



**Hon Donna Faragher JP MLC  
Member for East Metropolitan Region**

7 September 2018

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Via Email: [council@parliament.wa.gov.au](mailto:council@parliament.wa.gov.au)

Dear Matthew

**Re: Petition No. 073 – Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre**

Thank you for your letter dated 15 August 2018 regarding Petition No. 073.

The petition, tabled on 26 June 2018 in the Legislative Council, contains 815 signatures. It reflects the significant concerns of both the WA Gould League Inc. and the general community over the McGowan Government's poorly-thought out decision to cease annual grant funding of \$165,000 per year to the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre to support one teacher and one administrative assistant. If the decision is not reversed, funding will cease on 1 January 2019.

The McGowan Government made this rushed decision without any consultation with the WA Gould League. It is important to note that the WA Gould League has been part of the Western Australian community for 79 years and has always enjoyed a very strong and collaborative relationship with the Department of Education. Indeed, I am advised by the WA Gould League that the organisation was formed at the request of the Department with its first President being the then Director General of Education, Mr Charles Hadley.

Each year, the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, which is managed by the WA Gould League, delivers hands-on, interactive environmental education programmes to over 6000 primary and secondary students attending public, independent and Catholic schools from across the State. These programmes are comprehensive and cover a range of topics including *"Living Things"*, *"Ecosystems and Field Study"*, *"Classification and Food Webs"* and *"Wildlife Explorer"*. An important component of the environmental programmes offered by the Centre is *"Ancient Science"* where contemporary science and traditional Aboriginal culture are explored.

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All of these programmes are linked to the Australian Curriculum, are tailored to support specific year groups from pre-primary to Year 12 and are delivered by specialist education officers and volunteers. Furthermore, professional development courses are provided for teachers and educators throughout the year and the Centre assists the Department in the delivery of other programmes in support of the curriculum and other school-based initiatives such as Sustainable Schools.

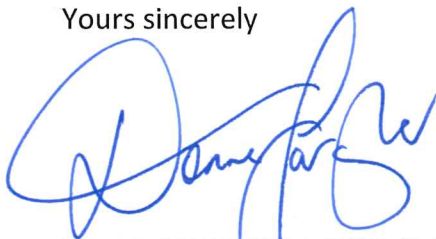
With regard to the cessation of grant funding, it should be noted that the WA Gould League was informed by the Government that they would be provided assistance from the Department of Education to explore alternative funding arrangements. Unfortunately, it appears that this assistance has not been comprehensive. Indeed, I am advised that while the Department has suggested Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) as a possible funding source, CVA have informed the WA Gould League that they cannot offer funding for staff, rather in-kind support. While in-kind support is appreciated, the WA Gould League requires funding for staff.

It is incredibly disappointing that the McGowan Government has decided, without consultation, to cease funding to this unique and highly valued organisation. The specialist educational programmes experienced by thousands of school students every year at the Centre cannot be easily replicated.

I, like many Western Australians, am very concerned that without government funding and without the continued close relationship with the Department of Education, this amazing Centre will ultimately close. I therefore ask that the Committee strongly support the petitioners' request that the State Government *"reinstate funding to the Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre so that it can continue to nurture a passion for nature in the children and community of Western Australia"* for years to come.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely



**HON DONNA FARAGHER JP MLC**

**Member for East Metropolitan Region**

**Shadow Minister for Education and Training; Women's Interests**