



POLICY SRT/EA1

CONSERVATION, LAND USE AND LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION

Background

The Swan and Canning rivers and adjacent foreshores are the centrepiece of the Perth metropolitan region. The rivers and foreshores provide habitats for a variety of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna. The river environment is a significant scenic feature. It is also a focus for leisure and recreation for the residents and visitors to Perth.

Since the time of first settlement, the Swan and Canning rivers have been the focus of activity and development. Residential, commercial and other forms of land use and development have been attracted to the river, initially for transport, and more recently because of the scenic and recreational qualities of the river environment. As a result, the river system is subject to increasing pressures for land use and development which must be balanced with the strong community desire to maintain public access to the river for a diversity of recreational activities including water sports, fishing and passive recreation, and to conserve and enhance the river environment which is the source of its attraction and value.

In its natural state the river is a dynamic ever-changing combination of interactive processes. This environment is subject to increased change due to land use, development and other human activity. The Swan River Management Strategy (1988) provides a statement of strategic policy to guide the Swan River Trust (the Trust) and other government agencies with regard to protecting and managing the river environment and to protect the resource it provides. There are other strategic policies which in part are applicable to the Trust Management Area and the wider catchment. These include Bush Forever (2000), The Darling System – System 6 report and the Swan, Canning Environmental Protection Policy (1988).

The Swan River Management Strategy comprises a statement of primary objectives, general policy measures and recommendations on seven sectoral issues. These general recommendations are followed by specific recommendations for particular areas of the river system.

The strategy emphasises the importance of integrated planning around the river system. It makes a commitment to maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem and natural landscape features, public accessibility and quality of the recreational environment, together with provision for passive recreation, boating, marinas, yacht clubs, tourism and associated facilities.

In 1999 the Trust and Department for Planning and Infrastructure commenced the joint Swan and Canning River Landscape Precinct Policy Plan study. The purpose of this study is to prepare strategic plans for each of the 23 precincts which make up the Trust Management Area. Building on the Swan River System Landscape Description (1997), these plans will set

out specific policies and strategies relating to land use, building design, setbacks, landscape treatment, access, recreation, foreshore management and nature conservation. This plan will unify state and local government decision-making to reinforce a common goal: To maintain a river landscape setting which accords with development within the broader landscape setting of the river.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure that land use and development on and adjacent to the river system maintains and enhances the quality and amenity of the river environment.
- Protect the river environment through the conservation of biodiversity and ecological systems including native vegetation and habitats for plants and animals.
- Assist in the protection and restoration of the waterways, associated water bodies and the marine environment.
- Encourage a range of recreation and tourism opportunities and facilities that reflect and complement the natural and built environment of the river.

Policy

SRT/EA1.1 Conservation and Environmental Protection

Planning and decision-making by the Trust will be directed to protect and enhance the river environment and its associated ecosystems.

The Trust will have regard to relevant provisions of the *Swan River Management Strategy*, *Swan Canning Environmental Protection Policy*, *Darling System – System 6* report and *Bush Forever* and any relevant national or international agreements, and associated policies or strategies when making decisions affecting native vegetation, flora, fauna, habitat, waterways or wetlands.

The Trust will advocate protection of the conservation values of the Metropolitan Region Scheme Parks and Recreation reserves comprising the management area and will seek extensions to the foreshore reserve system in appropriate cases in order to provide a buffer zone to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitats, wildlife corridors and landscape values of the river system, and to minimise erosion of stream banks and reduce polluted surface water run-off from adjacent land uses, as well as for public access and recreation.

The Trust will promote the maintenance and restoration of natural vegetation and actively encourage the retention and reinforcement of existing native vegetation. Land use and development should avoid the removal or fragmentation of native vegetation. If native vegetation must be removed as part of a land use or development proposal, the Trust may require the proponent to replace lost vegetation by replanting vegetation of similar local indigenous species on the subject land.

The Trust will not generally support land use or development which may, either directly or indirectly, degrade shallow river flats, foreshore vegetation or fringing wetlands.

Where development has the potential to contribute long-term chronic impacts on the river system, the Trust may require, as a condition of approval, that the applicant develop an Environmental Management System to minimise any potential environmental impacts of development and use.

SRT/EA1.2 Land Use and Development

Land use and development adjacent to the river and foreshores should achieve urban design and architectural outcomes which enhance and protect the character and landscape setting of the river and promote the public resource value of the river environment.

Landmarks, views and vistas shall be considered, protected and, where appropriate, enhanced by any new additions to the built environment.

Foreshore recreation values shall be enhanced by advocating development which does not dominate or overshadow public areas and views.

A comprehensive Site Context Analysis shall be undertaken for major developments taking into account the site characteristics and surrounding landscape (including dominant landforms, height and design of existing tree lines and related matters) and should form the basis for consideration of height, scale, massing, building materials and landscaping.

Development should seek to enhance the natural setting of the river through the protection of treelines, avoidance of stark and discordant colours, forms and bulk, and also through the use of screen and buffer plantings to frame views.

The Trust will encourage the use of planning provisions in the Metropolitan Region Scheme and local government town planning schemes, to achieve development and land use, which protects the river environment. Measures including reservation and acquisition of land for foreshore reserves and provisions where required will ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to development on the river.

SRT/EA1.3 Public Access

The Trust will act, in conjunction with other government agencies, to plan for a linear regional park system including the MRS Parks and Recreation reservations linking conservation areas and recreation nodes along the Swan and Canning river foreshores. Where public access to the river is not adequate the Trust will encourage further reservation and, where possible, acquisition of river foreshore land to enable the public to enjoy access to and along the foreshore and to protect the integrity of the river's environmental systems.

Within the management area, the Trust will favour development which facilitates public access. Land use and development which could prejudice future acquisition of land within the management area for public access will generally not be supported.

Where the management objectives promote formal public access paths, the Trust will seek to ensure that the river foreshores are linked through the provision of walking and cycle trails which connect places of natural and cultural interest as well as commercial and community facilities.

SRT/EA1.4 Foreshore Management Plans

The Trust will encourage the preparation and use of foreshore management plans to assist with the identification of appropriate planning and management strategies for foreshore reserves.

The Trust may require, as a condition of development approval, the preparation of a foreshore management plan, or contribution towards funding of such a plan, where a proposed development has the potential to impact, directly or indirectly, on the foreshore.

Where the need for a foreshore management plan arises from circumstances in addition to the impact of the particular development or beyond the boundaries of a site, the Trust may initiate the development of a foreshore management plan for the wider area.

As provided for by the Act, the Trust may also initiate the preparation of a foreshore management plan in liaison with the relevant vesting agency for the foreshore, where the land is vested in other authorities, or with the freehold landowner.

Where appropriate, the Trust may, as a condition of development approval, require bonds or bank guarantees to be lodged as a guarantee of completion of foreshore works. In considering a development application the Trust may have regard to the ability of the applicant to fully implement a proposal. Where necessary the Trust may seek a legal agreement with the applicant, or other guarantor, that works shall be completed within the period of the approval.

SRT/EA1.5 Referral

As part of its consideration of any application, the Trust may seek advice from any relevant agency or organisation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Local governments abutting the Swan-Canning river systems
- WA Planning Commission;
- Swan Valley Planning Committee;
- Department for Planning and Infrastructure;
- Department of Environmental Protection;
- Department of Conservation and Land Management;
- and any other agency or organisation that the Trust considers may have an interest in the application.

Related Policies and Guidelines

- E2 – Foreshore Reserves
- Guidelines for the preparation of Foreshore Management Plans
- Swan-Canning Environmental Protection Policy (1998)
- Swan River Management Strategy (1988)

Draft Adoption Date

Interim Adoption Date

Final Adoption Date

4 June 2002

Review Date

Five years from Final Adoption Date.