



# Media Release

7 February 2018

## **Man ordered to pay City's \$3,500 legal costs**

People planning to illegally remove materials from nature rehabilitation projects in the City of Cockburn should consider who might be watching, and the potential for expensive legal consequences if found guilty.

The City of Cockburn has successfully prosecuted a man found guilty of removing timber from dune rehabilitation works at C Y O'Connor Beach last winter.

In June 2017, he was photographed by a fellow visitor to the area as he loaded a wheelbarrow with logs being used to stabilise fragile dunes in the reserve, before transferring them to his ute.

The evidence was provided to the City which then tracked down the man and issued him an \$80 fine, which he subsequently refused to pay, arguing he was legitimately collecting firewood.

The man appeared at Fremantle Magistrate's Court on 24 January for non-payment of the fine and found guilty of removing the timber without permission under Section 3.4 (b) of the City of Cockburn Local Law.

He was fined \$500 and ordered to pay the City's \$3,500 legal costs.

Cockburn Environmental Manager Chris Beaton said matting, timber and brush recycled from Council gardening activities were regularly used at the reserve to stabilise erosion caused by human activity and dynamic coastal weather processes.

"Dead wood is a valuable habitat for coastal species from insects to reptiles, birds, marsupials and mammals. It also breaks down in the soil, providing vital nutrients," Mr Beaton said.

"The layering of timber and brush also prevents further erosion by discouraging people from walking through the dunes.



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“The brushing material is made up of branches from tree prunings to trap sand particles and seeds dropped from local plant species establish, also contributing to dune stabilisation.

“Brushing is effective because it lies slightly proud of the surface, creating a shaded microclimate where seedlings are protected from the sun and wind.

“The City is thankful to people who care about their community and the local environment enough to let us know if they see something that doesn’t look quite right.”

Report suspicious behaviour to the City on 9411 3444 or call CoSafe on 1800 267 233.

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