

Department of Environment and Conservation

Draft Corporate Plan 2006 – 2009 (V4.0 – 21 November 2006)

Foreword

This is the first corporate plan for our new organisation, – established on 1 July 2006 by bringing together the Department of Environment (DoE) and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

By combining the strengths of the former DoE and CALM, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is better able to face the challenges we have in Western Australia to protect our environment and conserve our native plants and animals and the ecosystems that sustain them.

This document summarises DEC's role as a State Government agency, the way we carry out that role and our key objectives for the next four years. Priorities for 2006-2009 include coordinating a whole-of-government response to climate change and to implementing the Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy; finalising a State biodiversity conservation strategy and Biodiversity Conservation Bill; continuing the establishment of the marine and terrestrial conservation reserve systems towards the goals of comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness; further developing a "World Class Parks System" in WA in terms of ecosystem management and visitor facilities and services; implementing the Contaminated Sites Act 2003; fostering a whole-of-government and community approach to a sustainable future for WA; and effectively engaging Aboriginal people in natural resource management.

Public participation and consultation will be a cornerstone of DEC's operations, and we look forward to working constructively with other organisations and Government agencies, industry, our neighbours, indigenous communities, our volunteers and sponsors.

Identifying strategic directions and objectives provides a focus for work plans at all levels in DEC and for individual performance agreements. I take this opportunity to acknowledge again the continued enthusiasm and commitment of staff, which will be vital in the effective implementation of this Corporate Plan.

Keiran McNamara
Director General

Our Vision

A healthy, diverse and well-managed Western Australian environment.

Our Mission

Working with the community, we will ensure that Western Australia's environment is valued, protected and conserved, for its intrinsic value, and for the appreciation and benefit of present and future generations.

Our Responsibilities

The Department of Environment and Conservation is in the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment. The department is also part of a greater environmental community and has distinct Government responsibilities for implementing Government policy within that community. Protection and conservation of the environment is a collective role.

The department has the lead responsibility for protecting and conserving the State's environment on behalf of the people of Western Australia. This includes managing the State's national parks, marine parks, conservation parks, State forests and timber reserves, nature reserves, marine nature reserves and marine management areas.

Its key responsibilities include broad roles in conserving biodiversity and protecting, managing, regulating and assessing many aspects of the use of the State's natural resources. The department contributes to the development of environmental protection policies, managing the environmental impact assessment process and carrying out regulatory functions to achieve improved environmental outcomes. It is also responsible for management of contaminated sites and coordination of pollution incident responses.

The department is also responsible for fire preparedness and pest animal and weed control on 89 million hectares of unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves.

The department provides support or assists the following Environment portfolio authorities and boards to carry out their functions:

- Environmental Protection Authority;
- Conservation Commission of WA;
- Keep Australia Beautiful Council;
- Marine Parks and Reserves Authority;
- Swan River Trust; and
- Waste Management Board.

The department contributes to national and international programs through national Ministerial Councils, the Natural Heritage Trust and other national programs, the work of organisations such as the IUCN (the World Conservation Union), and to the implementation of international environmental and conservation treaties in WA.

It employs people with world-class scientific, regulatory, evaluation, policy, land and marine management, visitor services and educational skills.

Our Values

People make organisations and the values they adopt shape those organisations. In working to achieve our Mission, we endeavour to behave with:

- Honesty, courage and integrity – acting ethically, lawfully, in the public interest and treating people with impartiality.
- Respect – understanding and respecting individual differences, valuing each other's contribution, and respecting the views and aspirations of co-workers and the views and contribution of stakeholders.
- Openness – having decision-making processes that are fair, transparent and understandable.
- Commitment – being responsible, accountable and dedicated in our work, both individually and collectively.
- Innovation – continually seeking new and better ways of achieving desired outcomes.

We will demonstrate:

- Teamwork – working collaboratively and cooperatively with co-workers, other agencies and in partnership with the community.
- Leadership – being progressive, showing courage, initiative and creativity in meeting our objectives.
- Professionalism – acting in a courteous and fair manner, and using up-to-date and sound scientific principles and accurate information in our work.
- Value – delivering the best possible result for the protection and conservation of the environment through continual improvement of our efforts.
- Learning-based culture – open to new ideas and concepts learnt from experience and others.

Our Principles

In making decisions or providing advice we will be guided by the following principles:

- Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, the lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measures which seek to protect or restore the environment or prevent loss of biodiversity.
- All elements of the environment, including the diversity of ecological communities and native species throughout WA, will be maintained in a healthy state and, where necessary and possible, restored.

- The opportunity for the public to be involved and engaged in developing and delivering benefits to the environment and to their own health and enjoyment will be promoted.
- Outcomes will be delivered in the most effective and efficient way.
- Cooperation, sharing and integration of resources and knowledge within the department and between communities and agencies will be promoted.
- We will be adaptive in our management, taking a flexible and responsive approach to management and operations and being receptive to change.
- Users of the environment and resources should pay fair value for that use.
- Use of environmental resources and wildlife will be on the basis of ecological sustainability.

Strategic Directions, Objectives and Strategies

The vision we are working towards is '*A healthy, diverse and well managed Western Australian environment*'. The department will achieve this vision by:

- Conserving biodiversity
- Managing natural resources and promoting sustainable practices
- Creating a "World Class Parks System"
- Implementing sustainable forest management
- Preventing pollution and remediating contamination
- Maintaining community involvement and support
- Improving the way we do business.

1. Conserving biodiversity

Objective

To protect, conserve and, where necessary and possible, restore Western Australia's biodiversity.

Strategies

- 1.1 Establish clear guidance for biodiversity conservation actions and improved legislation for achieving biodiversity conservation outcomes in partnership with the community.
 - Finalise and implement a State biodiversity conservation strategy.
 - Finalise a Biodiversity Conservation Bill, to replace the Wildlife Conservation Act, for consideration by Parliament.
 - Develop amendments to the Conservation and Land Management Act relating to regional parks and joint management of conservation lands and waters with traditional owners.
- 1.2 Expand and improve the marine and terrestrial conservation reserve system to achieve world's best standards.
 - Undertake systematic surveys of the State's biodiversity.

- Identify and acquire new conservation reserves to achieve comprehensive, adequate and representative targets as well as protecting sites of special importance.
 - Engage Aboriginal traditional custodians in the management of the reserve system to conserve heritage and biodiversity.
- 1.3 Expand off-reserve conservation that complements management of the reserve system.
- Develop and implement programs and partnerships for off-reserve biodiversity conservation with regional natural resource management organisations, community groups, landholders, industry and other agencies.
 - Progress the Swan Bioplan program for development of a biodiversity plan for the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent Darling and Whicher Scarps.
 - Ensure clearing of native vegetation is regulated in accordance with the principles set out in legislation.
 - Review and improve efficiency and effectiveness of regulatory and administrative processes for clearing of native vegetation.
- 1.4 Recover threatened flora, fauna and ecological communities.
- Identify threatened species and ecological communities.
 - Priority rank them for conservation action according to international (IUCN) criteria.
 - Prepare and implement recovery plans based on priority rankings.
- 1.5 Protect biodiversity from threatening processes, agents and activities, including pest animals, weeds, dieback and other exotic diseases, salinity and inappropriate fire regimes.
- Implement the WA Salinity Strategy in partnership with landholders, the community and other agencies.
 - Expand and enhance the Western Shield wildlife recovery program, incorporating introduced predator control, threatened species breeding and translocations, and associated management of threatening processes and species populations.
 - Use fire to achieve a range of land management objectives, including the conservation of biodiversity, maintenance of ecosystem health, and protection of human life and other values.
 - Expand programs for the control of introduced animals and weeds.
 - Incorporate consideration of climate change impacts upon biodiversity conservation in all planning and introduce adaptive management where feasible.
 - Implement integrated management strategies to control dieback and other pests and diseases that threaten species and ecosystems.
 - Continue to prepare management plans for all department-managed lands and waters.

- 1.6 Ensure that all use of native plants and animals is sustainable.
- Prepare, implement and continually improve management of wildlife harvesting programs for species permitted by Government.
 - Where appropriate, promote sustainable use programs as a means of improving biodiversity conservation.
 - Maintain and enhance licensing and compliance operations covering access to, keeping of, and release of wildlife.
 - Maintain inventories of forest resources.

2. Managing natural resources and promoting environmentally sustainable practices.

Objective

To protect, manage and, where necessary and possible, restore Western Australia's natural resources, including land, water and air, and promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices in the community, industry and government.

Strategies

- 2.1 Support development and implementation of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adaptation initiatives to reduce the impact of climate change on Western Australia.
- Support the Greenhouse and Energy Taskforce report to Government on ways to reduce emissions for the stationary energy sector by 50 percent by 2050.
 - Coordinate a whole-of-government response to implementing the Western Australian Greenhouse Strategy.
 - Participate in national greenhouse policy development through relevant Ministerial Councils and other mechanisms.
 - Complete development of the Western Australian Greenhouse Gas Inventory.
 - Coordinate a whole-of-government response to climate change addressing climate research, policy and planning for adaptation and mitigation, and helping communities to implement adaptation initiatives.
- 2.2 Develop and implement policies and strategies that promote waste avoidance and minimization, and resource recovery and recycling.
- Finalise the Waste Avoidance and Recovery Bill for consideration by Parliament.
 - Administer the Waste Management and Recycling Fund for improvement of waste management and recycling, with particular focus on development of Zero Waste Incentive Schemes.
 - Promote extended producer responsibility and product stewardship programs for priority wastes.
 - Investigate best practice Container Deposit Schemes for WA.
 - Develop a State-wide strategy for rural landfills.

- 2.3 Monitor ambient air quality and develop air quality management plans for priority air sheds.
- Implement the Perth Air Quality Management Plan with initiatives aimed at reducing winter haze, including the woodheater buyback program and identification of further policy options.
 - Implement the Diesel National Environmental Protection Measure including emissions testing and technical training/education program.
 - Implement a major air quality investigation program at Wagerup.
 - Develop air quality management plans for the key regional centres of Port Hedland and Collie to provide a strategic context for addressing air quality issues.
 - Implement the Air Toxics Program in Perth and regional centres.
 - Undertake targeted monitoring at selected industrial locations, and implement National Environmental Protection Measure monitoring.
- 2.4 Contribute to State and regional programs and partnerships to manage, and where necessary restore, natural resources.
- Participate in and contribute to national, State and regional natural resource management processes and programs.
 - Contribute to the development of a strategy for phasing out the use of highly water-soluble phosphate fertilisers in environmentally sensitive areas of the State's South-West by August 2010.
 - Contribute to the establishment of improved catchment management frameworks, including those for the Peel-Harvey and other estuarine systems.
- 2.5 Support the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to establish policies and undertake environmental impact assessments to protect the environment.
- Finalise the State of the Environment Report 2007.
 - In consultation with the EPA, develop a whole-of-government policy on the provision of offsets, and the use of 'biodiversity banking', to mitigate for environmental losses resulting from developments.
 - Further promote the use of Strategic Environmental Impact assessments to provide earlier certainty for development proponents and improved environmental outcomes.

3. Creating a "World Class Parks System"

Objective

To generate environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits through the further development of a "World Class Parks System" in terms of ecosystem management and visitor facilities and services.

Strategies

- 3.1 Plan, develop and manage parks, recreation areas, facilities and services so as to maintain in perpetuity the values of natural areas managed by the department.
- Encourage people to enjoy nature and natural areas.

- 3.2 Provide and sustain a range of safe nature-based recreation opportunities, facilities and visitor services that are compatible with conservation and recreation requirements.
- Establish innovative and ecologically sustainable visitor facilities and services, and nature-based recreation opportunities.
 - Redevelop and maintain recreation areas on the basis of strategic importance.
 - Maintain a visitor risk-management program.
- 3.3 Provide visitors with enriched experiences based on natural and cultural values.
- Provide, through partnership and sponsorships where appropriate, quality information, memorable interpretive activity programs, and innovative visitor facilities and services.
- 3.4 Reduce the threat of wildfire to human life, property and biodiversity and other values.
- Maintain a trained and well-equipped fire fighting capability and aerial detection network in key areas.
 - Work with the local community to implement fire management programs that meet biodiversity objectives and protect human life and public, private and natural assets.

4. Implementing sustainable forest management

Objective

To generate social, economic and cultural benefits from forests while sustaining their biodiversity, health, vitality and productive capacity.

- 4.1 Manage the forests and woodlands entrusted to the department, and the resources they provide, in accordance with the Forest Management Plan 2004 – 2013, including protection of old-growth forests.
- Facilitate the harvesting, regeneration and growth of forest products from State forest and timber reserves in accordance with the Forest Management Plan.
 - Provide access to the forest for the collection of forest produce.
 - Maintain an approval, monitoring and compliance management system for operations in State forest and timber reserves.

5. Preventing pollution and remediating contamination

Objective

To protect the environment, and people's health and amenity, by ensuring discharges meet approved criteria and contaminated sites are appropriately remediated.

- 5.1 Regulate emissions and discharges to the environment, and guide land planning to achieve adequate separation distances between industry and sensitive premises.

- Continue reforms to the industry regulation program in consultation with the Environmental Regulation Stakeholder Reference Group, and implementation of project approvals processes improvements and timelines.
 - Progress the review of industry licences to improve enforceability placing greater emphasis on emissions control.
 - Implement Annual Audit Compliance Reports signed-off by company CEOs or other approved officers.
 - Undertake an industry licensing quality assurance and audit program to ensure statutory instruments are administered in accordance with legal and policy requirements.
 - Review fees and charges for industry licensing to seek full cost recovery. Complete upgrade of the industry licensing database and review prescribes premises categories to ensure efficient regulation.
 - Continue coordination of inventory data and reporting to the National Pollutant Inventory.
- 5.2 Regulate the transport and disposal of controlled waste.
- Ensure all controlled waste movements are made using properly licensed carriers, drivers and vehicles in accordance with a valid permit.
 - Complete a review of controlled waste regulations and commence implementation of recommendations.
 - Coordinate a Government response to the Core Consultative Committee on Waste report, *The Siting of Hazardous/Industrial Waste Treatment Precincts and The Legislative and Regulatory Model to be applied*.
- 5.3 Regulate noise emissions in conjunction with local authorities, and guide land planning to avoid noise conflicts.
- Finalise amendments to the Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations to achieve improved regulation of noise emissions.
 - Continue support and technical advice to local authorities in implementation of noise regulations.
 - Provide technical advice to planning agencies and other government departments to ensure noise mitigation and management are properly considered in developments.
- 5.4 Monitor compliance with Ministerial conditions on environmental approvals
- Complete a review of delivery options for monitoring and auditing compliance with Ministerial conditions, including use of accredited auditors.
 - Develop model conditions to achieve improved auditability enforceability.
- 5.5 Ensure land contaminated from current and historical land uses is managed to reduce the risk to the environment and public health to a safe level consistent with accepted guidelines.
- Implement the Contaminated Sites Act 2003.
 - Establish the contaminated sites auditor accreditation scheme.

- Establish a public contaminated sites database.
- Manage the Contaminated Sites Fund and assist other departments in remediation of government and orphan contaminated sites.
- Provide technical advice to planning agencies and developers on the management of potential acid sulphate soils.

6. Maintaining community involvement and support

Objective

To develop community awareness and appreciation of the State's natural environment and biodiversity and promote community involvement in and support for its protection and conservation.

Strategies

- 6.1 Improve community knowledge of environment and conservation issues and awareness, understanding and support for the department's activities, services and policies.
 - Develop and implement strategic communication and advocacy programs.
 - Develop best practice publications, new media and other communication vehicles.
 - Initiate and lead public discussion on environment, conservation and land management issues.

- 6.2 Increase opportunities for youth to learn about and gain hands-on experience with environment and conservation issues.
 - Continue to develop effective school and experience-based education and activity programs.

- 6.3 Establish and implement awareness and education programs promoting environmentally sustainable practices in the community, industry and government sectors.
 - Initiate a common branding and public awareness campaign for Government's sustainability programs.
 - Continue implementation of community education programs in Airwatch, Ribbons of Blue, Wastewise, and Tidy Towns.
 - Support implementation of, and coordinate reporting on, the State Sustainability Strategy.
 - Finalise the State/ Local Government Sustainability Partnership Agreement and advance existing and new partnership agreements with individual local authorities.

- 6.3 Be responsive to the community.
 - Develop and implement appropriate public participation and involvement programs that are part of core business activity of the department.
 - Implement the Good Neighbour Policy, setting out the way in which the department deals with cross-boundary issues.
 - Develop the Healthy Parks, Healthy People program to promote the health benefits of visiting parks and the importance of

maintaining a healthy and well-managed network of protected areas.

- Plan and provide for people with disabilities and from different cultural/ethnic groups so that everyone in the community can gain access to, use and enjoy the facilities, services and programs of the department.
- Develop a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.

6.4 Increase involvement of Indigenous people in managing conservation lands and waters, biodiversity and 'country'.

- Provide opportunities for collaborative management, training and employment and other meaningful involvement of Indigenous people in the management of natural and cultural values.

6.5 Partner with other agencies, industry and groups with similar interests.

- Establish strategic alliances with key stakeholders working in the environment, conservation, natural resource and recreational sectors.
- Work to increase resources available for environment and conservation.

6.6 Promote a customer focus.

- Continually improve the department's customer focus policies, procedures and performance.

7. Improving the way we do business

Objective

To foster a positive work culture of trust, continuous improvement and anticipation of environment and conservation issues and customer needs, and deliver core business activities in the most effective and efficient manner.

Strategies

7.1 Develop and maintain sound internal communications.

- Promote timely, open and two-way communication with staff on subjects important to them and to the department.
- Continually seek to improve internal communications.

7.2 Manage and support employees effectively.

- Match employees to the department's present and future requirements, provide professional development in priority areas, and provide for employee feedback and recognition.
- Support employees with sound training, safety and support programs and career development opportunities.
- Delegate authority, responsibility and accountability as close as possible to where the major part of the work is performed.
- Promote continual improvement, teamwork and flexibility.
- Ensure that employees are recognized for their work, achievements and efforts.

- 7.3 Develop and improve knowledge and information sharing.
- Adopt and use new technology wisely.
 - Continually seek to improve the quality and accessibility of corporate information.
 - Invest in and maintain an information management and technology infrastructure required to support the department's statutory functions, core business activities and external obligations and commitments.
- 7.4 Focus scientific and social research programs on high priority issues.
- Carry out scientific and social research that addresses issues of high priority.
 - Develop and maintain close working partnerships between the department's scientists and operational groups, and with external research organisations.
 - Provide astronomical information and services for the benefit of the community.
- 7.5 Ensure management is based on sound science.
- Transfer advances in knowledge and science into regulatory and management operations.
 - Ensure scientific principles and facts form the basis of biodiversity conservation, environmental protection and management of CALM Act lands and waters.
- 7.6 Focus the department's resources on strategically important areas.
- Align budgets to strategic priorities and processes.
- 7.7 Commit to sustainability principles.
- Minimise the department's impact on the environment in terms of energy and water use, and in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Maximise recycling of paper and other materials.
- 7.8 Monitor our performance and identify areas where we can improve.
- Assess our performance against best practice benchmarks.
 - Build leadership and management capacity within the organisation.

(Insert DEC organisation chart)

(Insert list of primary acts administered by DEC)

For further information on the Department of Environment and Conservation please contact:

Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs

Department of Environment and Conservation

Locked Bag 104
Bentley Delivery Centre
Western Australia 6983

Telephone: (08) 9334 0333
Fax: (08) 9334 0498
TTY: (08) 9334 0546
Email: info@dec.wa.gov.au

Visit us on the Internet at www.dec.wa.gov.au