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advances in technology, and the priorities of the community. Land use planning decisions will often seek to minimise trade-offs in order to achieve the best outcome for the community, the environment and the economy.

Integrated land use planning and management is a practical way to achieve effective and efficient use of the natural resources of the State. There is a clear and explicit need to incorporate environmental considerations and resource management into the planning process to ensure that decisions are made in the context of potential impacts on the environment and our natural resources. In the same way, it is possible for more use to be made of the planning system in managing these issues. It is possible to achieve land use change and development that have positive environmental outcomes or that reduce the degree of negative impact on the environment.

The Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) policy is a broad, sector issue policy under *Statement of Planning Policy No. 8: State Planning Framework Policy*. It defines the principles and considerations that represent good and responsible planning in terms of environment and natural resource issues within the framework of the State Planning Strategy. The ENR policy will be supplemented by more detailed planning policies on particular natural resources matters that require additional information and guidance. These supplementary policies may also be Statements of Planning Policy and should be implemented in conjunction with this policy.

3. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

The policy applies throughout Western Australia.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- β to integrate environment and natural resource management with broader land use planning and decision-making;
- β to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment; and
- β to promote and assist in the wise and sustainable use and management of natural resources.

5. POLICY MEASURES

The above objectives provide the context for the policy measures which are set out below under the following headings:

- β General Measures
- β Water Resources
- β Air Quality
- β Soil and Land Quality
- β Biodiversity
- β Agricultural Land and Rangelands
- β Minerals, Petroleum and Basic Raw Materials
- β Marine Resources and Aquaculture
- β Landscapes
- β Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Efficiency

5.1 General Measures

The implementation of planning decisions can have an impact on the environment and other natural resources. The following policy measures recognise the significance of natural resources, and should be read in conjunction with the more specific statements on aspects of natural resources that follow.

Planning strategies, schemes and decision-making should:

- (i) Avoid development that may result in unacceptable environmental damage.
- (ii) Actively seek opportunities for improved environmental outcomes including support for development which provides for environmental restoration or enhancement.
- (iii) Take account of the availability and condition of natural resources, based on best available information at the time.
- (iv) Protect significant natural, indigenous and cultural features, including sites and features significant as habitats and for their floral, cultural, built, archaeological, ethnographic, geological, geomorphological, visual or wilderness values.
- (v) Take into account the potential for economic, environmental and social (including cultural) effects on natural resources.

- (vi) Recognise that certain natural resources, including biological resources, are restricted to particular areas and that these geographical areas or land types may need to be identified accordingly and appropriate provision made to protect the areas for the use of those resources.
- (vii) Take account of the potential for on-site and off-site impacts of land use on the environment, natural resources and natural systems¹.
- (viii) Safeguard and enhance areas of environmental significance on the coast including the marine environment.
- (ix) Ensure use and development on or adjacent to the coast is compatible with its future sustainable use for conservation, recreation and tourism in appropriate areas.
- (x) Support conservation, protection and management of native remnant vegetation where possible, to enhance soil and land quality, water quality, biodiversity, fauna habitat, landscape, amenity values and ecosystem function.
- (xi) Consider alternatives to land acquisition for conservation and landscape protection where limited or no public access is required.
- (xii) Take into account the potential for impacts from changes in climate and weather on human activities and cultural heritage including coastal and urban communities, natural systems and water resources.
- (xiii) Consider any relevant accredited Natural Resource Management Regional Strategy, or catchment management strategies prepared by catchment groups and endorsed by State government agencies, with a view to integrating implementation of appropriate and relevant parts through town planning schemes and assessment of developments.

5.2 Water Resources

Water is fundamental to human life and the environment. The careful management of water resources, both in terms of quantity and quality, is therefore essential to support natural ecosystems as well as future growth and development. This includes water catchments, waterways, wetlands, estuaries and the marine environment.

The State *Water Quality Management Strategy for Western Australia* (2001) (SWQMS) is the State framework for implementation of the *National Water Quality Management Strategy* (1994) (NWQMS). The prime objective of the NWQMS is 'to achieve sustainable use of the nation's water resources by protecting and enhancing their quality while maintaining economic and social development.' This ENR Policy is thus consistent with the guiding principles of the NWQMS and the SWQMS, as well as the *Wetlands Conservation Policy for WA* (1997), which aims to prevent further loss or degradation of valuable wetlands in Western Australia.

Planning strategies, schemes and decision making should:

- (i) Consider mechanisms to protect, manage, conserve and enhance:
 - a. wetlands of importance, Ramsar wetlands and wetlands identified in any relevant

- (v) Consider flood risk by identifying floodways and land affected by 1 in 100 year flood events and avoid intensifying the potential for flooding as a result of inappropriately located land uses and development.
- (vi) Consider the risks associated with nuisance or disease vector insects, in particular mosquitoes and midges, and ensure appropriate measures are applied to manage potential conflicts with community amenity and health, and environmental values.

5.3 Air Quality

Air quality is a local, national and global concern. At the global scale, the key natural resource management issues are the emission of greenhouse gases, which has been linked to climatic changes, primarily in temperature and rainfall, and the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer that affects the amount of ultraviolet light reaching the Earth.

Regional and local air quality problems are primarily the result of industrial and domestic emissions, vehicle use and land use practices such as agriculture and forestry. In Western Australia the key regional and local air quality issues are photochemical smog and haze from particulates (solid and liquid), sulphur dioxide, dust and air toxics.

Western Australia has adopted the

5.5 Biodiversity

Biodiversity describes the variability among living organisms from all sources (including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part) and includes diversity within and between species and the diversity of ecosystems.²

Biological diversity underpins ecological processes essential for maintenance of marine and estuarine quality, soil fertility and clean, fresh water and air. Biodiversity is also fundamental to the quality and character of the landscape and in providing recreational opportunities, aesthetic value and cultural identity. Planning should recognise the State's biodiversity in considering changes of land use, including consideration of any future potential value, such as for medicinal purposes or as a source of genetic material.

The protection and enhancement of biodiversity is guided by the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity* (1996) and the *National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-05*. There are also a number of statutory and non-statutory mechanisms designed to protect, manage and conserve areas identified as of high State, regional or local biodiversity value for Western Australia.

Planning strategies, schemes and decision-making should:

- (i) Consider mechanisms to protect areas of high biodiversity and/or conservation value, including:
 - a.

In the more remote parts of the State, social issues such as rural decline is increasing the pressure on natural resources, as a community's capacity for management decreases whilst requirements to intensify agricultural activities are increased.

The rangelands cover over 85% of Western Australia and contain essential elements of the State's biological diversity. Only about 2% of Western Australia's population lives in these arid and semi-arid lands. Pastoralism is by far the most extensive use, although these lands produce the majority of the State's mineral and energy wealth.

Productive agricultural land is a finite resource that must be managed sustainably for the long term. Planning should ensure that the State's agricultural base is protected from the unplanned loss of high quality productive agricultural land due to permanent changes of land use, and maximise the potential of productive farm land which is of high quality and strategic significance in the State, regional and local context. The *Statement of Planning Policy No. 11: Agricultural and Rural Land Use Planning Policy* requires identification and protection of agricultural areas of State, regional and local significance through identification in regional planning schemes, local planning strategies and town planning schemes.

Planning strategies, schemes and decision-making should:

- (i) Protect and enhance areas of agricultural significance, having regard to State, regional and local issues and characteristics, and to the requirements of *Statement of Planning Policy No. 11: Agricultural and Rural Land Use Planning*.
- (ii) Consider the natural resource capability of rangelands and agricultural lands.
- (iii) Diversify compatible land use activities in agricultural areas and rangelands based on principles of sustainability and recognizing the capability and capacity of the land to support those uses.

5.7 Minerals, Petroleum and Basic Raw Material Resources

Mineral resources, petroleum resources and basic raw materials are important natural resource assets and are a vital part of the economy, contributing 30% to Western Australia's gross domestic product. Mineral production is very diverse with over 50 different minerals in commercial production. The main minerals produced are iron ore, gold and alumina which, with petroleum, provide 80% of the total minerals mined in Western Australia. Mineral exploration is managed under the *Mining Act 1978*.

The Western Australian Petroleum Industry accounts for a substantial portion of the State's earnings from resources development. Onshore gas fields and pipelines carrying gas to domestic markets, processing plants and other industrial sites, require protection in the form of setback distances and dedicated easements, that safeguard the infrastructure and the safety of local communities. The activities of the oil and gas industries are administered by the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources, using petroleum legislation and regulations.

Basic raw materials include sand, clay, hard rock, limestone and gravel together with other construction and road building materials. A ready supply of basic raw materials close to developing areas is required in order to keep down the cost of land development and the price of housing. The extraction of basic raw materials on Crown land is covered by the *Mining Act 1978* while quarrying of basic raw materials on private land is administered by local government.

Planning strategies, schemes and decision-making should:

- (i) Identify and protect important and economic mineral resources to enable mineral exploration and mining in accordance with acceptable environmental standards.
- (ii) Identify and protect important basic raw material resources and provide for their extraction and use in accordance with *Statement of Planning Policy No. 10: Basic Raw Materials*.
- (iii) Support sequencing of uses where appropriate to maximise options and resultant benefits to community and the environment.
- (iv) Have regard to the *State Gravel Supply Strategy* (1998), the draft *Towards a State Lime Strategy*

\$570 million annually to the State's economy. Aquaculture continues to increase its importance, as new land based and marine aquaculture sites are established throughout the State.

Planning should recognise and account for areas of significance and ensure compatibility of land use planning decisions and actions associated with, and adjacent to, these areas.

Western Australia's planning system does not directly engage in planning for the marine environment. However, the need for integrated marine planning is acknowledged, and will be assisted by the preparation of a State marine planning strategy. Further, *Oceans Policy* (1999) outlines the Commonwealth government's intention to prepare regional marine plans. This includes Commonwealth waters adjacent to Western Australia.

Planning strategies, schemes and decision-making should:

- (i) Take account of the location of areas of significance for recreational and commercial fishing and aquaculture, having regard to State, regional and local issues and characteristics. This should include land based infrastructure that supports these industries.
- (ii) Seek to avoid or minimise any adverse impacts, directly or indirectly, on areas of significance for commercial and recreational fishing and aquaculture as a result of adjacent land use planning decisions and actions.

5.9 Landscape

Western Australia has a diversity of high value landscapes and scenic areas, many of which are unique to Australia. These range from the unmodified semi-arid and subtropical landscapes of the north and east of the State to modified rural farming landscapes in the south-west, and encompass a diversity of natural coastal landscapes, vast flat plains, mountain ridges and forested areas.

There is an increasing appreciation and valuing of natural landscapes by the community. These

- (ii) Support the retention of existing vegetation and revegetation in subdivision and development proposals.
- (iii) Support the use of alternative energy generation, including renewable energy, where appropriate.
- (iv) Support the adoption of adaptation measures that may be required to respond to climate change.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this policy is to inform local governments and the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal of those aspects of State-level planning policy concerning the environment and natural resources which

National Environment Protection Council (Australia) (1998) *National Environment Protection Measure for Ambient Air Quality*, Adelaide, SA

Salinity Taskforce (2001) *Salinity : a new balance : the report of the Salinity Taskforce established to review salinity management in Western Australia* Perth, WA

Water and Rivers Commission, (2001) *State water quality management strategy*, East Perth, WA

Western Australian Planning Commission (1997) *State Planning Strategy*, Perth, WA

Main Roads Western Australia (1998) *State Gravel Supply Strategy*, Perth, WA

Department of Resources Development (2001) *Towards a State Lime Strategy, draft* Perth, WA