

Department of Conservation and Environment

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Bulletin No. 255

March 1986

ISBN 0 7309 0531 4

ISSN 0156-2983

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY

ASSESSMENT REPORT ON THE TRIGG PARKLAND AND THE PROPOSED WEST COAST HIGHWAY
MARMION AVENUE ROAD LINK ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

1. BACKGROUND

1.1

In 1976 the EPA made a recommendation on a report by Scott and Furphy on the West Coast Highway route, namely

"that attention be given to upgrading to a four-lane highway status the West Coast Highway north of City Beach with a view to it joining Marmion Avenue at Karrinyup Road and doing so with a minimum of inconvenience to the residents and to the school on the eastern side of the regional open space south of Karrinyup Road but also with minimum ecological severance and bisection of that regional open space. In other words, the West Coast Highway should join Marmion Avenue at Karrinyup Road as close to the eastern boundary of the regional open space reserve as engineering constraints permit."

This decision to agree in principle with a link between Marmion Avenue and West Coast Highway through the Trigg Dune area set the stage for all future considerations.

1.2

In 1984 the MRPA considered this route in detail and it was decided that to achieve the objectives of -

- . minimising inconvenience to residents and the school on the eastern side of the area;

. minimising ecological severance and bisection of the regional open space:

the route should be shifted west to its present position. The EPA notes that in the process of including this road within the MRS there was extensive public input and participation including both written and verbal submissions to the MRPA and the amendment being laid before both houses of Parliament. The EPA is satisfied that the public have had opportunity to comment upon the philosophy and detail of the proposed road link.

1.3

The Trigg Dune area is the subject of System 6 Recommendation M36. The intent of this recommendation is consolidate the system of reserves which currently make up the area into one reserve, to emphasise the conservation value of the area and orientate the management of the reserve to maintain and enhance its conservation value. The recommendation also recognises the proposal for a link road in the area.

In February 1985 the EPA concluded that the proposed amendment to the Metropolitan Region Scheme linking West Coast Highway to Marmion Avenue would not result in unacceptable environmental impact and it was not in conflict with the primary intent of the System Six Recommendation M36 or the Authority's earlier recommendation of 1976.

The Authority recommended that:

. Prior to construction of a link road, a management plan should be prepared for the whole Triggs Dune Area including the foreshore reserve.

That plan should incorporate means for minimising the impact of the road on the area and provide for its long-term management, taking into account its conservation value. During the preparation of the plan, consideration should be given to recommending an appropriate vesting purpose and classification for the remaining reserves.

The management plan be submitted to the Authority for evaluation and comment prior to construction commencing.

1.4

The Stirling City Council commissioned Sinclair Knight and Partners in association with other consultants to prepare an Environmental Management Programme (EMP) for the Trigg Parkland and the proposed West Coast Highway/Marmion Avenue road link.

1.5

The Environmental Management Programme addressed the rehabilitation of the area affected by the road construction and set out management principles for the rest of the reserves. The rehabilitation of the road construction was dependent upon utilising existing materials from the road reserve and the reserves. In December 1985 a fire burnt a large portion of the area removing some of the available vegetation and seed stocks from the reserve. The effect of this on the proposals in the Management Programme is discussed later.

1.6

In examining the EMP the EPA sought comment from a range of Government Departments and other organisations, these were -

Department of CALM

Department of Marine and Harbours

Department of Agriculture (Soil Conservation Service)

Department of Conservation and Environment

The Wildflower Society

The Trigg Ratepayers Association

The Conservation Council

The comments received from these organisations and departments were considered by the EPA and incorporated in its assessment of the EMP.

2. THE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

2.1

The document consists of a reasonably comprehensive description of the existing environment and its regional and local significance; it then assesses the impact of the road design and follows this with an Environmental Management Programme for the road and its surrounds. The appendices consist of a major appendix covering a draft management programme for the rest of the reserves (Appendix A) and other appendices covering other aspects of the link road.

The section of the Management Programme covering the road construction and rehabilitation is of a high standard and one of the most comprehensive prepared to date for this type of project. However, the EPA considers that its February 1985 recommendation (see 1.3 above) would have been better interpreted by giving more emphasis to the impact of the road within the context of the management of the rest of the reserves, rather than treating the road as the major focus and relegating the management of the whole of the reserves as a secondary matter to be considered in an appendix.

2.2.

In December 1985 a fire burnt a large portion of the reserves removing most of the available vegetation and seed stocks from the reserves. As the EMP was written before the fire it did not take account of these effects or make any plan for rehabilitating the area.

The plans for the rehabilitation of the road rely heavily upon the availability of indigenous brush and seed material for the stabilisation and rehabilitation of the road works.

The EPA requested that the Stirling City Council should reconsider its rehabilitation plans in the light of the effects of the fire and pay particular attention to the following matters:

- . finding sufficient brush supplies for stabilisation which matched the different vegetation types through which the road traversed;
- . having sufficient seed stocks available for the rehabilitation planting as proposed in the EMP;
- . being able to protect the rehabilitation areas from vermin, particularly since other food sources were depleted in the fire.

2.3

Following further work by SCC addressing the above and other matters related to rehabilitation, the EPA is now satisfied that the road construction area will be able to be rehabilitated satisfactorily despite the impact of the recent fire.

2.4

In Section 2.1 it was indicated that the management programme for the rest of the reserve was relegated to a secondary matter with respect to the road construction. The EPA considered that the existing management programme for

the whole of the reserves as detailed in Appendix A of the Environmental Management Programme consisted of sound management philosophies and good recommendations for management but no concrete plans or commitments to what would be done and when. The EPA requested that the Stirling City Council address this apparent lack of definite commitment to ongoing positive management of the whole of the reserves.

2.5

The Stirling City Council responded to the EPA's request by stating that:

- . the rehabilitation and management of the road construction area was accepted as the responsibility of the Council and was budgeted for in the total project cost;
- . the Council accepted overall long term management responsibility for the balance of the reserves with special emphasis upon
 - public access
 - fire control
 - fencing
 - rehabilitation
 - control of exotic weeds

- control of feral animals

- public involvement

. the Council has granted budgetary consideration of \$ 75 000 to be spent over the next three years on these matters.

2.6

The Council has also undertaken to employ a consultant to ensure proper management and effective use of these funds and to ascertain further environmental demands.

2.7

The Council sees future public involvement in two areas:

- . to invite public comment on the management programme;
- . to develop further management programmes in conjunction with community involvement in a similar fashion to that in operation at Star Swamp.

The EPA supports the Council's move for public involvement and recommends that the Environmental Management Programme should be modified to take account of the matters raised above and this revised document be available for public information and comment. It is also recommended that opportunity be given for the public to be involved in the physical management of the reserve through community and interest group work projects, etc.

2.8

The EPA notes that the Council has accepted fire control within its long term management responsibility. However, the EPA believes that major emphasis should be given to the long term fire management philosophy particularly with regard to an agreed policy with the Fire Brigades Board on containment and extinguishing of fire rather than back burning and allowing the fire to burn itself out. Furthermore, controlled burning of the reserve should only occur to ensure survival of the vegetation types and not to continually reduce fuel to a minimum. Without such emphasis the EPA believes that all other management efforts would be jeopardised.

3. FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1

The EPA recommends that in accordance with the intent of System 6 Recommendation M36 the boundaries of the reserves should be defined and the reserve areas consolidated into one reserve with the purpose of "Conservation of Dunes", "A" classification and vested in the Stirling City Council. The EPA considers that an "A" classification will serve to prevent further alienation of portions of this area.

3.2

The EPA recommends as part of the Council's ongoing management planning and public involvement in the reserve that appropriate and workable administrative structures and procedures be set up to facilitate the ongoing management of the reserve. This should include rolling 3 year plans for the reserve which receive input from both Government Departments and interested public.

4. SUMMARY

4.1

This report does not seek to reconsider the decision on the selection of the route of the road. Its purpose is to evaluate the proposals for the rehabilitation of the road construction area and the management of the remainder of the reserve area.

4.2

The December 1985 fire has necessitated a change in the rehabilitation strategy for the road construction area and the management of the whole of the area.

4.3

The Management Programme for the road construction and the modifications to it necessitated by the fire meet the objectives required by the EPA for the rehabilitation of the construction area.

4.4

The proposals for a Management Programme and commitments given by the Council to the ongoing management of the whole of the area now go beyond what was originally contained within the Environmental Management Programme. The EPA considers that if these commitments are adhered to the area can be managed so that in the long term its conservation value is maintained.

4.5

The EPA considers that the impact of the road on the reserve can be ameliorated, and other commitments which have been made for the management of the remainder of the reserve have afforded a higher level of ongoing active management than would have otherwise occurred if the road had not been constructed.