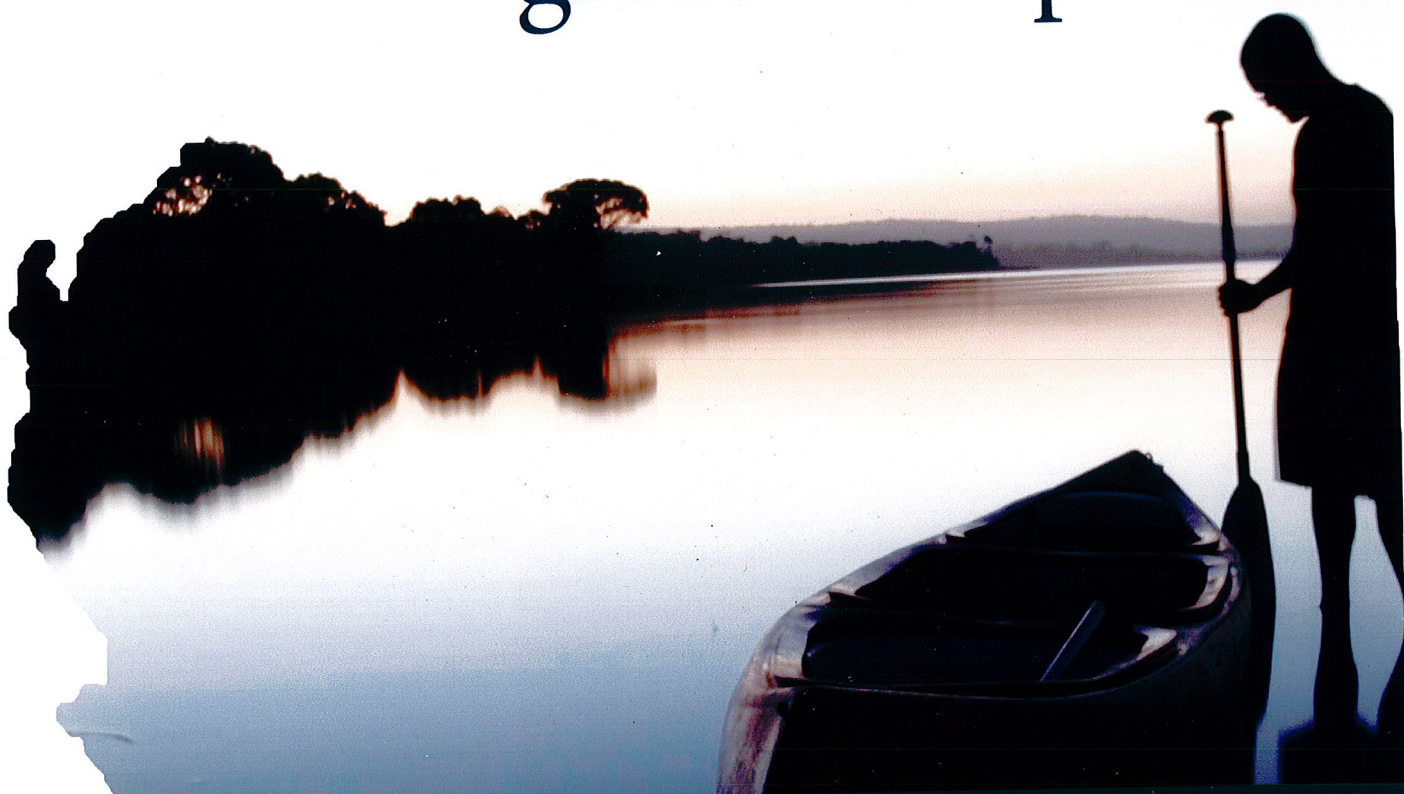


# A vision for *Western Australia's* great wild places

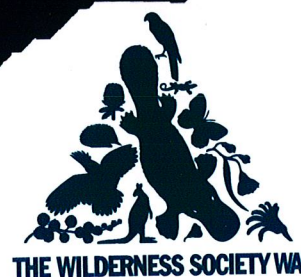


Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond



*The Wilderness Society* DECEMBER 2004

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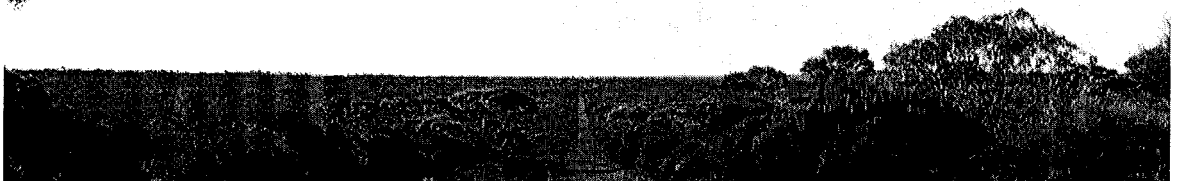


# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

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Woodlands east of the Rabbit Proof Fence. Photo: Charles Roche



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### 1.0 About this document

This document explains in detail a selected number of proposals summarized in The Environmental Challenge – A new era for conservation in Western Australia produced by the Conservation Council of WA and The Wilderness Society WA, December 2004.

These two documents are designed to be read in conjunction with each other, and are both available at [www.VoteEnvironment.com.au](http://www.VoteEnvironment.com.au) or from the below address.

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Leafy sea dragon, South Coast WA.

Photo: Tim Nicol





# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### 2.0 The Environmental Challenge

Western Australia is blessed with extraordinary natural treasures. The ancient gorges of the Kimberley; the majesty of Ningaloo Reef; the vast arid wilderness of the Pilbara; wet eucalypt karri and tingle forests; the channels of the Fitzroy River, now dry, now in flood; the complex myriad of inland bush – heathlands, woodlands, mallee scrub; the extensive coastline with offshore islands and submerged rocky reefs; the long pure-white beaches; seasonally flowing rivers, above and below ground.

There is nothing more Western Australian than these original landscapes. They have helped shape our character, our history and who we are today as a state. They remind us of where we have come from, and where we need to go after the last 175 years of reshaping our surrounds.

Western Australia is also lucky to be a state rich in natural resources – minerals, land that grows beef, wool, wheat, sugar, cotton, timber and much more, seas that spawn fish, prawns, corals. A booming tourist industry, a growing service sector, a resilient but declining rural community.

Western Australia has built much of its wealth on the natural environment, but at a significant environmental cost. We are losing a football field of land to salinity every hour due to land clearing – destroying farms and wildlife. Our sources of water are being stretched to the limit. Almost all of our fisheries are either at or over sustainable extraction levels, greenhouse pollution is still increasing and our rainfall declining, vast areas of inland bush are suffering from over-grazing, and mining and forestry are compromising our internationally-

recognised south west biodiversity hotspot.

Housing and urban development is expanding rapidly, replacing good farming land and bushland. Air quality is deteriorating, traffic congestion is worsening, and inadequate planning is seeing residents and project proponents clash in conflicts that should never arise.

And while our political leadership has started to recognise the extent of Western Australians' passion and concern for the environment, they can not ignore the toll our current economic path continues to take on the environment. It is time to shift our efforts. To find a new way that provides the community with wealth without significant environmental loss.

As part of its vision for Western Australia's great wild places, The Wilderness Society has identified a series of proposals that can set a significant path forward to protecting and restoring our wild places.

In the lead up to and during the State election The Wilderness Society will be engaging with the public, promoting these proposals and providing information about the environment policies of political parties. We urge all political parties to consider this document thoughtfully and adopt the proposals it contains, prior to the next election and beyond.



The Pilbara. Photo: Simon Neville



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### 3.0 About The Wilderness Society

The Wilderness Society is Western Australia's largest community-based conservation organisation working for the protection of Australia's wild places and the unique plants and animals dependent on them for survival.

The Society's results-oriented approach to conservation includes advocacy and negotiation, public education and empowerment, political lobbying, direct action, as well as desk and field research.

The Wilderness Society is a nation-wide organisation with offices in all capital cities and many regional centres. In Western Australia the Society enjoys the support of tens of thousands of financial members, volunteers and supporters and has two offices – one in West Perth and one in Perth. Thanks to our supporters over 25 years, The Wilderness Society has played a leading role in an amazing array of conservation victories. In WA these include the campaign to save WA's old growth forests, the Save Ningaloo Campaign, as well as other efforts to conserve the Kimberley, protect our Tuart forests, and prevent the commercialisation of genetically engineered crops.



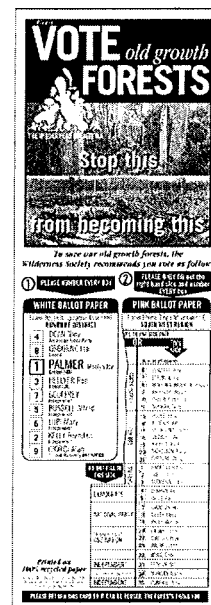
Rally for the Reef,  
December 2002

### 4.0 The Wilderness Society's role in elections

In the course of its advocacy work, The Wilderness Society has chosen on occasions to engage actively in election campaigns where such action assisted in securing good conservation outcomes. These activities have ranged from commenting on policies in the media, to running advertising campaigns, to organising community information events, to handing out *How to Vote* cards at polling booths on election day.

During the 2001 Western Australian State election The Wilderness Society acted to provide third party endorsement of party policies on election day by distributing 'How to Vote for the old growth forests' cards. These were handed-out by 800 supporters at 135 polling booths across 12 marginal electorates. Historically where the Society engages with the electorate at polling booths it has been demonstrated that the public will change its vote between 2-4%.

The Wilderness Society is not aligned or affiliated with any political party and is committed to making fair comment on environmental policies put forward by all political parties.



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### 5.0 The impact of the 'green' vote at the 2001 State election

*"I'm certainly of the view that our strong position on the old growth forest helped enormously in the course of the campaign because it was a clear defining issue and I think certainly there was a very strong support for us on that."*

(Premier) Geoff Gallop – ABC Radio, 12th Feb 2001

*"...this probably had a lot to do with the forestry issue..."*

(Opposition spokesperson) John Day – ABC Radio, 12th Feb 2001

*"...the then Labor State opposition sniffed the forest air and smelt an election winner. In February this year the tree savers won and Labor swept to power on green preferences."*

Stateline ABC Television 1 June 2001

Much has been said of the impact of the green vote at the last state election. Given the profile of old growth forests, it should be no surprise that, according to Reame media services, this issue became the third most popular issue on radio and television news and current affairs during the election, with environment organisations taking the third and fifth ranking of the most represented organisations in the electronic media.

More recently, political commentary on the last state election has focused on the impact of preference flows from the One Nation Party versus those of the Greens WA, and the role they had in determining who eventually won government.

While statistics based on party preference deals and flows have been used to validate particular opinions (mostly to discredit the role of the Greens WA), this narrow analysis reflects a poor understanding of the true nature of the environmental vote. All voters influenced by good environmental policies did not automatically place a '1' next to the Greens (WA). Many on the conservative side of politics were influenced by the 'green' policies of the Liberals for Forests independent candidates, and many undecided voters would have been swayed by the Australian Labor Party's promise to immediately end old growth logging. And some would have been encouraged to their position by the efforts of conservation groups who handed out 'VoteForests' cards in 12 marginal electorates.

The combined influence of the electoral work of the Greens (WA), Liberals for Forests and The Wilderness Society has been estimated by The Wilderness Society to have delivered 5 seats, and government, to the Labor Party. Without this support independents would have held the balance of power, with the likely return of the Court government, with or without a successful resolution to the old growth logging issue.

For those quick to dismiss the support for old growth forests as a 'one-off', the popularity of the campaign to save Ningaloo Reef, as demonstrated by the 15,000 strong rally in Fremantle on 1 December 2002 and the popular blue bumper sticker, has shown that the environment is of enduring concern to Western Australians, and a concern that they are prepared to act on.



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### 6.0 Looking after WA's National Parks and other conservation reserves

#### Background

National Parks and other conservation reserves are the wild places of Western Australia that have been put aside for all time to be left in their natural state. These areas occupy just 7% of the State's landmass<sup>1</sup>, and less than 3% of our marine environment<sup>2</sup>. Such levels of reservation could hardly be regarded as 'a balance', yet even these relatively small areas remain open to exploitative and damaging activities under different political party policies. A wealthy and prosperous State such as WA should be able to draw a 'line in the sand' and declare that such valuable and irreplaceable areas should be afforded proper protection and not subjected to mining activities, poor management and neglect.

#### 6.1 Mining in National Parks and other conservation reserves

Mining activities can, and frequently do, introduce feral animals, dieback, weeds and changed fire regimes into natural areas. These can alter the natural balance and have dramatic impacts on plant and animal communities, leaving scars on the landscape for millennia.

- All mining, including mineral exploration, construction of mining infrastructure corridors and the construction of mines should be banned from all types of conservation reserves (including proposed conservation reserves) in the State. Additionally existing mining tenements in conservation reserves should be phased out by the end of the decade.



D'Entrecasteaux National Park. Photo: David Mackenzie

#### 6.2 Funding to nature conservation agencies

Polling in recent decades has clearly shown that health, education, law and order, and the environment are issues of most concern to the voting public. Yet government spending on the environment continues to remain at hopelessly inadequate levels compared with the challenges we face.

In this financial year's state budget, spending on health is expected to be 25.6% of total general government expenses, education and training 27%, public order and safety 11%, and the environment 1.8%.<sup>3</sup>

If WA is to continue to benefit from a healthy society and economy, a sea change in attitudes and expectations is urgently needed regarding allocation of public funds. Problems such as salinity, which is now affecting over half of WA's farms<sup>4</sup>, are warning signs that we cannot continue to take from the environment without properly caring for it.

- Funding to all environmental agencies and programs should be increased by approximately 15% (in real terms) each year for the next four years so that spending on the environment reaches at least 3% of overall government expenditure by the end of the next term of government.





# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*



Lake Johnston wilderness, WA. Photo: Charles Roche

### 6.3 Wilderness legislation

Western Australia has a global responsibility to manage and preserve its wilderness heritage. Wilderness is threatened world wide by the demands of an ever expanding human population and ever increasing individual consumption. We are losing 30-40 hectares per minute around the world<sup>5</sup>. Half of the world's countries do not have any wilderness areas at all. Only Russia and Canada have more wilderness than Australia, and WA has almost as much high quality wilderness as all other Australian states put together.

Wilderness is increasingly appreciated by modern society for its irreplaceable and special qualities. However, wilderness areas also have a vital role to play in the preservation of plants and animals – keeping areas free from dieback, allowing evolutionary processes to continue as they always have, acting as a biological reservoir which can be drawn from in the future, and being a reference point against which the change of other natural places can be measured.

Wilderness, therefore, has an important role to play in WA's conservation reserve system<sup>6</sup>.

Despite this, the role of wilderness is virtually ignored in legislation pertaining to nature conservation in WA. As a result few areas are ever declared 'wilderness' under the CALM Act, they are not assured the standard of management required, and wilderness areas can be de-gazetted at ministerial whim.

Therefore, amendments to the CALM Act are needed in the next term of government to:

- provide guidelines for a minimum standard of management for wilderness areas;
- ensure that both houses of Parliament are required to agree before any de-gazettal of wilderness areas or reduction in area of wilderness is possible;
- allow for the identification and nomination of areas as wilderness areas by non-government groups and individuals;
- allow for wilderness areas to be declared and managed outside of the existing reserve system on unallocated crown land.



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

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### 6.4 Protecting Australia's ark – Barrow Island

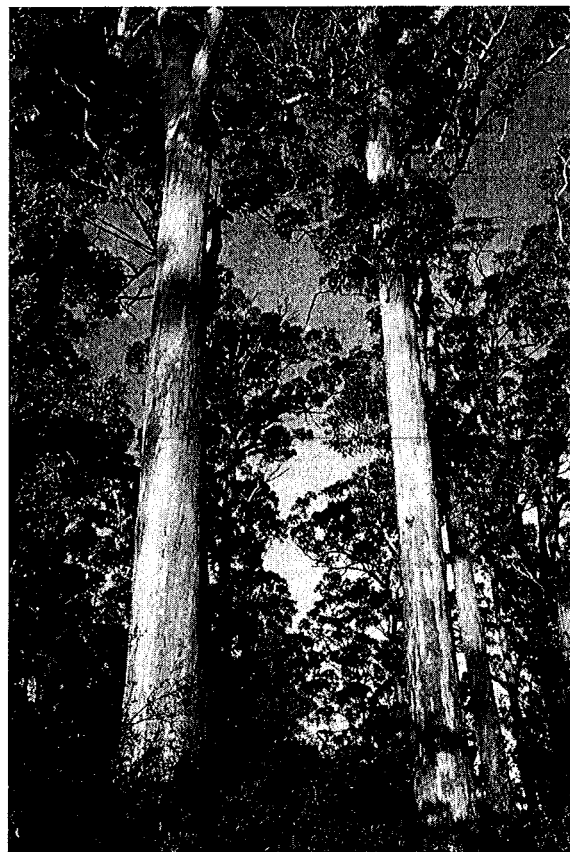
Barrow Island, 56 kilometres off the Pilbara Coastline, is a Class A Nature Reserve, home to 24 types of animal that don't exist anywhere else in the world, and at least 350 native plant species – all of which has so far remained relatively well protected from mainland weeds and diseases. This remarkable faunal and floral assemblage should make the island an invaluable scientific point of reference for the massive job of rehabilitating Australia's arid and semi-arid regions, but instead Barrow has been pushed to the brink by the presence of the petroleum industry and the drilling of over 1,000 wells.

The absence of any comprehensive baseline studies before the arrival of the oil industry has allowed current operators Chevron Texaco to make strange claims of benefiting Barrow with their presence, which in turn has helped convince the State Government to give in principle approval for siting the Gorgon gas project on the island.

The LNG plant required to process the high CO<sub>2</sub> content Gorgon gas will need as many as 3,000 contractors to build, which will expose the irreplaceable Barrow Island to levels of quarantine risk that are well beyond anything experienced as part of current oil operations. A single quarantine breach is all that would be required to lead to an extinction of one or more of the island's endemic fauna – and the Environmental Protection Authority described the chance of such a breach on Gorgon as “virtually certain”.

- Therefore The Wilderness Society calls on all political parties to reject any proposal for gas processing on Barrow Island.

### 7.0 Building a conservation reserve system that works



Old Growth Karri forest. Photo: The Wilderness Society

#### Background

The one-third of our continent which makes up Western Australia is comprised of 54 terrestrial bioregions (or large ecosystems) which all feature distinctly different plants, animals and landscapes. Of these bioregions, half have less than 5% of their area protected, and 95% have less than 30% of their area protected. These levels fall well short of the minimum 30% protection target that leading scientists<sup>7</sup> are now recommending for terrestrial environments, as recent work has shown that the retention of less than 30% of native vegetation greatly accelerates species loss<sup>8</sup>.



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

Similarly, the WA marine environment is made up of 18 marine bioregions. Of these bioregions, half are afforded no protection at all and less than 3% of our entire State waters are protected in no-take sanctuary zones – a level which falls well short of the 20-30% recommended by the World Parks Congress in 2003.

In addition to this, latest scientific research into conservation reserve design highlights the need to go beyond securing natural values in the landscape to also preserving the large-scale natural processes that have helped shape them<sup>9</sup>. If we continue to ignore this, we risk most of our current national parks degrading and diminishing, over time, into unhealthy museum pieces.

Clearly, we have some fundamental decisions to make and a significant task in front of us to correct these inadequacies.

### **7.1 Bioregional marine planning and management**

Globally marine ecosystems are in crisis. Marine scientists estimate that two-thirds of the world's coral reefs are dying<sup>10</sup>, and that 90% of the ocean's large fish have disappeared<sup>11</sup>.

WA has an opportunity to prevent our marine environment from heading in the same direction, but our existing system of Marine Parks can not and will not provide the protection scientists recommend. For the decade to December 2004 when the current system for the creation of marine protected areas has been in operation, waters protected in no-take sanctuary zones increased by just 3,050 hectares (0.024% of State waters). Even with recently proposed increases in marine parks, the area of fully protected State waters remains well below 3% of our total marine estate. With our reserve system delivering poor conservation outcomes



Pin Cushion Starfish. Photo: Wags and Kelly

and generating significant community conflict, it is crystal clear that our marine reserves planning system is broken. Until we achieve security for our biodiversity, uncertainty for our \$600 million fishing industry<sup>13</sup> will remain. Fishing pressure in WA has reached the stage where 87% of major commercial fish stocks are over-exploited (~9%) or fully exploited (~78%)<sup>14</sup>, and little is known about the impact that this is having on the thousands of other species in our marine environment.

The Wilderness Society believes that time is running out. WA's marine plants and animals, from our southern sponge gardens, to our northern coral reefs, are a priceless public asset. To secure both ecological and industrial certainty, WA needs a new policy framework to create a network of comprehensive, adequate and representative Marine National Parks and to deliver genuinely sustainable off-reserve management.

Unfortunately our current institutional and legislative arrangements underpinning management of our marine environment make such goals impossible. The system has grown in an ad hoc manner and we now find real problems which require urgent action by government. These problems are detailed in appendix 1.

# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

As a result of these problems, The Wilderness Society is calling for:

- An immediate end to the existing 'New Horizons' policy;
- The immediate implementation of a new ecosystem-based planning process underpinned by science and the precautionary principle (see appendix 2) to establish a network of well-managed marine National Parks throughout the State's marine bioregions and to deliver ecologically sustainable management of all state waters;
- Commitments to undertake institutional and legislative reform as outlined in the joint conservation group's Ten Point Plan (see appendix 3), with a commitment to fixing the most significant problems within the first half of the next term of government.

### **7.2 A bioregional terrestrial approach**

WA has yet to establish a conservation reserve system that is comprehensive, adequate and representative of all types of ecosystems across the breadth of the State. As mentioned earlier, just 5% of WA's 54 bioregions reach a level of protection greater than 30% of their area.

To redress some of the inadequacies of WA's terrestrial reserve system many conservation reserves have been identified and proposed over the past 30 years. Due to red tape and the conflicting objectives of government agencies which hold the power of veto over the creation of new conservation reserves, a significant proportion of these proposals remain frozen in time.

- WA must review the adequacy of its terrestrial conservation reserve system on a bioregional basis and increase reservation by the end of 2008 in line with the commitments made as

part of the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 ([www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/objectives](http://www.deh.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/objectives)).

- Additionally, any administrative veto held by non-environment agencies or for non-conservation purposes over the creation of conservation reserves must be removed before 2006.

### **7.3 Protecting ecological processes**

Many processes that determine environmental health or the survival of species operate over vast areas or long periods of time. Ecological processes and environmental flows include climate change, migrating species, fire, and transportation of water and nutrients by rivers and groundwater<sup>9</sup>. These create a web of cause and effect that links places hundreds or thousands of kilometres apart, and which can occur over decades or centuries. The scale of nature - in time and space - sets great challenges for the design of our conservation reserve system. Yet if we continue to protect small, isolated areas without also preserving ecological processes, the plants, animals and ecosystems of our protected areas will, over time, decline in health and resilience. Ignoring these factors when drawing boundaries for our reserve system will eventually risk the very survival of the nature we seek to protect.

- We must ensure that all government conservation work is underpinned by the need to go beyond securing natural values in the landscape to also preserve the large-scale natural processes that have helped shape them.



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### 7.4 The wilderness 'beyond the fence'

In Australia over the past two hundred years, 72 million hectares of the original 80 million hectares of temperate woodland has been cleared for agriculture, pastoralism and urbanisation. Western Australia has suffered the greatest, with some shires cleared of 95% of native vegetation. As a consequence, WA is now experiencing devastating environmental problems including salinity, soil erosion and mass extinctions of flora and fauna.

In south west WA there remains an area of relatively unbroken tall woodland, heathland, mallee shrubland, and mallee-woodland about the size of Tasmania which forms an important passage from the taller forests of the wetter coastal zone, to the lower shrublands of the arid interior. This wilderness east of the Rabbit-Proof Fence is a spectacular mosaic of vegetation communities, interspersed with islands of granite rock and natural salt lakes. It is a virtually intact wilderness some 6 million hectares in size which is bounded loosely by the towns of Kalgoorlie to the north, Esperance in the south, Hyden to the west and Norseman in the east.

The soil and climate variations and relative stability have produced an astounding level of biodiversity and a high rate of endemic species in this area. Research to-date has shown that this area, while being just 1% of Australia's land mass, holds almost one fifth of Australia's plant species – and more species are being discovered

on a regular basis. It is one of the reasons why south west WA is ranked as one of the worlds top 25 biodiversity hotspots.

This wilderness 'beyond the fence' represents the last unprotected wilderness area in the South West of the State. One third of the area delivers valuable services to the Avon catchment in reducing salinity, and it is also the eastern



Woodlands east of the Rabbit Proof Fence

proportion of the community-based landscape-scale conservation effort known as Gondwana Link (see background box below or [www.gondwanalink.org](http://www.gondwanalink.org)).

For further information regarding The Wilderness Society's conservation efforts in the area contact Charles Roche, TWS Outback Conservation Manager.



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### Background box 1

#### The Gondwana Link vision

South-western Australia is internationally renowned for its ecological diversity. Hundreds of millions of years of evolution across one of the Earth's oldest land surfaces has created a major 'biodiversity hotspot'. Sadly, massive clearing of vegetation for agriculture has fragmented the landscape. Accelerated climate change and land degradation now threaten the long-term viability of much of the region's biodiversity.

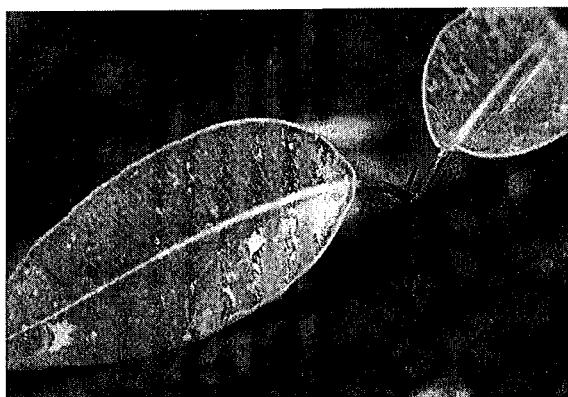


Gondwana Link community event. Photo Craig Keesing

The Gondwana Link vision is a community-based initiative which intends to turn this around. This landscape-scale conservation project will link the ecosystems of inland WA with the wetter forests of the south west corner. It aims to restore ecological connectivity from the woodlands of WA's Goldfields, via five of the region's significant wild places, to the karri and jarrah forests of the Margaret River area, a distance of almost 1,000 kilometres.

This is a cooperative effort from a broad range of community and non-government organisations. Initially, it is comprised of The Wilderness Society, Greening Australia, Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, Friends of the Fitzgerald and the Australian Bush Heritage Fund. The Wilderness Society's work in Gondwana Link is part of a bold and audacious continent-wide approach to protecting, restoring and reconnecting Australia's remaining wild areas (see [www.wilderness.org.au/wildcountry](http://www.wilderness.org.au/wildcountry)).

Collectively, the partner organisations bring together a wide spectrum of conservation strategies, including public advocacy, revegetation and landcare, land purchase and property covenanting, and the provision of incentives for conservation on private land. By working collectively to a long-term plan, each group's conservation efforts will be complementary – so that, when completed, there will be protected bush from Margaret River to Kalgoorlie and beyond.



Jarrah seedling. Photo: Andy Wildman

#### 7.5 Securing the Ravensthorpe connection

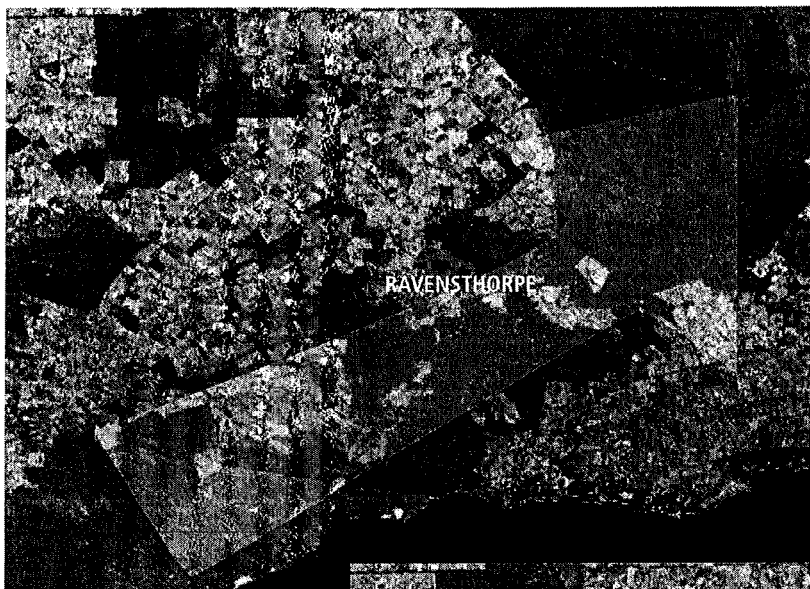
One of the most tenuous and valuable bush links throughout the Gondwana Link pathway is the 'Ravensthorpe connection'. Located just east of the town of Ravensthorpe, these two vital bush corridors provide the last link between the UNESCO-listed Fitzgerald River National Park and the dryer wilderness interior of WA (see section 6.4 above).





# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

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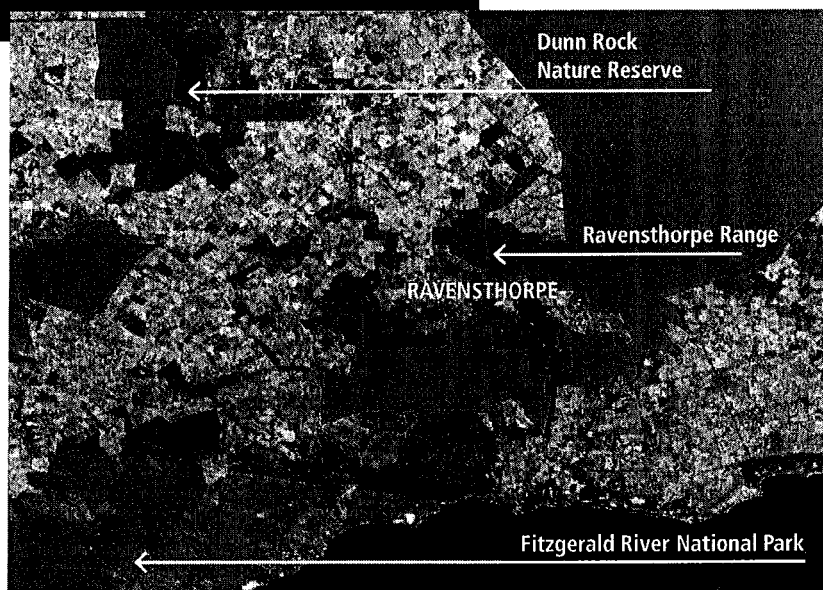


Satellite photo showing remaining vegetation (darker areas) and cleared farmland (lighter areas)

Arrow suggests potential for Ravensthorpe connection of continuous bush

These corridors, and the unallocated crown land south of the town, are extremely valuable in their own right as a remarkable confluence area for plant diversity. Here, the plant communities of the South Coast, the Wheatbelt and the Goldfields, which are all at the extremity of their ranges, come together to form an exclusive diversity collectively known as the 'Ravensthorpe Range convergence communities'. Just two examples of species found nowhere else in the world are the Bandelup Silver Mallet (*Eucalyptus purpurata*) and the Ravensthorpe Range lerista *Lerista viduata*, an endemic skink. There are few places in Australia that can lay claim to an endemic animal.

This woodland and heathland represents one of the last connecting corridors in a sea of cleared land and devastated ecology. The



Satellite photo with areas of bush on Unallocated Crown Land shaded

globally-significant plant diversity of this region means that all intact remaining vegetation is extremely valuable in its own right. Conserving the remaining parcels of crown land to the north west of Ravensthorpe would also contribute to the viability and connectivity of the Dunn Rock and Lake Magenta Nature Reserves. Government, as a key land manager in the Gondwana Link pathway, could make an extremely valuable contribution to this



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

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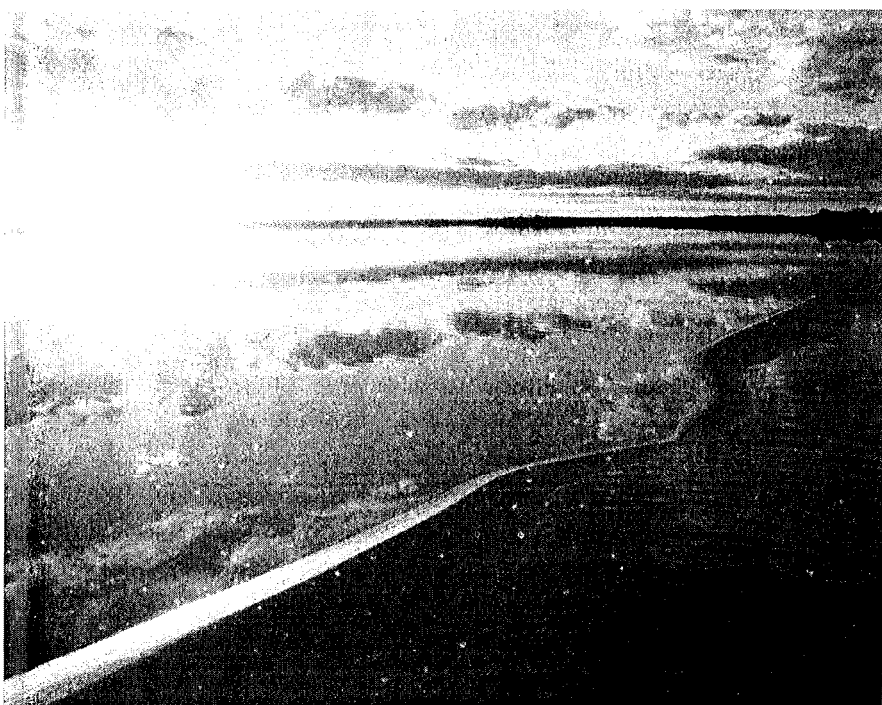
community-based vision in the next term of government by:

- Expanding the Fitzgerald River National Park to take in the Unallocated Crown Land south of Ravensthorpe;
- Transferring the Unallocated Crown Land to the north of Ravensthorpe around the Ravensthorpe Range area into an 'A' class nature reserve;
- Transferring the Unallocated Crown Land bush corridor to the east of Ravensthorpe into an 'A' class nature reserve;
- Expanding the Dunn Rock Nature Reserve to take in the Unallocated Crown Land to its west;
- Expanding the Lake Magenta Nature Reserve to take in the Unallocated Crown Land to its east;
- As a government initiative, fund the construction of a 'Biodiversity Hotspot' interpretive centre in Ravensthorpe as a focal point for the local community and visitors to promote the conservation of the region. It would be important to ensure that this centre is supported into the future through the creation of an endowment of \$1 million and through the strong involvement of local community conservation groups.

### 7.6 Lake Jasper

In the driest inhabited continent in the world where fresh water is increasingly valued, Lake Jasper is remarkable as WA's largest permanent freshwater lake. Located within D'Entrecasteaux National Park 50 kilometres south of Nannup, Lake Jasper is situated in a coastal wilderness of shifting dunes, granite and limestone headlands, long beaches, pockets of karri and jarrah forest, diverse heaths and vibrant wetlands. It is crystal clear and profuse with wildlife, serving as a 'biological reservoir' for native freshwater fish and playing a vital part in the surrounding wetlands which contains several rare plant and protected bird species.

Furthermore, Lake Jasper is situated in a bottleneck of the D'Entrecasteaux National Park, an important wildlife corridor which is part of the Gondwana Link vision.



Lake Jasper. Photo: Andy Wildman



# A vision for Western Australia's great wild places

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Lake Jasper is the subject of one of the longest running community conservation campaigns in WA. It came under threat from a proposal to mine mineral sands within its winter flooding zone when 368 hectares of land to the west of the lake were excised from D'Entrecasteaux National Park in 1996.

If this mine is allowed to proceed it would result in irreversible damage to the area's plants and animals. Pollution and muddying of the lake, siltation, chemical spills, and changes to the water table are all potential hazards both for wildlife and vegetation.

The mine proponent, Cable Sands Pty Ltd, has recently proceeded with construction of a mine in a vital part of the Ludlow Tuart Forest near Busselton. It should not be allowed to risk the future of another part of our natural heritage.

Therefore The Wilderness Society believes that the government should:

- Dismiss the proposal to mine at the proposed South Jangardup site;
- Incorporate the excised 368 hectares back into the National Park;
- Purchase for rehabilitation and incorporation into the National Park the parcel of private land directly to the north of Lake Jasper.

### **7.7 Wilderness declarations**

Despite WA's globally significant wilderness estate, just four areas have ever been declared 'wilderness' under the CALM Act. Wilderness plays a vital role in our conservation reserve system and more areas need to be managed for these values.

- WA must increase protection for its wilderness through the declaration of at least four new wilderness areas within the next term of government.
- The CALM Act should be amended to ensure proper identification, management and secure protection of wilderness areas, to allow for the third party nomination of wilderness areas, to allow joint management of conservation reserves with indigenous communities, and to integrate effectively with the proposed Biodiversity Conservation Act.

### **7.8 Protecting our Tuarts**

Tuart forests, of which there are six different types, all occur on the Swan Coastal Plain an hour to the north and two hours to the south of Perth. Since European colonisation the area of Tuart forest has diminished at a frightening rate, with less than 19% of Tuarts present in 1880 remaining. Tragically our six Tuart ecosystems are increasingly fragmented and under threat from neglect, urbanisation and over-development.

The plight of our Tuart forests recently came to prominence through the campaign to save Ludlow Tall Tuart forest. Public support for this issue demonstrated Western Australian's continuing passion to see our south west forests protected.

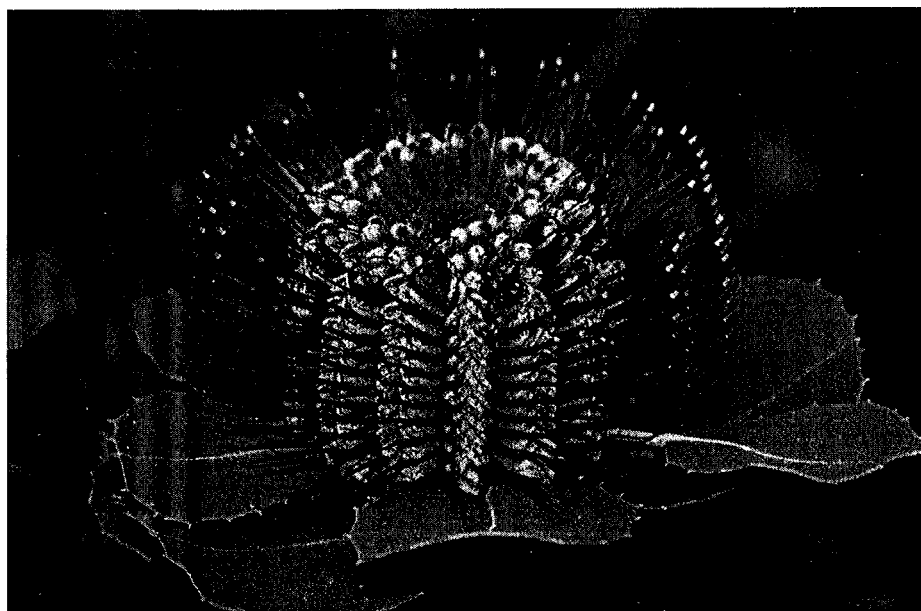
The Wilderness Society is currently formulating a conservation strategy to protect our remaining Tuart forests.

- Protect our Tuart ecosystems by implementing the conservation movement's Tuart reserve system proposal before 2008.



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### 7.9 Protecting WA's forest biodiversity

The current government's commitments to protect WA's old growth forests have been a positive step forward in establishing a conservation reserve system which will protect our unique forest biodiversity into the future – however we are still short of what scientists believe is required. The Government's failed process to protect our high conservation value forests needs remedial action so ensure that areas not represented in the reserve system are protected, and forests of high community value are not logged.

- The Government must act before 2007 to ensure the protection of high conservation value forests as nominated by the WA Forest Alliance, including Helms Block, Arcadia Block, Chester Block, and the Palmer Petition Area.

### 7.10 Securing Ningaloo Reef and Region

The value and popularity of Ningaloo needs no introduction. With the process of World Heritage listing under way, WA must act now to secure the integrity of the entire Ningaloo region so that its international reputation and tourism potential is not jeopardised.

- Within the next term of government protect the Ningaloo Region by:
  - de-gazetting the town site at Mauds Landing;
  - removing all mining tenements on Cape Range;
  - removing the 'temporary reserve' on Cape Range;
  - extending Cape Range National Park eastward to the coast;
  - dismissing the proposal to establish a salt operation on eastern Exmouth Gulf;
  - incorporating the Muiron Islands into Ningaloo Marine Park;
  - and supporting World Heritage listing with boundaries that include the eastern shores of Exmouth Gulf.



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### 8.0 A new conservation paradigm for government

State government, with its significant and increasing revenue base, enormous regulatory powers and vast land management responsibilities, has more potential and responsibility than any other single entity in the State to keep our environment in its natural condition.

However, government agencies are not fulfilling their potential in environment management and regulation due to inadequate funding, inappropriate priorities and practices, inefficient systems and a number of other obstacles. The following proposals will assist in turning this situation around.

#### 8.1 The Earth Charter

Similar to the United Nations Charter of Human Rights, the Earth Charter is a contemporary synthesis of values, principles, and aspirations that are widely shared by growing numbers of men and women in all regions of the world. Conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, the Earth Charter... *"is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It seeks to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world. It is an expression of hope and a call to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history."*<sup>15</sup>

The principles of the Earth Charter reflect extensive international consultations conducted over a period of many years. These principles are also based upon contemporary science, international law, and the insights of philosophy and religion. Successive drafts of the Earth

Charter were circulated around the world for comments and debate by nongovernmental organizations, community groups, professional societies, and international experts in many fields. (For further information see [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)). The Wilderness Society calls on the WA Government to:

- Sign the international Earth Charter and incorporate it into government agency policies and programs to be audited as part of the role of the proposed Sustainability Commission.

#### 8.2 Changing how the Environmental Protection Authority does business

The Environmental Protection Authority is WA's first line of defence for the environment against inappropriate development proposals. As a result of inadequate funding and inappropriate procedures and systems in both the EPA and DOE, many proposals are not thoroughly assessed, or when approved, are not monitored and conditions and standards not enforced. The following reforms would assist the EPA in fulfilling its mission and assist industry in meeting its environmental obligations.

- Separation between environmental consultants and proponents in preparing formal environmental impact assessments is essential within the next term of government. This is necessary to ensure that consultants can provide independent advice on terms of reference set by government on proposed developments. At present consultants are employed directly by proponents and are neither independent nor seen to be. An independent authority must be established to select amongst tendering consultants on a skills/experience basis, with the proponent providing the necessary consultant fees. These standards should be endorsed by the



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Ecological Society of Australia and legislation passed within the next term of government.

- Mandatory minimum ecological standards for project site revegetation need to be established and enforced through legislation and a commensurate increase in funding levied. These standards should be endorsed by the Ecological Society of Australia and legislation passed within the next term of government.
- All agencies including the EPA must establish bonds and penalties for project proposals commensurate to the full cost of rehabilitation, factoring in inflation, price rises, and past performance in meeting government standards and requirements. This would not diminish the responsibility of proponents to respect the environmental offset framework presently outlined by the EPA.
- Require that all major project proposals referred to the EPA be formally assessed.
- Require all proposals referred to the EPA to be listed on the EPA's web site.
- All project proposals referred to the EPA must be formally assessed and listed on the EPA's web site.
- The EPA must take into account wilderness quality, landscape integrity, ecological connectivity and natural processes in all proposal assessments.
- Develop a system of post approval independent monitoring of major projects to ensure that measures and targets set during the approval process are achieved.
- Within the next term of government, ensure that compliance with ministerial conditions is fully enforced to meet community expectations.

### 8.3 CALM culture, roles and responsibilities

The Department of Conservation and Land Management has made substantial progress over the past five years toward being an agency which has conservation as its primary consideration across all sections. However, while good conservation practices and standards are commonplace among some sections of the department, other areas are yet to reach their full potential. Improvements are most needed in the areas of fire management, wilderness management, conservation advocacy, and community liaison and promotion of off-reserve conservation management.

- Establish a Wilderness and Wild Rivers unit within CALM to:
  - Manage the ecological and wilderness values on Unallocated Crown Land which is where the overwhelming majority of wilderness in WA remains;
  - Coordinate / promote wilderness research;
  - Bi-annually assess the state of wilderness quality (as per the National Wilderness Inventory) throughout WA and issue a public report detailing the findings;
  - Promote wilderness within the department, government, and the public;
  - Proactively identify and promote the declaration of wilderness areas;
  - Promote complementary management practices with landowners whose land adjoins wilderness and wild rivers;
  - Advocate for wilderness preservation and restoration within government processes;
  - Where possible, involve rightful traditional owners in the management of Unallocated Crown Land;
- Establish Wild River Legislation to protect and manage wild and natural river systems across the state.





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- Remove CALM's conflict of interest in, and need for, sourcing income from tourism activities. CALM should continue to hold tourism management responsibilities under transparent and equitable tendering systems and income should go to consolidated revenue.
- Ensure that change toward a conservation advocacy culture within CALM continues through employee recruitment methods which place a high priority on individual's desire to protect the environment.
- CALM must be allowed and encouraged to enter into joint management arrangements with traditional owners of land through the passing of joint management legislation.
- Set the promotion and implementation of off-reserve conservation management on land contiguous to CALM-managed lands as a key objective for CALM Executive Director. Key indicators of success would be the achieving of targets for land contiguous with the CALM estate such that (a) the area managed specifically for conservation was increased, and (b) the standard of conservation management on those lands was improved.
- Work toward ecologically sustainable fire management by, (a) full implementing the EPA recommendations of the 2004 *Review of the fire policies and management practices of the Department of Conservation and Land Management*, and (b) implementing the recommendations for ecologically sustainable fire management prepared by the WA Forest Alliance and (c) requesting the EPA to review fire policies and management practices in other areas, such as the eastern agricultural areas, the Pilbara and the Kimberley.
- Undertake significant research into the impacts of baiting in remote areas on dingo populations and the subsequent knock-on

impacts on other species. Until this research is complete, adopt a precautionary approach to baiting of remote areas.

- Increased funding to CALM for its management of Unallocated Crown Land by \$5m each year for the next four years.

### **8.4 All government agency data to be freely and rapidly available**

The widespread availability of powerful computers and the increase in participation in community conservation activities in recent times have combined to produce a very significant demand for data pertaining to the natural environment. Analysis, manipulation and presentation of data using Geographic Information Systems has become a key decision support tool among non-government organisations. Making all data held by government agencies rapidly available at no cost to non-government organisations will greatly magnify the usefulness and application of this data and facilitate the intelligent focusing of voluntary conservation work throughout the landscape.

- Establish and fund a 'one-stop shop' for data pertaining to the natural environment held by all WA government agencies. This data would be provided rapidly at no cost to non-government organisations upon request.

### **8.5 Ethical investment of State superannuation**

Today the enormous financial capital of superannuation funds is increasingly used to influence good environmental practises through the design of discerning investment portfolios. This has been shown to be done without reduced return to the fund.

The WA Government Employees Superannuation Board (GESB) is the superannuation fund for employees of Western Australian Government



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departments, authorities and enterprises. With over 250,000 members and managing an investment portfolio of over \$4 billion, GESB is the largest Western Australian based superannuation fund. Through instructing the GESB to move in a defined way to investment only in ethical investments that do not cause significant environmental harm the State government and its employees have tremendous potential to benefit the environment and contribute toward a more sustainable society.

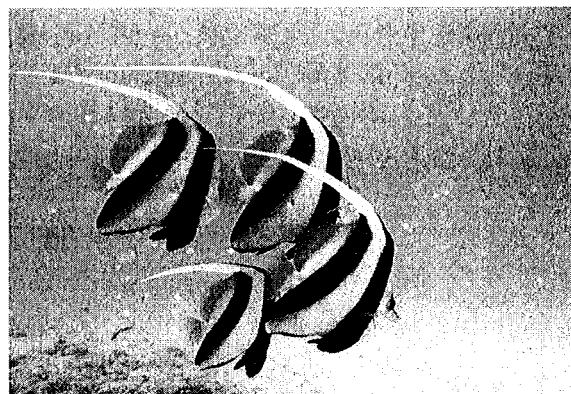
- Require that the State Government's employee's superannuation scheme avoid investment in environmentally and socially deleterious activities and favour those investments which promote the principles outlined in the Earth Charter. Preference should be given for environmentally sound Western Australian investment opportunities.

### **8.6 Pass and implement a powerful new Act to protect our biodiversity**

Western Australia has been recognised internationally for its extraordinary range and uniqueness of terrestrial and marine plants and animals. This biodiversity underpins our community, our quality of life and our economy: clean air and water, potentially sustainable industries such as our burgeoning nature-based tourism industry and bioprospecting, and source of opportunities for recreation and enjoyment.

Yet the health of WA's ecosystems and the resilience of its biodiversity continues to suffer from antiquated legislation developed decades ago before many of today's threatening processes were properly understood. WA needs to revolutionise the way we manage our biodiversity by introducing a powerful new Biodiversity Conservation Act which achieves the following:

- allows for the protection and management of our terrestrial and marine biodiversity and



**Banner fish.** Photo: Wags and Kelly

- associated ecological processes;
- establishes a well-resourced and independently-operating Biodiversity Commission which would include the functions of the Conservation Commission and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority but also oversees sustainable use of biodiversity more generally;
- provides \$10 million over the next term of government to the Biodiversity Commission to allow it to carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively, including monitoring, auditing, enforcement and advocacy;
- provides for the listing of threatened species as well as threatened ecological communities;
- allows members of the public to nominate species or ecological communities for listing;
- ensures the development and implementation of a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the entire State, including state marine waters;
- provides for the listing of processes that threaten biodiversity, such as dieback and competition by feral animals;
- incorporates significantly higher fines for those individuals and corporations which are responsible for harming threatened ecological communities and species;
- provides protection for the State's wilderness and wild rivers;



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- allows for the creation of bioregional plans relating to biodiversity conservation;
- allows the Minister for the Environment to waive rates, taxes and charges for landholders who have entered into conservation covenants;
- establishes a \$100 million endowment for the purposes of the conservation of biodiversity on private land;
- allows for conservation groups to apply for court injunctions to prevent unlawful acts affecting threatened species or ecological communities;
- contains detailed rules relating to the ecologically sustainable management of nature-based tourism.

This Act would need to be accompanied by consequential amendments to all other related Acts to allow it to succeed in its objects.

### 9.0 Creating sustainable industries

#### Background

Scientists now believe that our conservation reserve system, even if it extended to cover 30% of each bioregion, will not ensure the survival of the continent's plants and animals into the future<sup>7</sup>. The Ecological Society of Australia has stated that "*Much of the unprotected biodiversity across Australia is vulnerable to commercial uses and other threatening processes and continues to decline.*"<sup>16</sup>

To allow our children to enjoy the same opportunities that we have had, WA needs to undertake significant conservation management 'off-reserve' and ensure that our industries do not deplete the State's biodiversity. This means moving most of our industries onto a footing where their activities do not compromise the ecology of our unique ecosystems.

The following proposals would assist in achieving the necessary ecological sustainability.

#### 9.1 Reform of the pastoral industry

Rangelands, the name given to the vast areas of Western Australia outside of the south-western corner, occupies 87% (2,175,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of the State and is home to just 10% of its population. About half of this land is held under pastoral lease, and at the beginning of 2001, there were 504 pastoral leases in WA (covering 39% of the State).

Rangelands contain a wealth of native plant and animal species and habitats, unique geological formations, extraordinary landscapes and a rich indigenous and non-indigenous heritage. The biota of the rangelands is characterised by an extraordinary biological richness and complexity and a very high degree of endemism. Vegetation includes the shrublands and woodlands south of the tropics, the hummock and tussock grasslands of the Pilbara, the inland sandy desert communities and the sub-tropical savannas of the Kimberley.

A century of pastoral use has had a devastating impact on the environment. The WA Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has ranked pastoralism as the most significant threat to rangeland ecosystems and has described the significance of changes to the natural biota caused by grazing as being "serious and extensive over a considerable area". In an examination of flora in the wider rangelands area in 1994, Wilcox and Cunningham concluded that only 40% of the rangelands were in good condition, 34% were in fair condition and 26% were in poor condition.

Pastoral lease management practices which have resulted in land degradation and biodiversity loss across more than one third of the State include;

**Overstocking** - excessive grazing by introduced stock such as cattle reduces vegetation cover and inhibits regeneration, generally leading to land degradation, and in particular soil erosion.



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**Inappropriate fire management** - changed frequency of fires since non-Indigenous settlement and the introduction of grazing practices has led to broad scale changes in vegetation types including the spread of woody weeds and the decline of native species.

**The introduction of weeds and feral animals** - the major species of introduced animals affecting rangelands are goat, rabbit, pig, donkey, camel, horse, cat and fox. Impacts on biodiversity include predation, competition for food and shelter and displacement of native species resulting from grazing pressures and hoof damage. The indiscriminate and destructive grazing habits of goats have had a particularly devastating impact on native plants.

As a result, The Wilderness Society strongly encourages the following:

- Remove the statutory requirement for minimum stocking levels within the next term of government from the Land Administration Act.
- Through amendments to the Land Administration Act, prohibit the commercial use of goats on pastoral properties within the next term of government.
- Establish and implement a comprehensive goat eradication program.
- Require that the renewal of leases for all pastoral properties in 2016 be conditional on the adoption and government approval of accredited sustainability management plans.
- Seek reservation of further areas of high

conservation value as part of the proposal for terrestrial bioregional reservation in 6.2.

- Ensure the establishment by the EPA of pastoral management guidelines (or Key Performance Indicators) for ecological sustainability to underpin all pastoral lease management through to 2015 and all accredited sustainability management plans. These must be monitored and enforced by the Pastoral Lands Board and lease renewal must be strictly conditional upon meeting these guidelines.
- Commit to establishing 42 year rolling pastoral leases with assessments of KPIs every seven years with options for cancelling the lease upon findings of non-compliance.
- Establish a well-resourced, legislatively-based Rangelands Council responsible for the ecologically sustainable management of rangelands.
- Reform the Pastoral Lands Board so that its primary responsibility is the strong and effective monitoring and enforcement of management standards and KPIs in conjunction with the EPA and NRM rangelands strategy targets.
- Increase funding to the Environmental Management Unit by 100% by the end of the next term of government.



Postcard to the EPA, 2003



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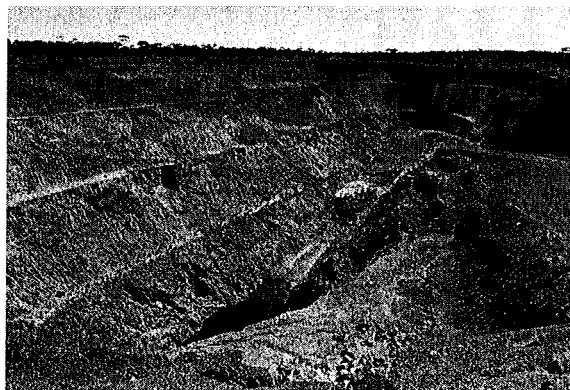
## *Environment and conservation priorities for 2005 and beyond*

### 9.2 Achieving an ecologically-sustainable native forest logging industry

Western Australian's desire to protect our unique south west karri and jarrah forests became one of the key defining issues of the last State election. Never before had an environmental issue had such an impact on an election in WA – the old growth forest 'referendum' had clearly fallen on the side of conservation.

And while good progress has been made toward establishing a comprehensive conservation reserve system for our forests, the political momentum generated at the election fell short of resolving the environmental challenges facing the logging industry. Many forest types remain insufficiently represented in National Parks and off-reserve management is characterised by the grossly unsustainable practices of woodchipping and clearfelling. A Western Australian government has the public mandate to finish the job and put the logging industry on a sustainable footing. Only when this is achieved will certainty for the logging industry and the forests of the South West be possible.

- End woodchipping of native forests on public land by 2006.
- End clear felling and gap logging of native forests on public land by 2007.
- Increase royalties for timber from native forests by 10% each year for the next 4 years so that royalties better reflect the true value of our native timber.
- Establish an independent scientific committee (composition to be decided by Ecological Society of Australia) to thoroughly investigate the impact of global warming and rainfall decline on the ability of South West native forests to regenerate and to make



Mine site south of Kalgoorlie. Photo: Charles Roche

- recommendations to government regarding the implications of its findings for silvicultural prescriptions and wood volumes logged.
- Reform the grading system for logs from native forests and introduce independent and random auditing of grading so that uniformity and correctness of grading is maintained across logging operations.
- Establish ecologically sustainable fire management as mentioned in 7.3.
- And to assist in ecological sustainable forest management in Tasmania, WA should prohibit the import of old growth logs from that State.

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Hunter River, Kimberley. Photo: Rob Jung

### 9.3 Reducing the ecological footprint of the mining industry

Mining plays a significant role in the economy in Western Australia. With its widespread exploration activities, mine construction, energy intensive processing and vast infrastructure corridors, it has also been responsible for significant environmental degradation of key areas of high conservation value. A balance needs to be struck where special parts of WA are set aside from this type of industrial activity, and alternative, less destructive forms of wealth generation are explored. The following special and irreplaceable areas are just such places.

- Prohibit mining of bauxite in the magnificent Mitchell Plateau, de-gazette the temporary reserve over the area, and place the area into a formally protected tenure such as an Indigenous Protected Area or a joint managed National Park.
- Mining must not be extended to any islands in the Buccaneer Archipelago.
- Mining of the South Jangardup deposit next to Lake Jasper must be rejected and the area reinstated as a National Park.
- The proposed Learmonth Limestone mine at Ningaloo should be rejected and a limestone strategy developed for the State.

- Prohibit any proposed increase in the expansion of bauxite mining in the jarrah forest.

### 9.4 Minimising the impact of agriculture in the north

Across northern Australia lies a vast arc of forests, woodlands, wild rivers and monsoonal wetlands – one hundred million hectares of intact wild country. It is one of the world's last great wild places. The North has four connected regions: Cape York Peninsula, the Gulf Country, the Top End and the Kimberley – each ecologically unique, but connected as a whole to form a distinct bioregion of Earth.

Western Australia's Kimberley region is at a crossroads. It can either follow the same path taken by southern WA that has resulted in such significant environmental problems, or it can learn from the mistakes of the past and find a more sustainable future for society and the environment. Promoting broad scale agriculture in the Kimberley before we give sustainability a chance will set us down a path that will be impossible to retreat from. It will remove the opportunity to do things differently and dramatically change the course of millions of years of evolution. Therefore the Wilderness Society proposes that:

- development of Ord Stage Two is ruled out;
- the current moratorium on genetically modified crops is extended through to the end of 2010;
- new cotton production proposals north of the 24th parallel are prohibited;
- reject proposals to build a pipeline from the Kimberley to supply the State's South West with water.





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**11.0 APPENDIX 1** – The problems with current policy, institutional and legislative arrangements pertaining to marine planning and management.

Conservation groups agree that significant institutional and legislative reform is needed in the marine domain because:

1. There is an absence of an overarching governance framework for the protection and management of our marine environments. There presently exists no comprehensive and unambiguous policy, legislative or administrative system for delivering protection of marine biodiversity and marine ecological processes in WA. The system also therefore fails to meet sustainability objectives.

2. Under the current system, multiple agencies involved in management of the State's marine environments function with internal and inter-agency inconsistencies, overlaps and conflicts in objectives and responsibilities. This has led to poorly disguised animosity between agencies and inefficiencies. It has fuelled conflicts at all levels, from stakeholder to ministerial, and delivered poor environmental outcomes.

3. A major constraint to the establishment of marine conservation reserves in WA was the introduction (in 1997) of a power of veto over the Environment Minister's ability to initiate and declare reserves. Only severely compromised environmental outcomes can be expected of a requirement for concurrence from ministers whose principal responsibilities are resource exploitation, maintaining access to resources and responding to constituents with vested interests in resource exploitation.

4. Currently less than 2% of WA's state coastal waters are afforded complete protection from

extractive activities. The weight of marine scientific opinion now recommends that a minimum of 20% by area of each marine habitat type (in each bioregion) should come under 'sanctuary' as the basis of responsible marine management.

5. The Fish Resources Management Act (and therefore Fisheries WA) has an inherent conflict of interest. Fisheries WA is responsible for the conservation AND the development AND the sharing of fish resources. These conflicts reduce the likelihood of ecosystem based management (EBM) approaches. Further, the focus on fish as a resource detracts from recognition of fish as part of the marine environment. That the definition of 'fish' under the Act includes flora, for example, also attracts attention to its deficiencies.

6. Negligible compliance in sanctuary zones. There is currently an impasse over the enforcement of compliance in (CALM) sanctuary zones. CALM want to do it but cannot, and Fisheries WA can do it, but won't (under their respective legislations). This lack of compliance means that marine parks are highly exposed to the charge of being 'paper parks.'

7. The role of science in WA marine management is undervalued, often ignored and applied in ad hoc ways. It is rarely independent. Science should have a defining role in marine planning and management, in decisions regarding targets for, design and establishment, of marine sanctuaries and in determining ecologically sustainable levels of resource exploitation and human interactions with marine ecosystems.

8. The existing 'New Horizons' policy framework for the creation of new marine reserves cannot deliver a Comprehensive,



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Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system. New Horizons is a localised multiple-use model, is not bioregionally-based and its outcomes are determined socially, not scientifically.

9. Poor integration of State/Commonwealth marine management processes. It is intended that parallel Bioregional Marine Planning processes be undertaken between State and Commonwealth Governments in adjacent jurisdictional areas. Ideally, state processes are integrated with commonwealth processes but at present no mechanism or agreement on process has been reached or defined.

It is regularly claimed that Western Australia has some of the best managed fisheries in the world. This may be the truth. Unfortunately, it does not therefore follow that we have one of the best managed marine environments in the world. The differences between managing fish stocks and managing biodiversity must be better understood and acknowledged.

The reality is that our state waters are a multiple use system without an effective governance framework for the protection and management of our marine ecosystems. The two pillars of our current system are integrated fisheries management and the marine reserves program. As they are currently arranged, they cannot succeed in providing the levels of protection for the marine environment that scientists warn are needed. Even with the greatest goodwill the system cannot deliver adequately.

### 12.0 APPENDIX 2 — Essential features for credible Bioregional Marine Planning

Any new system of Bioregional Marine Planning should be:

- outcome driven;
- science based;
- risk averse and demonstrably precautionary in approach;
- include a comprehensive, adequate and representative no-take reserve system;
- provide for appropriate community involvement;
- be subject to independent monitoring and audit in achieving outcomes;
- be integrated with planning approvals and coastal and terrestrial management processes;
- aligned with the best standards available internationally, such as those applied recently at the Great Barrier Reef;
- and deliver outcomes within a reasonable, unambiguous and fixed timeline.

Any such process **must** unambiguously establish targets for the percentage of each habitat within each bioregion to be set aside in no-take areas to make up the core of a CAR reserve system.



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**13.0 APPENDIX 3** – The solutions to the problems with current policy, institutional and legislative arrangements pertaining to marine planning and management.

### **Conservation group's Ten Point Plan**

1. The conservation and management of the marine environment should be achieved through Bioregional Marine Planning and implementation. This approach should be enshrined in legislation (through the Biodiversity Conservation Act).

2. There should be a single agency responsible for conservation and management of the marine environment (including both flora and fauna).

3. A Biodiversity Commission, similar to the Conservation Commission, and Marine Parks and Reserves Authority should oversee, monitor and audit the marine conservation and management agency, (the responsibility of both of these existing authorities should be combined and carried out by the Biodiversity Commission).

4. The marine conservation and management agency should be responsible for bioregional marine planning and management of the marine environment. It should develop and implement management plans on an ecosystem basis, in line with the precautionary principle, and based on the evidence and advice of a statutory marine scientific committee.

5. The marine scientific committee should be independent of government and its contribution and independence should be enshrined in legislation.

6. There should be a separate agency responsible for issuing permission to extract flora and fauna from the marine environment (similar to the Forest Products Commission in respect of forest products).

7. Extractive permission should only be allowed if consistent with the bioregional management plans set by the marine conservation and management agency.

8. The requirement for concurrence should be removed from marine parks and reserves (similar to the removal of this requirement from management plans on terrestrial reserves).

9. State processes would be considerably more consistent with Commonwealth processes under these arrangements. Agreements should be defined.

10. Neither structural adjustment nor compensation clauses should undermine planning and ecosystem management.

There is currently a unique opportunity to set up an effective framework for planning and management of the marine environment. The opportunity arises because there are currently only two agencies with responsibility for marine flora and fauna, so it would be a challenging, but relatively simple task to re-allocate their jurisdictions in a way which achieves more appropriate outcomes. (This opportunity no longer exists in the terrestrial environment.) There is also a recent precedent to make the necessary changes because similar changes were recently made to CALM in respect of forest products.

Finally, many of the necessary changes can be made simply, as part of the Government's commitment to a fully-fledged Biodiversity Conservation Act. Any further delay in such reforms will only increase frustration among a wide range of marine stakeholders.

