

Draft Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million
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Green Growth
Plan Submission

12 May 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan (GGP).

This submission is on behalf of the Canoe Trail Friends Of Mandurah and Pinjarra Inc. (CTFMP) (<http://canoetrailfriendsofmandurahandpinjarra.myclub.org.au/>), which is a group of paddlers that have come together to form a "paddlers alliance" some of our undertakings are:

- ◆ compilers of seven (7) canoe trail guides for the rivers and estuaries of Mandurah and Pinjarra with three (3) associated companions, and one Mandurah Island kayak Guide - The Dolphin Trail
- ◆ advocates for development of canoe launch sites
- ◆ advocates for universal canoe access
- ◆ coordinators of the annual Peel Paddling Carnival
- ◆ authors of submissions regarding environmental impacts on our waterways
- ◆ advocates for awareness & protection of our waterways wildlife
- ◆ compilers of Dolphin Tales & Walking Trails and Birdwatching Walking Trail Guide (Water & Shorebirds)
- ◆ event providers to the Annual Clean Up of Peel Waterways

There will be numerous submissions on a range of issues, including these two that we are aware of and support, the *Peel Harvey Catchment Council submission* and the *Birdlife Australia submission*.

Our overall impression is that the Draft Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million is conceptually a genuine attempt to balance the various issues of development and conservation.

However there are specific areas that we feel have not been addressed or are areas of concern for the group.

Members of the CTFMP have had many years of exceptional enjoyment paddling on the waterways of the Peel region, and expect to have many more. Apart from the tranquillity of paddling there are two major contributors to the enjoyment experienced on the waterways and they are the bird life and the Dolphins, and their well-being is the main focus of this submission.

We have over the years developed a good relationship with several other bodies instrumental in managing or monitoring and advocating for wildlife of the area and working towards the improved health of the waterways. As a result there have been many initiatives and reviews

undertaken in the region and it would seem that many of the plans produced should be utilised in the Green Growth Plan, rather than inventing new mechanisms for the management of the area.

For example

2.1 Enhanced environmental outcomes

2.1.2 Key commitments

Protecting rivers and wetland systems Page 16. Measures will also be implemented to manage threats to migratory birds and other shorebirds and their habitat in Peel Harvey estuary and broader Peel–Yalgorup wetland system including the establishment of Peel Regional Park and related management programs. Peel Regional Park will consist of both a network of land based reserves under the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 as well as local government reserves and a marine management area over the Peel Harvey estuary and its tributaries. A community advisory committee will assist in the management of the Peel Regional Park.

From this and other sections it would seem that the Department of Parks and Wildlife, will be the lead agency in ensuring outcomes are achieved. That's fine but their resources are minimal at present and they are unable to cope with their current obligations. This whole process will stall and die without proper funding. Given the current budgetary positions of both the State and Federal Government funding is unlikely to be forthcoming. We are not in a position to be able to provide a solution to this problem but are extremely concerned that this whole process is a complete waste of time and will be a complete environmental disaster as developers plunder the area because all the safeguards and good will is dissipated because of a lack of funding. It happens constantly and we fear it will happen again.

There is frequent mention of the Ramsar listed Peel Yalgorup System e.g.

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Maintain the ecological character of the Peel–Yalgorup Ramsar site via the ongoing presence of the following characteristics:

- Large and diverse complex of ecosystem types including shallow estuaries, coastal saline lakes and freshwater marshes.
- Populations of plants and animals important to maintaining the biodiversity of the Swan Coastal Plain bioregion, include threatened species and communities.
- An actively growing thrombolite community.
- Water quality that is equivalent to or better than current and/or recent historical conditions.
- Suitable habitat to support a range of species during critical life cycle stages, including breeding and moulting waterbirds; over–wintering migratory shorebirds; and breeding fish and crustaceans.
- Very high abundance of waterbirds and migratory shorebirds, sufficient to meet Ramsar listing criteria.
- Breeding, nursery and feeding habitat for numerous fish and crustacean species.

It would seem appropriate at some point in the plan to acknowledge that there is a Ramsar management and monitoring plan that should be funded and implemented –Peel-Harvey Catchment Council 2009, Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site Management Plan, Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, Mandurah

and

Monitoring and Evaluation Guide for the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar site

Similarly the Peel Region has been designated as a Natural Resource Management (NRM) Region. Much of the planned strategy for the NRM should be incorporated into the Green growth plan and its implementation appropriately funded. See - 2025, A Strategy for Natural Resource Management in the Peel-Harvey Region, A Report to the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, Jane O'Malley & Andrew Del Marco (eds.) Mandurah, Western Australia.

Many of the NRM Objectives and outcomes are similar in concept and philosophy (and in many cases more measurable and hence their achievement is more readily and successfully

monitored) to the GGP, but the NRM plan is also strong on mechanism of community and other involvement in achieving these objectives.

The utilisation of existing local mechanism, plans and organisation should be emphasised in the GGP, as they are local and committed.

One of the major impediments to progress in the Peel Region has been the diversity of bodies with responsibilities in the region and no single body to oversee the whole region. This needs to be remedied and the GGP could do that if it is framed correctly.

The Peel Regional plan (Appendix H p 14) has potential in this regard, and would point to Parks and Wildlife being the key coordinating or responsible body, not to diminish the role of other Departments like DoT and DoW. But the current system needs revision and holistic approach

Following from this the Marine Management Area is a good first step, but there should be commitment to an upgrading Marine Park status over the next 10 years.

We also support and encourage the extension of the Ramsar declared area to incorporate the entire area of the Marine Management Area, Appendix H p 15.

Dolphins

While all the above and efforts to improve the health of the Peel-Yalgorup system will benefit dolphins, there are other concerns.

The proposed population increase brings a corresponding increase in number and size of boats, and an increased risk to dolphins particularly mothers and calves.

So far in 2016 there have been 11 newborn reported, this is a significant number and emphasises the importance of the Peel Inlet, Harvey Estuary and associated rivers to Dolphins. Not only is it a valuable source of food but also sanctuary and training ground for calves. However mothers and calves are very vulnerable in the narrow channels and rivers and the shallows of the estuary to disruption and strikes from boats. The bigger the boat the more noise, disruption and stress, the faster the boat the more chance of strikes and stress or separation of mothers and calves. Probably not much to be done about size, but speed is a problem that needs addressing. Currently the enforcement of speed limits in rivers and channels is inadequate, we observe speeding boats constantly but have never seen one stopped by any agency, it probably occurs but it is rarely seen. This is probably due to inadequate resourcing of Water Police, DoT and Parks and Wildlife.

Although not related to dolphins *per se* the lack of enforcing motorised vessel exclusion zones has an effect on shorebird habitat, their feeding and recuperation

So once again provision needs to be made for the adequate resourcing (funding) of agencies and bodies involved in ensuring the success of this and other plans in the Peel region.

Thank You

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