban development complements natural landforms;
- ensure that vegetation is integrated with development to minimise the contrast between the natural and built elements of the landscape and that ridgeline vegetation and its backdrop to the waterway is retained;

- ensure that commercial uses and associated development on or adjacent to the river foreshore are confined to existing established nodes and proposed nodes identified in an adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan; and
- protect the natural conservation values of marine parks at Alfred Cove and Matilda Bay.

### **8.3 Perth water**

#### **8.3.1 Description**

Perth water is a major landscape feature of the city. The expanse of water is flanked by the lawns of Langley Park, the Esplanade and Sir James Mitchell Park and framed by Kings Park and city centre office towers. Traversed by ferries, cruise boats and recreational craft, the river creates a picturesque and lively image. In contrast, still waters at night and early morning provide reflections of city lights.

Dominant built landscape features are the city skyline, with high-rise buildings orientated towards the river. These reinforce the linear form of the foreshore and provide strong vertical definition. The landscape has a distinctly urban character, which contrasts with Mount Eliza and the natural landscape character of the Kings Park escarpment.

This part of the river provides a variety of recreational, commercial and transport activities. Focal points are Barrack Square, the Bell Tower, Supreme Court gardens and court house, Perth Concert Hall and tourist hotels overlooking Langley Park. Commercial, residential and recreational facilities along the South Perth foreshore opposite complement the city centre river landscape.

Upstream from the Causeway the river narrows and winds its way past Claisebrook inlet at East Perth and also the old East Perth power station. On the opposite bank of the river Burswood Casino provides a significant landscape feature. Redevelopment has occurred along much of this section of the river in recent years, resulting in a wide variety of land uses and a changing landscape. Adjacent to Burswood Casino the water is designated for speedboat and water-ski club use.

#### **8.3.2 Policy**

Planning decisions in this area should:

- recognise the importance of the river for transport, commerce, tourism and leisure as well as its conservation values;
- protect views across and from the water, both north and south of the river between the Narrows Bridge and the causeway and east and west between Kings Park and Heirisson Island;
- protect views of the Kings Park escarpment from both the north and south shores and from craft on the river;
- maintain and enhance views of the river from city streets and public places;
- maximise opportunities for public access to the river so that it becomes an intrinsic part of living and working in the city;
- enhance the appearance and function of existing recreation, tourism and commercial nodes and proposed nodes identified in an adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the State heritage register and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places;
- promote new riverside development appropriate to its surroundings and respectful of the unique river setting; and
- protect and enhance river views in redevelopment projects and ensure that development complements the natural landforms and provides opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of the river.

### **8.4 Lower Canning**

#### **8.4.1 Description**

The Canning River landscape near its confluence with the Swan River is dominated by the elevated landform of Mount Henry and the public infrastructure of Kwinana Freeway and the Canning and Mount Henry bridges. Beyond Mount Henry the river forms two wide basins, Aquinas Bay and Shelley Basin. These are framed by the ridgeline of Mount Henry, decreasing to the flatter, lower lying land of Salter Point and Waterford.

Deep Water Point is a popular recreational node, clearly visible from the Canning Bridge and used extensively for rowing, water skiing and other aquatic activities.

With the exception of some significant commercial development near the Canning Bridge, most of the Canning River area has a suburban character, which is generally screened by fringing vegetation and flat topography. Residential suburbs are leafy, characterised by low density development with mature trees and a natural river foreshore. Several institutional land uses define the landscape along this section of the river. These include Aquinas College, Clontarf and Castledare boys homes and further upstream, the Canning City Council offices and gardens.



The area includes the Canning River Regional Park, which contains some of the best estuarine vegetation of the Swan-Canning catchment. The Kent Street Weir and Nicholson Bridge are notable landmarks along this part of the river.

#### 8.4.2 Policy

Planning decisions in this area should:

- protect views from public places, particularly from Canning and Mount Henry bridges, Deep Water Point and Salter Point;
- ensure that development and river uses do not degrade the visual amenity and conservation value of the natural landscape, particularly within significant areas such as the Canning River Regional Park;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the Register of Heritage Places and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places;
- ensure that commercial development on the foreshore reserve is confined to existing recreation nodes and in accordance with an adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan for the area;
- enhance recreational opportunities where access is limited; and
- ensure that the scale and density of new residential development blends harmoniously with the leafy, suburban character and predominantly natural features of the landscape.

### 8.5 Upper Canning and Southern rivers

#### 8.5.1 Description

Parts of the upper Canning and Southern rivers are in a relatively natural state; however, much of the foreshore is either in private ownership or in poorly managed public reserves. The river has diminishing water flows in its upper reaches due to poor rainfalls, dams and irrigation.

Between Nicholson Road and the Southern River confluence the Canning River is a narrow and shallow channel, which becomes seasonally waterlogged. At Kelmscott the river enters a valley and the vegetated upper slopes denote a change in the landscape. Lower slopes are cleared and either grazed or used for orchards. Trees exist in thickets along the stream-line. Some properties have fences along the river to protect the banks from stock damage.

There is a mix of land uses, including low density residential development such as Thornlie Technical and Further Education, City of Gosnells offices, Gosnells Hotel, Railway Markets, orchards and grazing land. Foreshore reserves include John Okey Davis Park, which is an attractive open parkland landscaped with lawn and exotic plants and some areas of remnant riparian vegetation.

In the upper reaches, development adjacent to the river is predominantly rural-residential. The landscape provides attractive views of undulating hills with the river running through the valley. Araluen Park, Roley Pool and Araluen Country Club residential estate are notable landmarks.

#### 8.5.2 Policy

Planning decisions in this area should:

- improve public access to the river;
- protect river banks in their natural state;
- enhance surface and sub-surface water capacities flowing into the river;
- ensure development meets environmental water requirements, where they have been set;
- maintain and enhance riparian vegetation and habitats;
- ensure that development, including earthworks associated with subdivision, complements the landscape values of the area and the Darling Scarp;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the State heritage register and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places; and
- maintain and enhance views from public places such as John Okey Davis Park and adjacent Railway Market area, Araluen Park and Roley Pool.

### 8.6 Helena Valley

#### 8.6.1 Description

The Helena River passes through a range of landforms, from the flat alluvial plain at its confluence with the Swan River at Guildford to the undulating hills of the Darling Range and steeper ridges of the Darling Scarp. The valley has elevated views to the west across the coastal plain and Helena Valley Road is the main vehicular access.

Land uses in the lower river areas include residential, schools, light industrial and some rural land uses. Further upstream, riverside rural blocks are mostly cleared for grazing and horse agistment. Many properties extend to the river, restricting public access. In some places the river is lined by mature riparian vegetation forming a vegetated corridor. Following years

of subdivision, farming and land clearing, parts of the river and valley have become degraded with only remnant habitats and little or no flowing water.

The river is dammed at the Mundaring Weir and is not navigable. In the summer, the lower river channel is reduced to a series of pools and exposed dry riverbed. In winter the waters swell to fill the entire flood plain. Much of the native riparian vegetation has been cleared for grazing or urban land uses. Further upstream a greater proportion of the native vegetation remains. The Mundaring Weir is a spectacular water body, which appears as a large, long narrow lake.

#### 8.6.2 Policy

Planning decisions in this area should:

- enhance the natural riparian vegetation, especially in the lower reaches of the river;
- enhance the potential for water flows to be returned to the river;
- ensure that development complements the historic landscape qualities of the river near its junction with the Swan River at Guildford;
- improve public access to the river and extend contiguous foreshore reserves;
- ensure that earthworks associated with subdivision and development complement landscape values, particularly in the upper reaches of the valley;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the State heritage register and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places;
- maintain and enhance views from public places;
- protect the landscape and heritage values of the Mundaring Weir; and
- restrict construction of dams and prominent earthworks.

### 8.7 Lower Swan

#### 8.7.1 Description

Once past the Goongoonup Bridge the Swan River narrows and takes the form of large meanders that take it around the Burswood, Maylands and Garvey Park peninsulas. This landscape is a more natural river landscape with a narrow channel fringed by a thin line of riverine vegetation interspersed with low-lying wetland areas at Baigup Reserve, Ashfield Flats and the South Guildford Wetland.

There is still a significant amount of good quality vegetation remaining along this part of the river; however, there are also many areas that are degraded. A number of areas such as Ascot Waters, Garvey Park and Maylands Peninsula have been altered by excavation. The main landscape features of this stretch of the river include the steep embankment opposite the Maylands Peninsula, the eroded banks adjacent to Ashfield Flats, as well as Kuljak and Ron Courtney Islands.

This part of the river has many public parks and recreational features that are integrated with riverside residential areas. Notable landmarks include Ascot and Belmont Park racecourses, Ascot brick kilns, Tranby House, Garrett Road and Redcliffe bridges, Sandy Beach Reserve and Riverside Gardens.

Major riverside recreation areas such as Garvey Park and the Rivervale, Bassendean and Bayswater foreshores provide both passive and active recreational opportunities. The river is also currently used for sailing, kayaking and canoeing, horse-swimming and water-skiing.

#### 8.7.2 Policy

Planning decisions in this area should:

- establish protection measures for riparian vegetation on foreshores;
- promote an aesthetic environment for new riverside development appropriate to its surroundings, and establish a sense of place by the river;
- recognise the importance of the river for transport, commerce, tourism and leisure as well as its conservation value;
- enhance the appearance and function of existing recreation, tourism and commercial nodes and of proposed nodes identified in an adopted Swan-Canning precinct plan;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the Register of Heritage Places and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places; and
- ensure that subdivisions incorporate adequate foreshore reserves and building setbacks.

### 8.8 Middle Swan

#### 8.8.1 Description

The Swan Valley is a cultural landscape of popular and commercial value to the Perth Region. Vineyards are a prominent feature and are a significant contributor to the tourism value of the area. The river channel is relatively narrow and has several tributaries draining from the surrounding lands. Fringing riparian vegetation is mainly shore rushes, paperbarks and sheoaks but with occasional stands of flooded gum. The surrounding landform includes

steep embankments around Success Hill and Midland Brick and flat floodplains at Viveash and Caversham.

The riparian vegetation is degraded in some places. Access along the river is not possible in some places other than in a small boat. Pathway access is being considered.

Subdivision and development is generally set back from the river. There are several historic and interesting buildings along the foreshore as well as tourist facilities and wineries that contribute to the distinctive landscape character of the area. Institutional uses along the river include Guildford Grammar and Preparatory School, Governor Stirling High School, La Salle College, Swan Districts Hospital and Swanleigh Hostel. Attractive recreational areas include Lilac Hill and Fish Market Reserve.

The rural landscape character is attractive and provides some significant views, particularly the panoramic view of Woodbridge House and vineyards and the natural landscape at the confluence of Bennett Brook and the Swan River.

#### 8.8.2 Policy

Recognising the *Swan Valley Planning Act 1995* and the role of the Swan Valley Planning Committee, planning decisions in this area should:

- establish adequate protection measures for riparian vegetation on foreshores;
- improve pedestrian and cycle access along the river;
- ensure that development complements the valley landform and makes a positive contribution to its cultural landscape;
- protect views to and from the river and its rural landscape setting;
- maintain or enhance significant views, particularly views of Woodbridge House and vineyards opposite;
- ensure that development complements the historic landscape qualities of the river at Guildford;
- protect places of cultural significance, in particular places on the State heritage register and the Department of Indigenous Affairs register of significant places;
- promote sustainable tourism and commercial development;
- ensure that subdivisions incorporate adequate foreshore reserves and building setbacks; and
- maintain foreshore protection and streamline habitat.

### 8.9 Upper Swan

#### 8.9.1 Description

The upper Swan Valley and river is vegetated with paperbark groves. The braided channels of the river, the ox-bows and views up to the Darling Scarp add to the landscape character of this area. The evidence of urban development diminishes as this area meets the Walyunga National Park (the national park) in the upper reaches of the river. The river retains some wildness in its character. The screening of the river by trees and vegetated banks narrows the field of visual influence in some places.

Dominant land uses include viticulture and orchards and rural-residential development in the lower parts of the river. The State Equestrian Centre and Belvoir Amphitheatre are notable destinations. The upper section of the river is surrounded by the national park with the railway line alongside it. This stretch of the river is particularly attractive because of the varied terrain and relatively undisturbed vegetation communities. The river flows over several exposed granite outcrops, which creates small waterfalls and rapids, the attraction of the annual Avon Descent power and paddle boat race.

Much of the river through the national park is accessible via walk trails and informal paths and a lookout from O'Brien Road provides a spectacular view of the river and park.

Several small farms dot the Darling Range at South Chittering and Moondyne Brook.

#### 8.9.2 Policy

Recognising the *Swan Valley Planning Act 1995* and the role of the Swan Valley Planning Committee, planning decisions in this area should:

- enhance the rural setting and natural landscapes of the river;
- ensure that river slopes and floodways are not degraded either visually or physically;
- protect significant views, in particular Bells Rapids and the steep slope of Mount Mambup and the rise of the scarp at Brigadoon which affords an attractive view of the surrounding rural landscape;
- protect the landform from extensive earthworks, clearing and other intrusions that may impact on the function and character of the river;
- ensure that subdivisions and developments incorporate adequate foreshore reserves and building setbacks;
- promote sustainable tourism and commercial development; and
- facilitate enhancement of existing recreational areas and facilities.

**9. Implementation**

- 9.1 The purpose of this policy is to guide and inform agencies, authorities, landowners, and the broader community on matters relating to protection and management issues that are to be taken into account and given effect to by the Swan River Trust, the WAPC and local governments when considering planning proposals or in undertaking any decision making affecting the Swan and Canning rivers.
- 9.2 It is the intent of this policy that precinct plans will be prepared collaboratively between the local governments, the Swan River Trust and the WAPC, generally following the procedures for the preparation of a local planning policy set out in the Model Scheme Text, and be endorsed by all parties. The precinct plans are intended to correlate with the river precincts that are described in the Swan River System Landscape Description (indicated in figure 1), taking into account the objectives and policy statements and the environmental, physical and social attributes of the locality. Where a precinct boundary includes multiple local governments, such local governments should collaboratively prepare the relevant precinct plans.
- 9.3 Implementation of this policy will generally occur through the adoption, or approval, of precinct plans that will influence and direct strategic plans, conservation and management strategies, statutory local planning scheme amendments and subdivision and development applications, and through the ceding or acquisition of land, as appropriate.
- 9.4 Each of the precinct plans should:
- define the precinct boundaries based on those described in the Swan River System Landscape Description, but refined where necessary to more fully reflect the environmental, physical and social attributes of the locality and the purpose and intent of the relevant precinct plan;
  - provide guidelines for the form, location, scale and orientation of development and subdivision within the precinct;
  - suggest improvements or identify issues associated with providing public access to the river;
  - provide the appropriate future land uses for the precinct, including recreational or commercial nodes where relevant, in suitable and selected locations;
  - set out appropriate management strategies for the protection, conservation and rehabilitation, of significant landscapes, topography, flora, fauna and cultural heritage sites;
  - provide guidelines for management of natural estuarine processes, including control of land uses and development within the floodplain; and
  - set out the relevant means by which implementation of the precinct plan recommendations can be most effectively achieved.
- 9.5 Precinct plans prepared by local governments pursuant to this policy should be prepared or amended following a similar process as that for preparing a local planning policy under the Model Scheme Text, except that following adoption by the local government, the precinct plans are to be forwarded to the Swan River Trust and the WAPC for endorsement. Upon adoption, precinct plans should be treated as having the same status and effect as local planning policies.
- For the purpose of this policy, a local planning policy or similar plan or policy existing prior to the commencement of this policy may be submitted to the WAPC and Swan River Trust for adoption as a precinct plan pursuant to this policy.
- 9.6 When local planning scheme provisions are reviewed or amended in the context of adopted precinct plans they should reflect, where appropriate, controls on land use and development to maintain and enhance the health, amenity and landscape values of the river, including its scenic and recreational values.
- 9.7 This policy and any associated precinct plans, together with the Swan Canning Rivers Environmental Protection Policy and other relevant State and local policies, are to be taken into account by the relevant decision making authorities when plans and development proposals within the area to which this policy applies are determined.

**10. Definitions**

In this policy, unless the contrary intention appears:

“acid sulfate soils” is the common name given to naturally occurring soil and sediment containing iron sulfides. When disturbed and exposed to air they oxidise and produce sulphuric acid, iron precipitates, and concentrations of dissolved heavy metals such as aluminium, iron and arsenic.

“development” has the same meaning as in the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

“environmental water requirements” means the minimum flow necessary to maintain natural ecological function.

“essential public infrastructure” means facilities associated with the provision of power, water, waste, education, ports and similar service for the public.

“flood fringe” means the fringe areas of the floodplain where the water is typically shallow and slow moving and refers to the area of the floodplain that is not the floodway.

“floodplains” means the area of flooding in a 1 in 100 year flood event for a particular watercourse, which includes the floodway and flood fringe areas.

“floodways” means the main channel and portion of the floodplain that forms the main flow during a flood event.

“foreshore” or “foreshore reserve” means an area of land abutting a watercourse or body of water, and is to be vested in the Crown and shown on the survey documents either as a reserve for recreation or a reserve for foreshore management, depending on the use to be made of the land.

“fringing vegetation” has the same meaning as riparian vegetation.

“Model Scheme Text” is the model text set out in appendix B of the *Town Planning Regulations 1967* (as amended).

“riparian vegetation” refers to vegetation of, on, or relating to the banks of a natural course of water.

“subdivision” includes amalgamation.

“Swan-Canning precinct plans” and “precinct plans” refer to the plans adopted by the WAPC and the Swan River Trust based on the precincts identified in the Swan River System Landscape Description.

“Swan-Canning river system” and “the river” mean the Swan, Canning, Helena and Southern rivers and includes the adjacent and nearby land areas shown on figure 1 and in the Swan-Canning precinct plans.

“Swan River System Landscape Description” is Report No 27 published by the Swan River Trust in 1997.

“water sensitive urban design” refers to a framework that incorporates stormwater related issues in urban areas for water quality, water quantity and water conservation, plus broader environmental and social objectives as explicit design objectives and criteria.

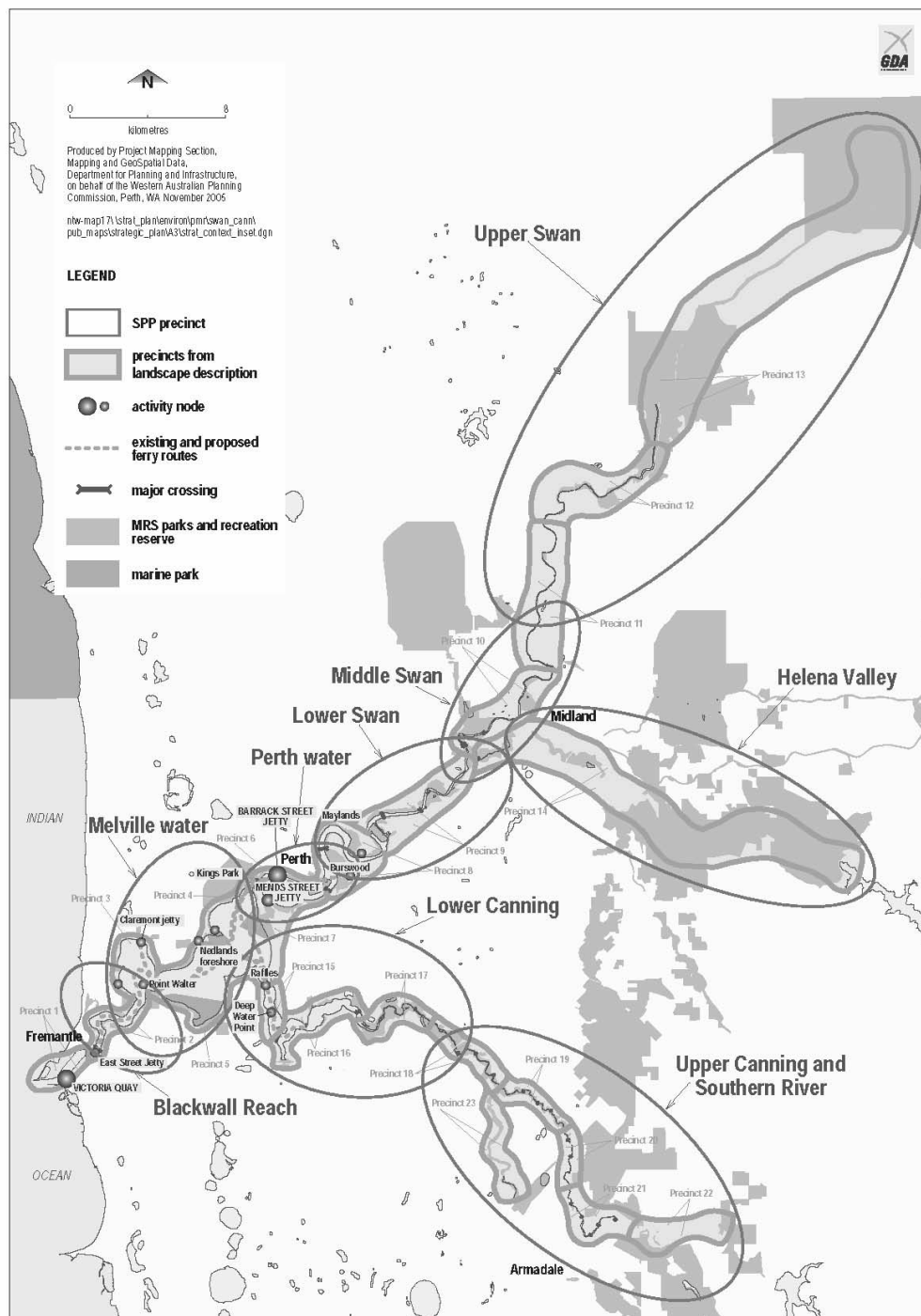
By command of the Governor,

M. C. WAUCHOPE, Clerk of the Executive Council.



# Swan-Canning River System - State Planning Policy

Figure 1 - Precincts



*The boundaries identifying the SPP precincts are notional and subject to definition through the precinct planning process.*