

Title	Environmental Conservation
Policy Number (Governance Purpose)	



Policy Type

Council

Policy Purpose

Cockburn has unique and diverse ecological and cultural assets that form an important part of the natural and built environment. The City adopts a strategic approach to conservation, protection and management of natural areas within the City.

The objective of this policy is to guide sustainable planning outcomes for the retention and management of locally significant flora and fauna and to promote wetland conservation and restoration

This policy applies to the assessment of structure plans, subdivision and development applications within the City of Cockburn and should be read in addition to the City's Town Planning Scheme No 3 (TPS 3).

TPS 3 provides strategic guidance on the protection of Native Flora (Section 4.14), Native Fauna (Section 4.15) and Wetlands (Section 4.16) and this policy provides a range of additional initiatives for ensuring the effective protection and ongoing management of natural areas, native flora and fauna and wetlands within the City.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the City's Natural Area Management Strategy and the Landowner Biodiversity Conservation Grants Policy which promotes the retention of natural areas on private property.

The policy clearly articulates Council's position on environmental protection and management when assessing:

- Scheme amendments
- Structure plans
- Local Development Plans
- Subdivision applications
- Development applications

Policy Statement

(1) Protection of Flora and Fauna

1. Where remnant vegetation is present proponents will be required to undertake flora and fauna surveys as outlined in the relevant and most recent Environmental Protection Authority Technical Guidance documents.

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2. Structure plans, subdivision and development applications (and Local Development Plans where applicable) should be supported by documentation to demonstrate that site clearing is minimised, the presence of natural areas have been considered and that consideration has been given to vegetation condition, habitat and ecological linkages.
3. All endeavours are to be made to protect and retain trees that have been identified in fauna surveys as providing significant habitat value. Proponents are to seek advice from the City as early as possible in the development process to discuss alternative opportunities to integrate tree retention into the development design. This may include, for example, the designing of road alignments to retain significant trees within verge areas.
4. The City will use its discretion where appropriate to consider opportunities to retain environmental assets when facilitating sustainable development outcomes. This, for example, may include higher residential densities where there is a greater provision of public open space required for conservation through the structure planning process.
5. Larger integrated parcels of public open space that are wholly comprised of remnant bushland are preferred to smaller fragmented parcels however, these smaller parcels will be considered of higher value if it is of high conservation significance and/or if it provides an ecological linkage value. Ideally bushland should form part of an area of public open space that includes other recreational and amenity functions to ensure the recreational needs of the future community are met. Notwithstanding this, all planning proposals need to demonstrate the provision of an adequate balance between active and passive public open space.
6. Where applicable, conditions preventing or restricting the clearing of vegetation within subdivision and development approvals will be applied (or recommended to the Western Australian Planning Commission where applicable) in order to facilitate the maximum retention and ecological function of natural areas, consistent with endorsed structure plans and related planning decisions.
7. Development proposals which are deemed to impact on fauna that is considered rare and/or endangered will require the proposal to be referred to state and/or federal authorities in line with the guidelines outlined under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act (1999) and the WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. Proponents may also be required to submit their proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

(2) Wetland Conservation

1. Wetland buffers will be determined based on the relevant State Government Guidance.

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2. Development that incorporates a wetland will require the proponent to prepare a Wetland Management Plan which details the measures required to be taken to maintain the ecological function of the wetland, hydrological balance and to prevent pollution.
3. Discharge of drainage directly into wetlands will not be permitted unless there has been suitable treatment to remove nutrients and other pollutants, provided that adverse hydrological impacts will not occur. The integrity of wetland and buffer vegetation is to be maintained where drainage facilities are established within the buffer to the wetland. Information on how this is to be achieved should be detailed in the Local Water Management Strategy and Urban Water Management Plan.
4. Where on-site effluent disposal is proposed in sewage sensitive areas, including wetlands and their buffers, the systems must comply with the Department of Planning Sewage Policy and any associated guidelines.

(3) Bushland Resource Recovery

Where all possibilities to retain good quality bushland have been exhausted and the bushland is to be cleared, the City may seek agreement with the proponent to:

- Make topsoil available for rehabilitation projects
- Permit seed collection to occur prior to clearing
- Permit plant salvage to occur prior to clearing
- Permit large habitable logs to be salvaged
- Permit access to mulch from the site if it is not to be used elsewhere, and utilise salvaged and existing vegetation within areas to be landscaped.

Applicants are encouraged to identify these opportunities within their applications.

(4) Advice

Where applicable, conditions preventing or restricting the clearing of vegetation within subdivision and development approvals will be applied (or recommended to the Western Australian Planning Commission where applicable) in order to facilitate the maximum retention and function of bushland, consistent with endorsed structure plans and related planning decisions.

The following steps should be taken by the developer to identify and maximise the retention of flora and fauna during the development process.

1. Undertake a Flora and Fauna Survey of the land to be developed.
2. Consider the survey results and identify the best quality and high habitat value areas for retention within POS areas.
3. Prepare a Draft proposal
4. Discuss with the City's statutory planners or environmental staff.
5. Finalise and submit proposal.

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References

Town Planning Scheme No.3 –

- s4.14 (Native Flora)
- s4.15 (Native Fauna)
- s4.16 (Wetlands)

Strategic Link:	Natural Area Management Strategy
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