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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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## Better picture of tuart distribution

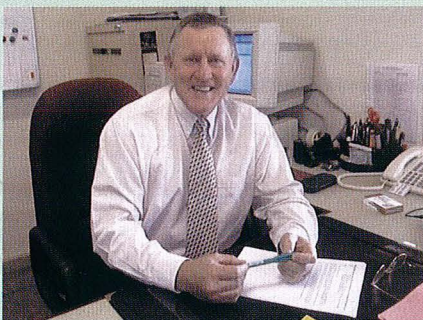
A new tuart 'atlas' has estimated the extent of tuart woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain at 29,500 hectares. This compares with 38,829 hectares that was estimated by Hopkins *et al.* (1996) using the data of Beard (1979).

The 'atlas' is part of the work of the Tuart Response Group to prepare a strategy and action plan for conserving and managing tuart woodlands.

Environment and Heritage Minister Dr Judy Edwards set up the Group in November 2001 because of community concern over the failing health of many tuart trees at Yalgorup south of Mandurah.

Research by the Department of Conservation and Land Management and Murdoch and Edith Cowan Universities has shown that the native wood borer (*Phoracantha impavida*) is implicated in the decline of many individual trees.

However, the researchers believe the borer may be an underlying symptom of the main causes including climate variability, changed hydrology and altered fire regimes.



Group Chairman and the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Director of Regional Services, Alan Walker.

## More accurate assessment

Tuart Response Group Chairman and Department Director of Regional Services, Alan Walker, said the latest 'atlas' had been put together with information gathered since July 2002.

It represented a more accurate assessment of the extent of tuart ecosystems and the condition of its associated understorey.

"The 'atlas' will be used as a basis for refining the present tuart reserve system. It will also be used to identify important conservation linkages between tuart in reserves and tuart on freehold lands," he said. Earlier tuart mapping had been hand prepared at a scale of 1 to 250,000. The latest 1 to 10,000 fine scale mapping used high resolution aerial photography and digital capture methods.

## New pockets of tuart found

"At the same time, the 'atlas' has revealed new pockets of tuart that had been overlooked during previous mapping," Mr Walker said.

"The priority now is to work with stakeholders and communities to develop strategies and actions that ensure tuart is properly conserved and managed."

Mr Walker said the Department was also updating the 1980 vegetation complex mapping of the Swan Coastal Plain. This is expected to be finished later this year.

"The vegetation update and the complementary Tuart 'Atlas' are important new resources for balancing nature conservation with appropriate development on the Swan Coastal Plain," he said.



## Message from the Minister

The Tuart Atlas is a further key step in the development of the Government's Tuart Conservation and Management Strategy and Action Plan.

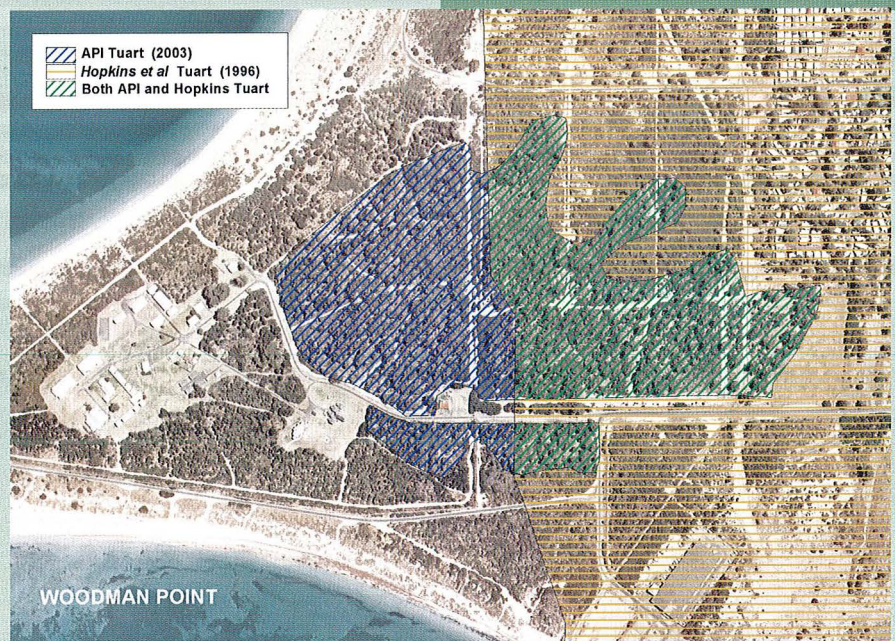
It has been developed to provide the latest information on the extent and condition of tuart woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain. The Tuart Atlas has identified new areas not previously mapped, and provides a finer scale for identifying new reserves and linkages with tuart on freehold lands.

It now provides a sound scientific basis for the development of tuart conservation and management partnerships between Government, landholders and community groups.

Dr Judy Edwards

*Judy Edwards*

Minister for the Environment and Heritage



Significant new patches of tuart woodland on Quindalup dunes at Woodman Point. Map-Ecoscape (Australia) Pty. Ltd.



## New map focuses on tuart woodlands

The differences between the two assessments of tuart's extent was expected, Mr Walker said, because the maps had different purposes.

“The earlier mapping assessed the extent of Western Australia’s entire vegetation at a broad State scale—the new mapping has focused only on tuart’s natural range in the coastal strip between Lancelin and Busselton at a finer regional scale.

“It doesn’t mean that tuarts have ‘disappeared’ or been cleared for urban or agricultural development. Rather, the latest mapping shows that areas previously mapped as tuart are, in fact, other woodlands of the Swan Coastal Plain.



Tuarts at City Beach with low, broad, dense canopies, in response to very salty sea winds. Photo—Robert Powell



Differences in tuart occurrence where earlier mapping ‘regionalised’ large areas of tuart (yellow). These were subsequently captured as isolated patches (green) by the Tuart Atlas project. New pockets of tuart woodlands (blue) are shown. Map—Ecoscape (Australia). Pty. Ltd.