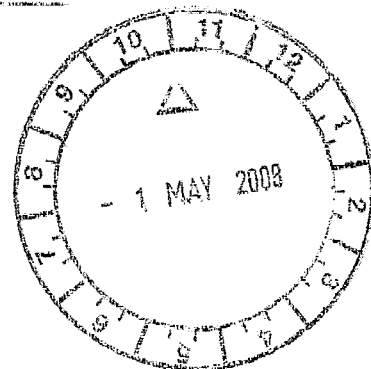




Minister for the Environment; Climate Change; Peel

Our ref: 21-013445

Mr Paul Grant
Clerk Assistant (Committees)
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Mr Grant

**COMMITTEE REPORTS: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO REPORT NO. 12:
OVERVIEW OF PETITIONS**

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 2008 forwarding a copy of the report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs in relation to the above.

The following advice is provided regarding Recommendation 1 *"the Committee recommends that the State Government undertakes a comprehensive review of buffer distance requirements for all conservation category wetlands subject to urban development"*.

The responsibility for urban development planning guidelines rests primarily within the portfolio of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, while wetland conservation requirements are primarily dealt with through my portfolio and in particular, the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC). In the case of conservation category wetlands, DEC is currently cooperating with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) in the development of standard recommended wetland buffers for urban development.

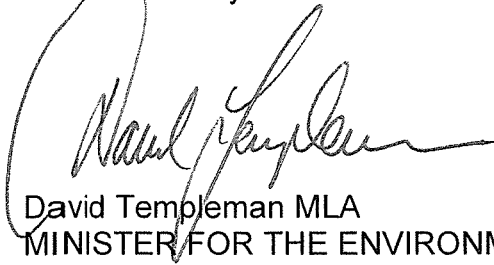
DPI chairs the Wetland Buffer Guideline Working Group which reports to the State Wetlands Coordinating Committee. The working group assisted in the preparation of a draft *Guideline for the Determination of Wetland Buffer Requirements* (published by the Western Australian Planning Commission) which was released for public comment in 2005. The working group is currently preparing an amended guideline document in light of the public comment received. The working group consists of representatives from DPI, Department of Agriculture and Food, DEC, Department of Water, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Western Australian Local Government Association, Urban Development Institute of Australia, and an independent wetland scientist.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF WA

I believe that the intent of the Committee's Recommendation 1 has already been partly met through the public comment on the 2005 draft guidelines and that it will be fully met once final guidelines, taking into account the public comments received and further agency review, are completed and endorsed. It is intended that the final buffer guidelines will be adopted by the Environmental Protection Authority and the Western Australian Planning Commission, and will be applied consistently across Government.

Furthermore, the EPA is undertaking a comprehensive review of the environmental impact assessment process in WA and the underpinning environmental policy settings. One of the priorities for policy review is Wetlands and it is my expectation that the Chairman of the EPA and the Director General of the DEC will work collaboratively to ensure that the matter of buffer distances is managed so as to produce clear and consistent guidance for the land development industry and both local and state government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Templeman', written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.

David Templeman MLA
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT; CLIMATE CHANGE; PEEL

30 APR 2008