

**Committee:** House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage  
**Reference:** Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025  
**Date:** Thursday, 31 March - Perth

**SUBMISSION BY THE URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA INC**  
**REPRESENTATIVES:** Mary Gray (President), Robert Greenwood

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We wish to discuss one fundamental aspect of sustainability for Perth: preservation of bushland and its biodiversity.

The south west of WA is a biodiversity hotspot for conservation priority identified in the international study of Myers et al 2000. The south west is the only region of Australia afforded this status. Perth sits in this hotspot. We claim Perth is the biodiversity capital of Australia and one of three biodiverse cities of the world.

Furthermore, recent work by local researchers (Hopper and Gioia) has shown that the Perth Metropolitan Region is one of 11 biodiversity hotspots within the south west. Thus Perth is a hotspot in its own right.

However Perth's globally significant bushland heritage is under very serious threat. The biodiversity capital of the nation is most at risk of climate change and associated threats.

The threats are:

- clearing for development and continuing urban sprawl
- climate change (up to 60% RF drop, 6-7 deg temp rise)
- weed invasion
- frequent fires
- dieback
- acid sulfate soils
- community ignorance and complacency

We are staring at mass extinction of flora and fauna species unless there is a major shift by both Commonwealth and State Governments to invest in conservation underpinned by robust statutory controls.

The Perth metropolitan region now has ~28% bushland remaining in a fragmented landscape, yet the Commonwealth target for conservation of ecosystems is for at least 30% retention. So we are at the cusp of significant decision making for the future of the region.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage  
**Inquiry into Sustainable Cities 2025 Perth 31 March 2005**

**SUBMISSION BY THE URBAN BUSHLAND COUNCIL WA INC**

**Sustainability of Perth's unique bushland and its biodiversity**

Issue	Context for action	Action recommended
Recognition of Perth's status as a unique biodiversity hotspot	1. Publications by Norman Myers et al 2000, & 2005 of Conservation International: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Nature Vol 403 24 Feb 2000</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Hotspots revisited</i> (book just published)</li> </ul> 2. Research in WA by Stephen D Hopper & Paul Gioia on plants of south west region WA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>annurev.ecolsys.35.112202.130201</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commonwealth and State Government recognition of conservation significance and serious threat it faces</li> </ul>
Bushland clearing	1. <i>National objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation 2001 - 2005.</i> (Commonwealth of Australia 2001) Key action No. 1 (protect and restore native vegetation and terrestrial ecosystems) 1.1 and especially 1.1.4  2. Reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions	1. Apply target 1.1.4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ End land (ie bushland) clearing Australia wide as a national policy initiative, statutory base needed (eg EPBC Act or new, introduce 'overnight' with comprehensive implementation package of support )</li> <li>▪ Fund (Commonwealth) implementation and awareness program</li> <li>▪ fund compensation for difficult cases</li> </ul> 2. Essential Greenhouse Gas reduction measure- must be Australia wide and comprehensive
Bushland protection	1. <i>National objectives and targets for biodiversity conservation 2001 - 2005.</i> Key action No. 1.2, 1.3 esp targets for 10% and 30% protection of each ecological community  2. <i>Bush Forever</i> program (State) for regional conservation estate  3. Perth Biodiversity Project:- ' <i>Local Government Biodiversity Planning Guidelines 2004</i> ' for Perth Metropolitan Region.	1. Apply targets for 1.2, 1.3 and resource for south west WA and Perth region as top priority due to hotspot status  2. Currently being implemented now ~ half way into 10 year program. Half hearted, not adequate State priority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure State implements more rigorously and increases funding to secure all sites</li> <li>▪ establish long term management arrangements</li> <li>▪ ensure statutory protection including practical management provisions</li> </ul> 3. Local bushland protection and management by Local Government authorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fund local government on at least 1 to 1 base to</li> </ul>

<p>implement the guidelines and to secure natural areas through planning measures</p> <p>encourage employment of expertise and capacity by councils</p>
<p>set an 'urban growth boundary' for Perth, retain inland, wetlands, foreshores and open space, the lungs of the city</p> <p>develop selected inner- mid urban areas to more compact sustainable form</p>
<p>Education and awareness component not being implemented. Government agencies are reluctant to act as a catalyst. Failure of State Government to implement its commitment 4 years ago to immediately protect all Govt sites. Ignorance of Bush Forever and bushland significance. Inadequate funding, many actions deplorable and ignore community wishes for conservation.</p> <p>encourage State funds and implements awareness program</p> <p>encourage State to lead a change of attitude to a conservation ethic and commitment to it</p> <p>encourage substantial federal funding to support and lead Government to implement Guidelines as priority</p>
<p>2. Fund community awareness program through existing networks</p> <p>explore new creative means- documentaries, TV media, radio, internet, etc. - mass media potential</p> <p>provide focus and resources for education system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels</p>
<p><b>Herbarium base has huge gaps, capacity of 1,2,3 starved of expertise, funding and infrastructure. BOTH the Herbarium and WA Museum and housing of their collections is a public disgrace.</b></p> <p><b><i>A matter of public disgrace for WA and for Australia.</i></b></p> <p>encourage Commonwealth investment in 1,2,3 is urgently needed. Should be regarded as long term infrastructure investment.</p> <p>encourage major State investment essential. eg build new Herbarium and Museum</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Massive new funding of basic survey and research</li><li>▪ greatly increased knowledge base is essential for working toward sustainability of our unique flora, fauna and landscapes both in Perth region and south west.</li><li>▪ For 5. Fund quality biodiversity projects such as our Fungi project, and Perth Biodiversity project through existing programs</li></ul>
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