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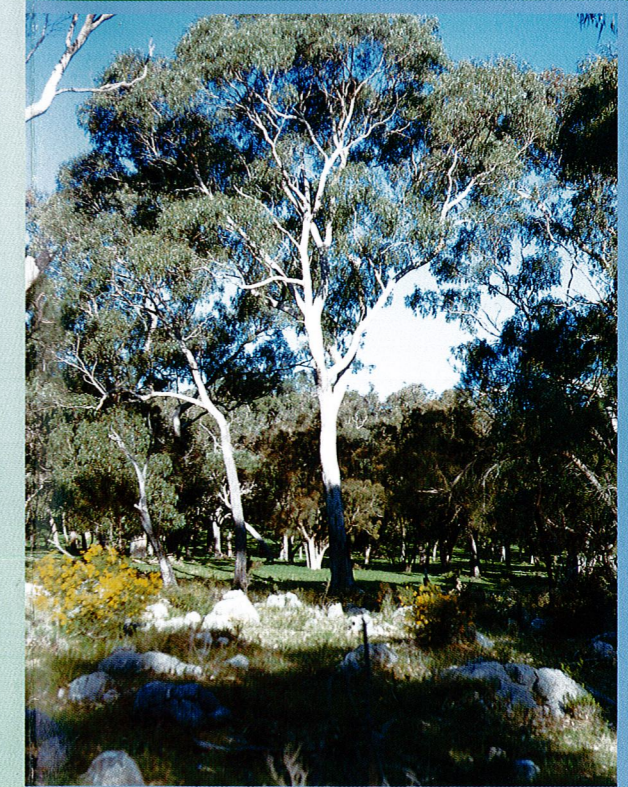
Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Members of the Tuart Response Group

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Charles Roche (Community Representative)	Tuart Coalition	☎ 9754 2410 Fax: 9754 3423 charles@envirowa.asn.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation movement representation and liaison • Conservation and care of tuart on private lands • Tuart conservation in the Ludlow/Busselton area
Fiona O'Connor (Community Representative)	Lake Clifton LandCare Group	☎ and fax 9739 1727 fioconnor@westnet.com.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and care of tuart on private lands • Tuart conservation in the Lake Clifton/Yalgorup area • Community consultation
Robert Griffiths	Department for Planning and Infrastructure	☎ 9264 7805 Fax: 9264 7566 robert.griffiths@planning.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated environmental, urban and rural land use planning • Land development information and liaison
Ross George	Department of Agriculture	☎ 9368 3863 Fax: 9474 5974 prgeorge@agric.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural planning and clearing regulations under the Soil and Land Conservation Act • Agricultural use and management practices threatening tuart ecosystems
Tim Sparks	Department of Environment; Water and Catchment Protection	☎ 9278 0446 Fax: 9278 0586 tim.sparks@wrc.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swan Coastal Plain hydrology • Water use policies, strategies and programs • River, stream and wetland management
Gayle Gray	South West Development Commission	☎ 9792 2000 Fax: 9791 3223 ggray@swdc.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and development in the South West Region • Coordination between south west agencies • Information and advice on issues and policies in the south west
Christine Steer	Peel Development Commission	☎ 9535 0000 Fax: 9535 2119 ces@peel.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and advice on sustainable economic, social and environmental development in the Peel Region • Promotion of the attractions, assets and development opportunities in the Peel Region
Drew Haswell (Executive Officer)	Department of Conservation and Land Management	☎ 9334 0337 Fax: 9334 0458 drewh@calm.wa.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuart Response Group coordination • Tuart conservation protection and action planning • Tuart communications and community involvement planning • Community, industry and research liaison • Data collection and analysis • Public information and other resource materials

Conserving our tuarts





Above: Severe tuart decline, showing evidence of 'repeated deaths' on resprouted crowns. Photograph: D. Mitchell.

Front cover: Tuart trees on farmland between Lake Clifton and Harvey Estuary. Mature, healthy tuarts often have near-white bark. Photograph: R. Powell.

Front cover bottom panel: Prickly wattle in tuart understorey. Photographs: R. Powell.

Conserving our tuarts

Since the mid 1990s there has been growing community concern about the noticeable decline in the health of tuart trees south of Mandurah. The State Government's Tuart Response Group seeks to establish a partnership with local communities to plan and manage the conservation and protection of tuart trees and ecosystems, and to investigate the causes of tuart's decline.

History

Tuart trees grow along a 400-kilometre band from Jurien Bay, on the northern margin of the Swan Coastal Plain, to the Sabina River, just east of Busselton. They are generally confined to limy or limestone soils close to the coast. It is estimated that before Europeans arrived

there were more than 111,600 hectares of tuart woodland. Most of these were subsequently cleared for agriculture and urban development and it is estimated that only 35 per cent remains.

Tuart conservation

Most tuart woodlands are now found at Ludlow, Yanchep and Yalgorup National Parks. Significant tuart woodlands are also conserved in Bold Park and Kings Park, in State forest at Myalup and McLarty, and in unallocated Crown land and *Bush Forever* sites at Yanchep, Woodman Point, Port Kennedy and the Harvey Estuary. Smaller remnants of tuart are scattered across its natural range from Jurien to south of Busselton. About half the existing tuarts are on freehold land. As a species, tuart is well represented in parks and reserves. However, its conservation adequacy is less clear for its six ecosystems, and for flora associated with tuart.

Tuart decline

In recent years tuart woodlands between Mandurah and Preston Beach have suffered a severe decline, linked with heavy infestation by wood-boring insects. The underlying reasons are not yet clear but may include ongoing reductions in winter rainfall, hydrological and salinity factors near wetlands, soil and nutrient supply, altered fire regimes, competition with understorey species, changes in the ecological balance between insects and their predators, adjacent clearing and roadworks. In the face of the decline in tuart health, a comprehensive conservation and protection strategy is needed.

What's being done about it?

Government and community based action is now under way to investigate the causes behind the observed decline in tuart health, and to devise a Tuart Conservation and Protection Strategy and Action Plan.

The Strategy will:

- encourage the community to be more aware of tuart and more involved in its conservation and protection;
- ensure tuart ecosystems are identified and adequately represented and managed for conservation within and outside reserves;
- ensure that significant stands and specimens of tuart trees outside conservation reserves are retained and appropriately managed;
- promote partnerships with community groups with differing interests in tuart trees and ecosystems;
- introduce research based remedial support to minimise the impact of processes that threaten the health of tuart trees; and
- ensure that accumulated knowledge leads to improved tuart management.

As an initial step the Minister for the Environment and Heritage established the Tuart Response Group in November 2001 to advise on, and coordinate, the development of this work. Up to August 2002 the Response Group has:

- prepared for public release the Status Report on Tuart Conservation and Protection;

Right: Tuart forest near Ludlow in 1896, showing mature tuarts with few peppermint trees. Photograph: Government Printing Office. A 4264.

- completed the Tuart Communications and Public Involvement Plan;
- evaluated future research needs with key stakeholders at the July Tuart Science Workshop;
- commenced the development of a Tuart Atlas that will map and describe the extent and condition of tuart trees and understorey; and
- provided partner investigator support for Murdoch University's tuart research funding application to the Australian Research Council.

In September and October 2002 the Tuart Response Group will conduct a series of stakeholder workshops between Lancelin and Busselton to assist the development of the Tuart Conservation and Protection Strategy.

