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54 Bournemouth Crescent,
Wembley Downs, W.A. 6019
14 August 1995

The System Six Study Team,
Department of Environmental Protection,
141 St Georges Terrace,
Perth, W.A. 6000

Dear Study Team,

SYSTEM SIX UPDATE: 'CARINE HILL' BUSHLAND

I attach a copy of a report of an excursion of the Northern Suburbs Branch of the Western Australian Wildflower Society to the above area in September last year. Also attached is a map showing the location and approximate boundaries of the bushland.

The report gives an idea of the area's values. Since its understorey is limited, the vegetation will not meet the criterion of vegetation 'in the best possible condition'. However, as the report points out, the area has biological value in other respects. It is likely to be of some importance in providing food and shelter and nesting-habitat for birds, and also in forming links with other areas; I have discussed these aspects briefly with John Dell of the Western Australian Museum, who confirms this view. You may therefore wish to seek further advice from the representatives of the Museum associated with the System Six Update.

The area also has aesthetic values — although I note that these will be given less emphasis in the Update than will conservation values.

As the report points out, the western extension of the Reid Highway is proposed to cut through this area. It should be possible, however, to retain some of the vegetation. Further parts of the vegetation will be destroyed if the roads shown dotted on the map (Lancelot Street and Bedivere Place) are constructed and associated urban development proceeds.

The Northern Suburbs Branch of the Wildflower Society may have further information on this area, and possibly some correspondence too.

I shall be grateful if you will consider including the above area in the System Six Update. If it is decided that the area is inappropriate for inclusion, I wonder if you might at least consider bringing it to the attention of the Main Roads Department, the Ministry for Planning and the City of Stirling, in order that as much as possible of the vegetation might be saved.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Powell
Robert Powell.

On Saturday September 17 a group of members and I examined a site in Carine, north of Careniup Swamp and just west of the Mitchell Freeway. To give the site a name, I shall call it Carine Hill. Here an area about 400 m by 200 m is heavily wooded; tuart predominates, but there are also stands of marri and occasional jarrah trees. The age of the individual trees varies from old to very young. Good numbers of saplings and seedlings of tuart and marri were seen, showing that these species were able to regenerate on this site, despite the disturbed conditions. Several bull banksias (*Banksia grandis*) occur here and various shrubs were noted, but most of the original understorey has disappeared and been replaced by weeds.

Carine Hill lies about four kilometres from the coast. Its vegetation contrasts with the remnants of wetland vegetation at Careniup and Big Carine Swamps, near by. It also contrasts with the vegetation in Lake Karrinyup Golf Course, which is more open, with more banksia and sheoak, and less dominated by tuart.

Carine Hill is unusual in being so heavily forested with tuart, since most such vegetation in Perth's northern suburbs has been cleared for housing. Moreover, this type of vegetation normally is found nearer the coast. The site represents a tongue of Cottesloe soil (brown sand over limestone) extending out to the east of the main belt of these soils.

This remnant of tuart forest has both scenic and biological values. Being on elevated land, it stands out from quite some distance away, and good views of it are obtained from the Mitchell Freeway. The site itself is pleasantly undulating, and there is the beauty of the individual trees and their combined effect in groups and patches of forest. The hill also offers some extensive views, particularly to the south and south-west, over lakes and vegetation to more distant features.

Carine Hill has biological value in providing food and shelter for birds. Its forest vegetation is an important habitat for birds on Perth's coastal plain, particularly since forests are poorly represented in bushland reserves; most remaining bushland in this region is woodland or shrubland. Moreover, many of the trees on Carine Hill are mature ones that offer hollows for birds and other fauna.

This remnant vegetation has further biological value in forming links with other areas. It is close to Careniup and Big Carine Swamps and to Lake Karrinyup Golf Course. It also is part of a corridor of vegetation that extends to the east, along existing and proposed sections of the Reid Highway, providing a link with sizable areas of open space in Mirrabooka, Malaga and Noranda.

At the end of the excursion our group discussed Carine Hill's future. Unfortunately the Reid Highway is proposed to cut through it, which will undoubtedly destroy much of the vegetation. Not all of it need be lost, however. By discussing the area with the City of Stirling and the Departments of Main Roads and Planning and Urban Development, the Northern Suburbs Branch of the Wildflower Society could help ensure that as much as possible of this remnant vegetation remains.

... Robert Powell ...

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