



CALM's Dieback Dealings To Be Assessed By EPA

By Peter Robertson

THE EPA has released for public comment and scientific and environmental assessment certain aspects of CALM's proposed new approach to managing *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (Pc) dieback in the South West.

Most aspects of what CALM is proposing are appalling and are not scientifically, environmentally or socially responsible or defensible as a response to the Pc dieback problem.

It is clear that CALM, with the support of sections of government and industry, wants to deregulate dieback management in order to make certain activities such as roading, logging and mining cheaper and easier.

In essence, CALM, with all of its lack of accountability and conflicts of interest, is planning to divide our south west forests and associated ecosystems into 'protectable' and 'unprotectable' areas and then weaken or remove dieback management prescriptions (e.g. access and hygiene restrictions) from the areas identified as 'unprotectable'. Even in 'protectable' areas it is not clear what, if any, adequate dieback management prescriptions will remain in place.

We greatly fear that CALM is already and will continue to use the 'protocols' it has itself developed, in order to define large areas of forest that it wants to be logged as 'unprotectable'. For example, under CALM's proposals, even the merest hint of evidence of dieback renders an area 'unprotectable', which could be seen as an incentive for some bodies to introduce dieback to areas sought after for logging or some other commercial activity.

Overall we see this new approach as a recipe for the widespread and accelerated infection of our unique South West flora and ecological communities and a major threat to the biodiversity of the region.

There appears to be no accounting by CALM, or other proponents of the new approach, of the environmental, social and economic costs of this new approach; no indication of the trade-offs involved; and no clear explanation as to how exactly we as a community will benefit from the new Pc management approach.

Our unique floristic heritage is worth more than this. Although Pc dieback will undoubtedly spread, or be spread, to some extent, no matter what action is (or is not) taken, we are obligated to do all that we can as a community to prevent the introduction of Pc dieback into susceptible ecosystems and slow its rate of spread.

If we as a community, and government and industry are to deserve the economic and other benefits provided to us by what remains of our natural environment we must allocate the necessary resources to maintain the integrity and values of that natural environment. If the government is not prepared to do this on our behalf, and industry is not

prepared to pay the full costs of its activities, then this should be stated clearly and 'up front'.

We hope that you will make a submission to the EPA on this most important, indeed benchmark, issue of Pc dieback management in South West WA.

For information about the EPA dieback assessment:
<http://www.environment.wa.gov.au/EPA/news/2000/000616.htm> ■

A Global Perspective for Local Action — Thinking Beyond Today

A Forum hosted by the Moore Catchment Group

The Forum will be held on Friday 28 July at the Moora Recreation Centre, Moora from 9am to 4pm. Cost of \$30 includes catering.

Internationally recognised Israeli Professors:

- Prof. Uriel N. Safriel - The effects of global climate changes on desert ecosystems
- Prof. Yosef Mizrahi - Salt tolerance in fruit trees, taming wild plants for profit

Acclaimed local and interstate presenters:

- Dr. Rika Erickson & Abbott Placid: Historical background of the catchment
- Sally Marsh & Prof. Michael Burton: Economic and social issues - a catchment survey
- Jerome Gumley - Bank West: Financial indications for the future
- Prof. Stephen Davies: Biodiversity in the region
- Prof. Bob Gilkes: Our soils now and into the future
- Richard Crawford - Manager Marketing, Elders: The future for Agro Commerce

Major Topics

- Global climate change and the potential effects on Western Australian agriculture
- Making better use of our natural resources
- Diverse options for a diverse community
- Financial planning, sustainability index

Presented by the popular ABC Radio presenter Grant Woodhams, this Forum will be a day for farmers, community groups, local government and state government representatives to see Western Australia in a global context and explore options for the future of dryland agriculture.

'We cannot stay the same, we have to change our practices. Some answers may lie in the native species that are left.' - committee member Fiona Falconer.

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To Register Please Fax Moora Shire on 9651 1722

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