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**Hon Reece Whitby MLA**  
**Minister for Environment; Climate Action**

Your Reference: Petition 043  
Our Reference: 79-04409

Hon Peter Foster MLC  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Legislative Council Committee Office  
18-32 Parliament Place  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Mr Foster

 Thank you for your letter dated 7 April 2022 seeking comment on the terms of Petition No. 043 – Protecting the South West Black Cockatoos, tabled by Hon Stephen Pratt MLC.

The petition calls for an inquiry of two parts to protect the south west black cockatoos:

- a 'Gap Analysis' to investigate what is missing in the laws, policies, and initiatives; and
- an 'Emergency Plan' that will reverse their decline and prevent their extinction.

The State Government is committed to the conservation and recovery of the three threatened black cockatoo species, Carnaby's cockatoo (endangered), Baudin's cockatoo (vulnerable) and the forest red-tailed black cockatoo (vulnerable), found in the south west of Western Australia. Extensive work has been undertaken to conserve this species and is continuing. Recovery of threatened species includes specific targeted recovery actions, implementation of robust laws and policies, and other environmental restoration and management initiatives that have broad conservation outcomes.

The laws and policies to protect threatened species have been strengthened over recent years, particularly through provisions of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). New protections include a requirement for Ministerial Authorisation for any activity that will take or disturb threatened fauna. Consistent with the objectives of Streamline WA, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) is developing guidelines to apply a risk-based approach to the provision of consistent and transparent advice to support informed decision making related to development activities. These guidelines will ensure that timely and robust advice on impacts to threatened species will be available to provide a balanced approach to development and protection of the environment.

DBCA recognises that the historical clearing of banksia woodlands and other food sources has had impact on the population of Carnaby's cockatoos. As such, the Government continues to focus on reducing the loss of habitat through environmental impact assessment processes under State and Commonwealth legislation.

Nationally adopted recovery plans for black cockatoos have either expired (Baudin's and forest red-tailed cockatoos) or are due to expire in January 2024 (Carnaby's cockatoo). A review of these recovery plans has recommended that conservation and recovery planning for these species should be integrated and updated to incorporate new information about the species ecology and actions to address threats. DBCA is currently working with the Commonwealth Government on the development of an updated recovery plan, based on current scientific evidence, to address the decline and to support the persistence of these species.

DBCA works in partnership with the WA Museum, non-government organisations including BirdLife Australia and WWF Australia, research institutions and community volunteers to implement recovery actions for the protection, rehabilitation and management of black cockatoo habitat across their breeding and non-breeding (foraging and roosting) range.

Examples of recovery actions that have been implemented to improve the conservation status of black cockatoos include the installation and repair of artificial nest boxes to improve breeding success, measures to reduce vehicle collisions with adult birds, rehabilitating injured cockatoos, protecting habitat, and monitoring and research to understand the movements and requirements of these species. These measures have resulted in a significant improvement in breeding success and increased our knowledge to inform conservation of these species.

The State Government has a range of other environmental initiatives that improve outcomes for threatened species. On 8 September 2021, it was announced that large scale commercial timber harvesting in south-west native forests will be discontinued from 2024. Preparation of the Forest Management Plan 2024-2033 by the Conservation and Parks Commission (through DBCA) is underway.

Another action of relevance to the conservation of threatened black cockatoos is the Carbon for Conservation initiative, released as part of the Government's COVID-19 economic stimulus and recovery plan. In August 2020, the Government initiated a market-led proposal process that called on the private sector to identify carbon farming opportunities within Western Australia's national parks and reserves. One of the candidate sites identified for Carbon for Conservation was the northern Swan Coastal Plain area, including the areas of harvested pine plantation within the Gnangara-Moore River State forest. The State Government is currently evaluating proposals received under this initiative through the market-led proposal process.

The Government supports the concept of replanting in the ex-plantation areas of Gnangara-Moore River State forest to provide environmental and social benefits, including food resources for Carnaby's cockatoo, while ensuring ongoing management of the Gnangara-Moore River State forest is balanced with the primary objective of maximising groundwater recharge to provide about 40 per cent of the Perth metropolitan drinking water.

DBCA has partnered with the Water Corporation and BirdLife Western Australia to plant native seedlings in Gnangara-Moore River State forest. DBCA will continue to explore opportunities for such partnerships to return native vegetation to the former pine plantation areas of the Gnangara-Moore River State forest, and create habitat for threatened black cockatoos and other native wildlife.

I hope that this response provides reassurance that the McGowan Government is committed to the conservation of threatened species, including black cockatoos.

Should you require further information or any clarification on the information provided, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Reece Whitby', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reece Whitby MLA  
**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

28 APR 2022