



**Hon. Diane Evers MLC**  
Member for the South West Region

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC  
Chair, Environment and Public Affairs Committee

Dear Mr Swinbourn

**RE: Petition No. 075 – Development of the Greenpatch, Dalyellup**

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of this petition, which to my knowledge, has not been taken to the Ombudsman. It calls on the Legislative Council to “support measures to stop the development of the Greenpatch (Structure Plan 11453P-SP-04B – Lots 9105, 9076, 8019 Dalyellup) and to recommend the area be ceded into the Shearwater Tuart Forest to form part of the Preston River to Ocean Regional Park”.

There are a number of reasons that any application for a subdivision or development in “Greenpatch” should be stopped. Like the petitioners, I am concerned about the loss of quality Tuart bushland with associated impacts on threatened species that inhabit the area. Approximately 80 - 86% of the original area of Tuart woodlands and forests in Western Australia has been lost, leaving around 25,000 ha comprised of 563 patches, most of which have been disturbed, fragmented and are under 10 ha. Even worse, only a small number of areas remain in good ecological condition. A new species of the pathogen *Phytophthora multivora*, has been found to be well established in Tuart forest south of Mandurah, and has the potential to have a significant negative effect on communities not previously thought to be very susceptible to dieback disease<sup>1</sup>. This loss is particularly serious since Western Australia is the only place in the world where Tuart woodlands and forests are found. They are precious.

I welcome the steps that have been taken to protect Tuart woodlands and forests to date. The Western Australian government recognised Tuart ecological communities as Priority 3 in November 2016, while the Tuart woodlands and forests of the Swan Coastal Plain have been nominated for listing as a Threatened Ecological Community under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, in the conservation category of ‘critically endangered’<sup>2</sup>. A national listing can provide increased opportunities for landholders and managers to gain funding for work to protect and restore patches of these ecological communities and help to protect threatened species such as Carnaby’s Cockatoo. However, these positive steps would be gravely undermined if a subdivision at Greenpatch is approved before the scientific

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/licences-permits/Flora/management\\_of\\_commercial\\_harvesting\\_of\\_protected\\_flora\\_in\\_wa\\_2018\\_to\\_2023.pdf](https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/plants-animals/licences-permits/Flora/management_of_commercial_harvesting_of_protected_flora_in_wa_2018_to_2023.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/tuart-woodlands-forests-swan-coastal-plain>



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assessment and decision making process associated with evaluation for listing is completed. Again, precaution is called for.

The preservation of this and other Tuart woodlands and forests is of great importance to many in the community. For instance, the Beekeepers Section of the WA Farmers Federation argues that Tuart forests on the Swan Coastal Plains should be protected because they are an important source of honey production. Like the Greens, WAFarmers notes that forests currently face grave threats such as harvesting, land clearing, and climate change. As WAFarmers notes, approximately 80 per cent of Tuart woodlands and forests have already been cleared for residential development and agricultural land, and it is therefore important to ensure the remaining portions of the woodlands are protected to safeguard the longevity of the Tuart species and related ecological community in WA.

Furthermore, as the petitioners argue, there is a risk that the loss of Greenpatch's current function as a buffer zone between the former titanium waste residue disposal facility and the local community will expose people to harmful levels of toxic waste and leachate. This is critically important given the presence of hexavalent chromium in a bore on the western boundary of the Greenpatch development, in an area formerly leased by the adjacent waste residue disposal facility, as the government explained in response to the Hon. Robin Chapple's question without notice on 20 March 2018. Despite the Government's assurance that chromium-6 levels are below the Department of Health's non-potable use guidelines, members of the public in the local area remain concerned as they note that the World Health Organisation's guidelines for chromium levels in non-potable water - which inform our state and national guidelines - are "provisional".

I also support the petitioners' call to cede the area into the Shearwater Tuart Forest to form part of the Preston River to Ocean Regional Park. Although the Minister for Transport; Planning; Lands has explained that the boundaries of the Preston River to Ocean Regional Park have already been determined, the Minister stated in a Question without Notice on 10 May 2018 that the Government retains the power to determine whether these lots can be included in the Park.

In summary, I support the Petitioners call to stop the development of the Greenpatch development and to cede the area into the Shearwater Tuart Forest to form part of the Preston River to Ocean Regional Park. At the very least, the Government should wait for the outcome of the reviews and assessments outlined above to be completed before making any further development decisions.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Diane Evers MLC

**Member for South West Region**

**12 September 2018**