

Central Coast Regional Strategy

A submission by the Environmental Protection Authority on the document released for public comment by the State Planning Commission

Environmental Protection Authority
Perth, Western Australia
Bulletin 765
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THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report contains the Environmental Protection Authority's submission to the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

This submission is not a report under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act, and there are no provisions for appeals against the Authority's views expressed in the submission.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Central Coast Regional Strategy was prepared for the Central Coast Planning Study Steering Committee by the Department of Planning and Urban Development as part of the strategic planning programme of the State Planning Commission. The Steering Committee included officers representing the Department of Environmental Protection.

The Central Coast Regional Strategy has identified the need for further action and study and presented a land-use plan based on the available information for the area shown in Figure 1. It is proposed to be reviewed in five years.

This bulletin contains the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) advice on the Central Coast Regional Strategy.

The EPA notes that this Regional Strategy is the first such strategy for the area.

1.2 Objectives and bulletin format

The objective of this bulletin is to provide environmental advice on the conservation aspects, action statements, planning units and proposals contained in the Central Coast Regional Strategy to the State Planning Commission.

The EPA's advice in response to specific issues is provided in **bold** following an explanation of how the advice was derived.

1.3 Limitations of bulletin

This bulletin only considers issues at a regional level in the Regional Strategy. Local issues such as the need for detailed foreshore planning at Cervantes are not raised in this bulletin.

Where proposals with potential environmental impacts would be adequately addressed through the relevant action statements and the EPA or DEP is listed as an action agency, no comment has been made in this Bulletin (e.g. Horticulture).

Where either the DEP or EPA is listed as an involved agency for an action statement, it can be assumed that the EPA supports the action statement unless it is discussed in this bulletin.

The EPA has not tried to distinguish whether it is more appropriate for the DEP or EPA to be involved for each action statement where either is listed. The DEP would be responsible for most of the action statements and would use its judgement to determine matters of particular importance which should be referred to the EPA.

Issues related to areas adjacent to or outside of the study area have not been considered in this Bulletin. The EPA has also not addressed in detail the issue of water resource protection, as the Water Authority of Western Australia, a primary advisor on this issue, had not determined its position on the strategy at the time of writing.

2. Method of assessment

The method of assessment for the Regional Strategy involved:

- cross-checking geographical information. In particular, information relating to EPA Red Book recommendations for conservation reserves (Refer to Department of Planning and Urban Development, 1994 Appendix 3 for a summary of these recommendations) and to infrastructure such as roads was checked;

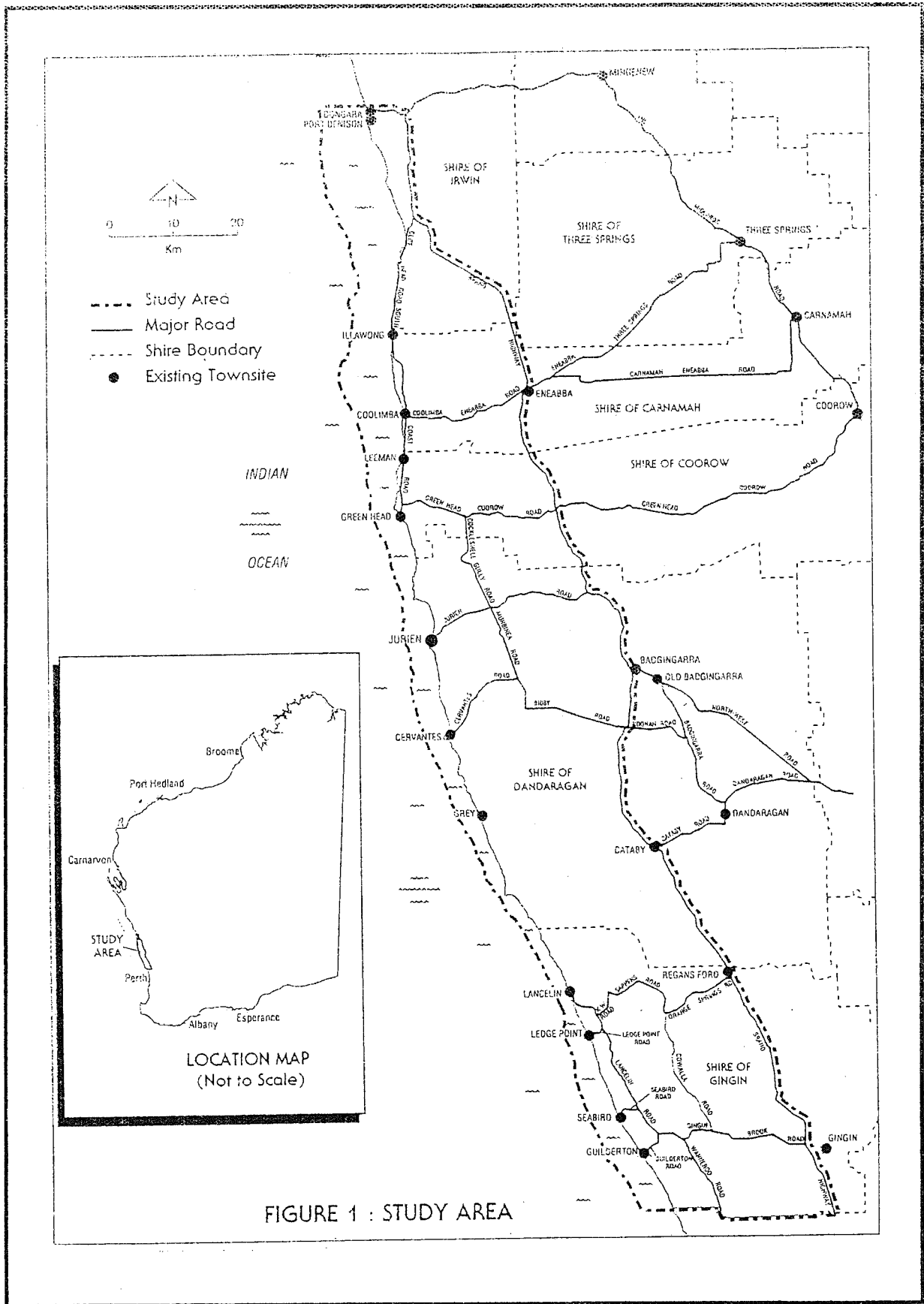


FIGURE 1 : STUDY AREA

Figure 1 Area studied in Central Coast Regional Strategy (Source: Central Coast Regional Profile, Figure 1)

- consideration of each action statement in the context of existing EPA policy and other published information;
- discussion with officers of Department of Conservation and Land Management and Water Authority regarding aspects of concern common to those agencies and the EPA. The EPA relies on the Water Authority for much of its advice on water resource protection issues. However, at the time of writing the Water Authority had not resolved its view on the Regional Strategy;
- circulating the Regional Strategy and collating comments from the Department of Environmental Protection Evaluation Division (Mining and Planning Branches) and Policy and Strategic Studies Division (Marine and Reserve Implementation Branch); and
- liaison with officers of the Department of Planning and Urban Development concerning proposed recommendations.

3. Environmental Protection Authority advice

3.1 The natural environment

The EPA acknowledges that the process used to prepare the Regional Strategy collated relevant information and funded a consultant to undertake an environmental audit of the Central West Coast. The environmental audit terms of reference emphasised assessment of the natural environment to identify areas of significance.

3.1.1 EPA Red Book recommendations - General

The Central Coast Regional Profile details the relevant EPA Red Book recommendations for the study area and the current status of each recommendation.

Figure 9: The Open Space Concept Plan of the Regional Strategy shows 'Areas with significant conservation value (limited mixed use)' which are Vacant Crown Land. This category does not differentiate between areas identified through the EPA Red Book recommendations and areas identified through the environmental audit. 'Limited mixed use' indicates that these areas could be used for purposes such as wildflower picking. Such uses are not compatible with EPA Red Book Recommendations 5.7 and 5.20 which are identified under this category.

Figure 9 does not show areas proposed to be added to the conservation estate as recommended by the EPA Red Book recommendations.

The Environmental Protection Authority considers that Figure 9: The Open Space Concept Plan should be amended to show 'Proposed Conservation' for areas identified for conservation in the System 5 Red Book recommendations.

3.1.2 EPA Red Book recommendation 5.15 - Beekeepers Reserve

The Central Coast Regional Profile details this recommendation and its current status. Figure 9: The Open Space Concept Plan identifies most of this area as 'Review of reserve purpose required within CALM estate'.

The Environmental Protection Authority supports the 'Review of reserve purpose required within CALM estate' for areas identified in Figure 9: The Open Space Concept Plan.

3.1.3 EPA Red Book recommendation 5.24 - West Coast

EPA Red Book recommendation 5.24 gave notice of the EPA's intent to set up a working group to make recommendations on the future control and management of Crown lands on the west coast between Moore River and Kalbarri, excepting portions of land already considered in other System 5 recommendations.

The environmental audit and process used in development of the Regional Strategy follows closely the first part of the process envisaged by the EPA when it formulated recommendation 5.24. In particular, the specialists workshop held in February 1993 to review Crown lands and un-vested reserves in the study area represented an important step in collating available information and identifying the need for further studies. Information from the specialists workshop is summarised in Appendix 4 of the Central Coast Regional Profile.

Wetlands should also form part of the conservation estate. The Regional Strategy has an action statement which states 'Undertake a detailed wetland study...'. If implemented the wetland study would provide the necessary information and identify any wetlands on both crown and private land which may have significant conservation value. The Draft Environmental Protection Policy for Lakes and Swamps of the South West Agricultural Zone would provide useful information when it is finalised.

The process used to determine the EPA Red Book recommendations for conservation reserves included a public review period prior to a final review by the EPA and endorsement by the State Cabinet. In formulating recommendation 5.24, the EPA envisaged that a similar process should be followed.

The Regional Strategy action statement proposal to 'Review the conservation estate...' is generally consistent with the EPA recommendation 5.24. However, the Regional Strategy does not detail how this is to be achieved.

The Environmental Protection Authority considers that the action statement which reads 'Review the conservation estate ...' should include reference to how this action should be carried out. In particular, reference should be made to:

- **the need for more information on vacant Crown Land identified in Appendix 4 of the Central Coast Regional Profile;**
- **the need to include information about wetlands from the proposed wetland study; and**
- **the need for public review of recommendations for additions to the conservation estate.**

3.1.4 EPA Red Book recommendation System 6 - M1

In January 1993 the Department of Planning and Urban Development published the Yanchep Structure Plan which identified urban development within System 6 Area M1 and land at Wilbinga as Open Space (See Figure 2). The Department of Environmental Protection has since provided advice to the State Government through the Minister for the Environment that land at Wilbinga has greater environmental and landscape attributes than System 6 Area M1, and could be exchanged with System 6 Area M1 without compromising the conservation values sought to be protected by System 6 recommendation M1.

However, as indicated in the Central Coast Regional Strategy, Wilbinga (along with Breton Bay) has been identified as a possible site for future heavy industry. It would be unwise to exchange System 6 Area M1 for land at Wilbinga until the location of heavy industry is decided and land at Wilbinga is secured for conservation.

The Environmental Protection Authority endorses the position that land at Wilbinga has significant conservation value and that System 6 area M1 could be exchanged for land at Wilbinga. However the Environmental Protection

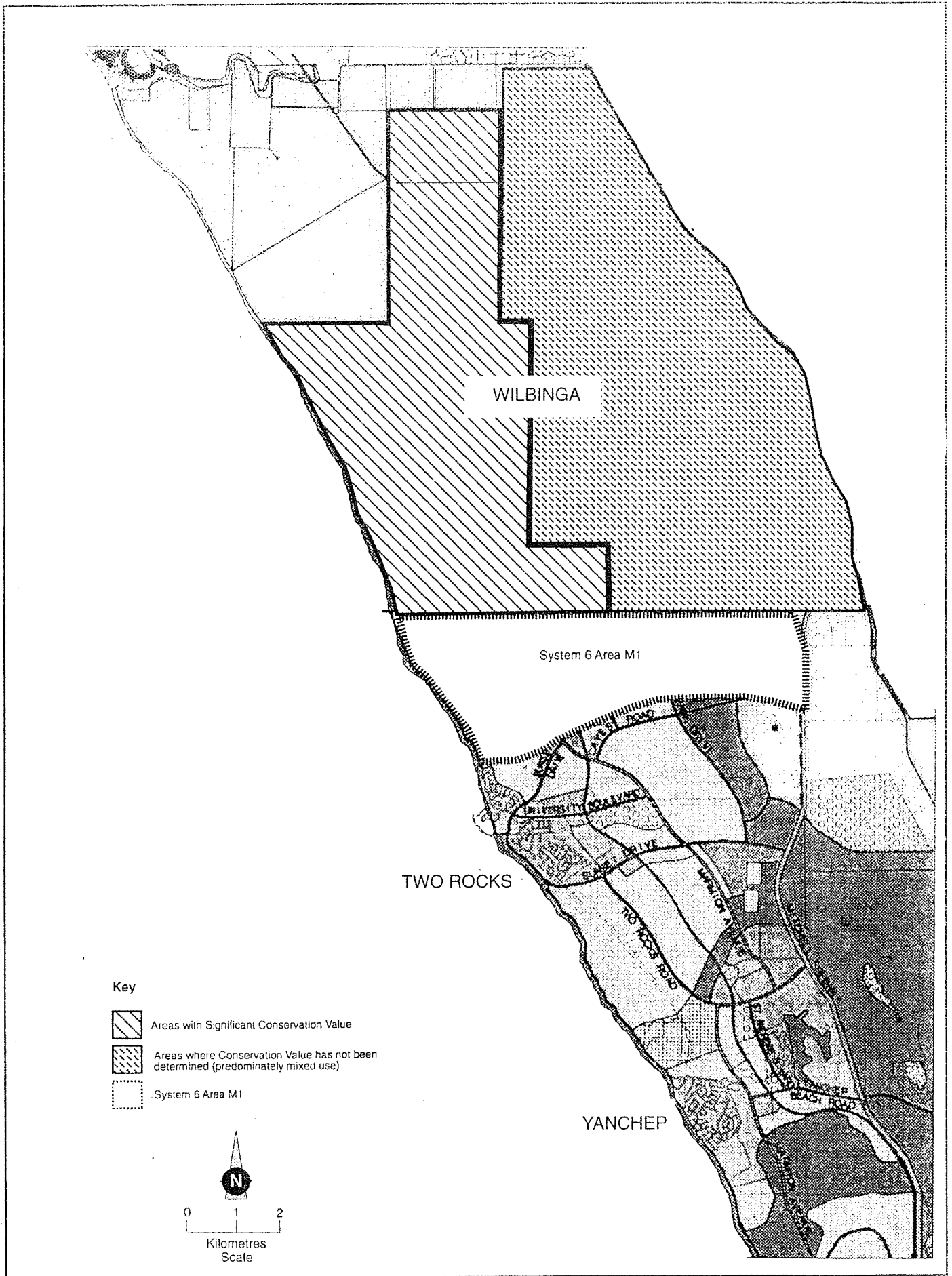


Figure 2. Yanchep Structure Plan showing System 6 Area M1 and land at Wilbinga (after Central Coast Regional Strategy, Fig. 9 and System 6 Red Book, Fig. 75. Base map from DPUD Yanchep Structure Plan)

Authority seeks a high level of certainty that land at Wilbinga will be retained primarily for conservation (e.g. gazetted as a nature reserve) before it is prepared to recommend to Government that System 6 area MI is not required for conservation.

3.2 Protection of the marine environment

The Regional Strategy has two action statements which relate to the need for study of the marine environment and water quality. However, neither statement suggests collection of the type of information being obtained by the Perth Metropolitan Coastal Waters Study, namely the information needed to determine target loads for nutrient inputs in near-shore environments. Target loads should be determined wherever high nutrient inputs to the coast are likely.

At some locations along the coast, high nutrient loads are likely. For example, at Jurien Bay sea cage aquaculture and a population increase is planned.

The Environmental Protection Authority considers that the action statements for the marine environment should be amended to ensure studies of the marine environment or water quality determine target loads for nutrient inputs in near-shore environments, particularly near future point sources (e.g. sewage outfalls & sea cages).

3.3 Proposals with potentially significant environmental impacts

3.3.1 Roads and infrastructure corridors

The proposed Cervantes to Lancelin road alignments shown in Figure 6 of the Regional Strategy pass through existing National Park and nature reserves. The management objectives for these areas would determine the acceptability of a road, and if acceptable, potential impacts such as the introduction of weeds and disease, the protection of any rare flora and fauna near the alignment and the source of construction materials (including for on-going maintenance) would need to be adequately managed.

Proposals to widen infrastructure corridors through National Parks or nature reserves should be treated in the same manner as roads.

3.3.2 Industrial sites

The Regional Strategy identifies a new industrial site on the east side of the Lancelin Road between Ledge Point and Seabird (service industrial), the need for an industrial site to be established in the Shire of Dandaragan and the potential for a heavy industry site at either Breton Bay or Wilbinga. In recent years the EPA has assessed proposed new industrial areas to address environmental issues such as separation of incompatible land-uses, air quality, noise, solid and liquid waste management and risks and hazards.

3.3.3 Aerodromes

The Regional Strategy identifies a site for a new aerodrome on the east side of the Lancelin Road between Ledge Point and Seabird. Noise impacts on existing land-uses and separation of incompatible land-uses such as residential development would need to be addressed by this proposal.

3.3.4 Referral of proposals with potential environmental impacts

The Environmental Protection Act requires that any proposal which appears likely, if implemented to have a significant effect on the environment must be referred to the EPA for consideration of its environmental impacts. Under this requirement there is a wide range of developments which could be proposed in the study area which would require referral. In particular, the strategy makes specific reference to several proposals which should be referred.

The following proposals identified within the Regional Strategy would require referral to the EPA:

- (i) the road from Cervantes to Lancelin, particularly if the alignment passes through National Park and Nature Reserve and is not consistent with an approved CALM management plan for these areas;**
- (ii) the widening of infrastructure corridors within National Parks and Nature Reserves if not consistent with an approved CALM management plan for these areas;**
- (iii) the rezoning of land for or establishment of heavy industry (e.g. Breton Bay or Wilbinga) or other industry in close proximity to residential areas; and**
- (iv) the upgrading or establishment of new aerodromes.**

3.4 Implementation

The Regional Strategy recommended that the Steering Committee remain in place to guide implementation of the strategy, set priorities, generate and allocate resources, and monitor and review the strategy.

The continuation of the Steering Committee is consistent with the approach recommended for North-East Corridor regional planning. The EPA expects that the Steering Committee would define, integrate and coordinate the studies to aid environmental decision-making.

The Environmental Protection Authority supports the Steering Committee remaining in place to guide implementation of the strategy.

3.5 Additional information and placement of existing information.

3.5.1 Mining and basic raw materials

The action statements for Mining and Basic Raw Materials both suggest that rehabilitation standards need to be developed.

The publications listed below include standards for rehabilitation.

Department of Mines Western Australia 1991, *Environmental management of quarries: Development, operation and rehabilitation guidelines* Department of Mines Western Australia.

Environmental Protection Authority 1990, *Environmental Code of Practice - Extractive industries* Environmental Protection Authority

Memorandum of Understanding between the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Minerals and Energy

The Environmental Protection Authority considers that the action statements which read;

- 'Promote the rehabilitation of mine sites to a pre-determined standard...' should read 'Implement the DME standards for the rehabilitation of mine sites'; and
- 'Establish standards for rehabilitation of quarries ...' should read 'Implement existing standards ...'.

3.5.2 Planning units

The following important items of information located in the Central Coast Regional Profile or in other parts of the Regional Strategy should appear in the information pertaining to the planning units.

The Table below summarises recommended additions to the text.

Planning unit	Section	Advice
E5	Planning unit and features	Add - System 5 recommendation 7 being implemented.
C1	Land uses to be promoted or encouraged	Lake Thetis - Note that negotiations have taken place to include it as part of Nambung National Park.
C1	Planning and management guidelines	Add - Support incorporation of private enclaves into Conservation reserves (consistent with EPA Systems recommendations).
C8	Planning unit and features	Add - Area has limestone plant endemics (See Figure 9 Central Coast Regional Profile).
G2	Planning unit and features	Add - Conservation area identified in System 6 recommendation C2.
G2	Major issues and planning considerations	Add to Wilbinga notes - Possible exchange area for System 6 area M1.

4. Conclusion

The Environmental Protection Authority considers that the Central Coast Regional Strategy has provided a basis for commencing studies required for sound environmental planning of the region.

5. Reference material

Department of Planning and Urban Development 1994, *Central Coast regional profile*
Department of Planning and Urban Development April 1994

Department of Planning and Urban Development, 1993 *Yanchep Structure Plan* Department of Planning and Urban Development January 1993

Department of Mines Western Australia 1991, *Environmental management of quarries: Development, operation and rehabilitation guidelines* Department of Mines Western Australia.

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