

Church and school, Wellard

Lot 68 Bertram Road, Wellard, Town of Kwinana

El Shaddai Kwinana Christian Fellowship

**Report and recommendations of the
Environmental Protection Authority**

**Environmental Protection Authority
Bulletin 479
December 1990**

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ASS No. 412
ISBN 0 7309 3576 0
ISSN 1030-0120

Introduction

The Environmental Protection Authority has assessed a proposal by El Shaddai Christian Fellowship for the development of a church and school on Lot 68 Bertram Road Wellard, Town of Kwinana. The site is within the area defined as the Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment by the Minister for the Environment.

The Peel-Harvey Estuary is badly degraded because large quantities of nutrients have flowed into the Estuary from surrounding farm land and urban areas. Algae live on the nutrients and multiply rapidly, stifling life in the Estuary in warmer weather. The algae accumulate and rot on the shores of the Estuary, causing odour problems, polluting the shore, and killing wildlife and fish.

The strategy accepted by the State Government to improve the Estuary's condition includes the construction of the Dawseville Channel to improve flushing and catchment management to reduce nutrient input through controlling clearing, drainage and nutrient inputs.

The proposal to develop the church and school on Lot 68 was referred to the Environmental Protection Authority by the Town of Kwinana. In recognition of the environmental concerns regarding the Peel-Harvey Estuary, the level of assessment was set at Consultative Environmental Review.

Proposal

The proposal involves the establishment of buildings and facilities to enable the operation of a school and church on Lot 68 Bertram Road Wellard (see Figure 1).

It is proposed to establish a school, church, playing fields and carpark in the north eastern portion of the site, no less than 15 metres from the Peel Main Drain which traverses the site.

Consultation

The Environmental Protection Authority received comments on the proposal from the following groups and agencies:

- Conservation Council of Western Australia
- Department of Planning and Urban Development
- Water Authority of Western Australia

Environmental assessment

Based on the Authority's investigations concerning the Peel-Harvey catchment, information submitted by the proponent, and submissions received from government agencies and the public, the following environmental issues have been identified:

- disposal of sewage wastes;
- drainage management;
- groundwater protection; and
- wetland protection.

The Environmental Protection Authority considers nutrient discharge from all developments within the Peel-Harvey Coastal Catchment should be minimised. Given that a sewerage pump station has been constructed 500 metres to the west of the site, and connection to reticulated sewerage is therefore possible, the Authority considers connection of the proposed church and school should be a requirement.

In addition, no stormwater drainage should be discharged directly to the Peel Main Drain, but retained on-site for at least three days in a 1 in 10 year storm event.

The Authority has concluded that the environmental impacts of the proposal as submitted by the proponent would be environmentally unacceptable. However, the proposal would be environmentally acceptable if nutrient application to the site was minimised through the provision of sewerage, on-site disposal of drainage and appropriate management of the ovals, and also reinstatement of the wetland periphery vegetation in the south western portion of Lot 68 is undertaken.

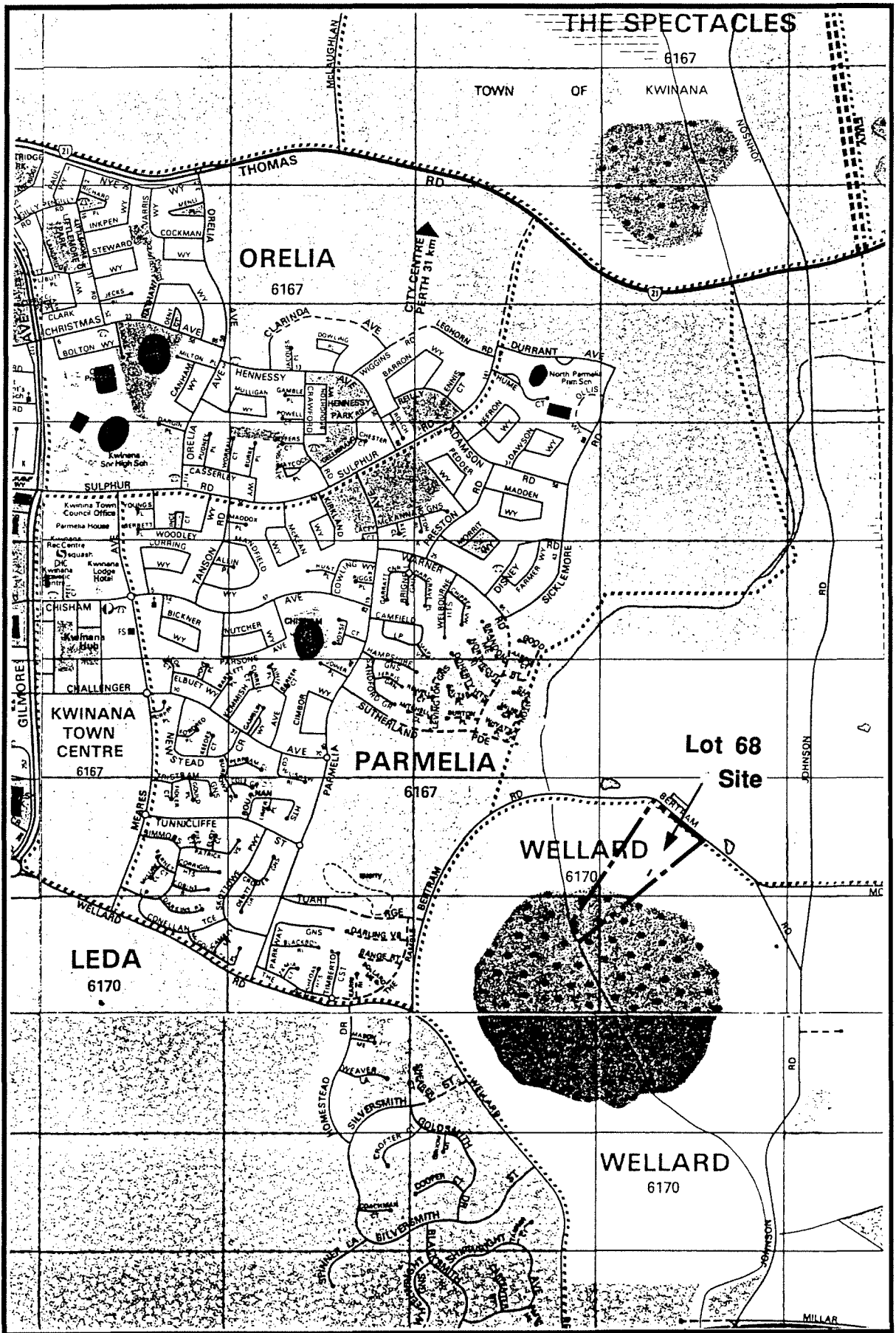


Figure 1. Location of development site.

Recommendation 1

The Environmental Protection Authority has concluded that the project, as described in the documentation submitted by the proponent, for development of a church and school on Lot 68 Bertram Road is only environmentally acceptable if the proposal is modified in accordance with the recommendations in this Assessment Report. The Authority recommends that with those modifications the proposal could proceed.

The Authority's experience is that it is common for details of a proposal to alter through the detailed design and construction phase. In many cases alterations are not environmentally significant or have positive effect on the environmental performance of the project. The Authority believes that such non-substantial changes, and especially those which improve environmental performance and protection, should be provided for.

Recommendation 2

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the church and school are connected to a reticulated sewerage service.

Recommendation 3

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that all stormwater is disposed of on-site, with design criteria of three day detention for 1 in 10 year storm event.

In regard to the proposed ovals, the Authority considers the proponent should consult with officers of the Authority concerning management of the ovals to ensure nutrient and water application is appropriate.

Other activities should only be permitted on the site if they do not involve excessive nutrient application or the clearing or drainage of land.

The south western portion of the site supports part of Bollard Bullrush Swamp, and development of the site for a church and school could potentially increase pressure on the swamp. Although the swamp is significantly degraded, it is important that development which may compromise its future rehabilitation and management is not allowed.

However, a management strategy for Bollard Bullrush Swamp has not been developed as yet, and it is therefore recommended that, in the interim, the wetland periphery is revegetated to assist in the protection of the wetland.

Recommendation 4

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that prior to construction, the proponent submits and subsequently implements an Environmental Management Programme, addressing:

- nutrient and irrigation management; and
- a wetland periphery revegetation programme for the south western portion of Lot 68;

to the satisfaction of the Environmental Protection Authority.

The Authority believes that any approval for the proposal based on this assessment should be limited to five years. Accordingly, if the proposal has not been substantially commenced within five years of the date of this report, then such approval should lapse. After that time, further consideration of the proposal should occur only following a new referral to the Authority.