



WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (Inc)

# Media Release

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## Clearing Permit approved with significant reduction in clearing

**Perth, 13 May 2021:** The Wildflower Society of Western Australia (WSWA) has congratulated the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) for a significant decision following an application by the Shire of Wyalkatchem to clear native vegetation during road widening operations.

The initial application was to clear 3.8ha of native vegetation along the Cunderdin-Wyalkatchem road, which links the Great Eastern Highway to the Goomalling-Merredin Road.

“Very little native vegetation remains in this over-cleared part of the Wheatbelt”, said A/Prof. Kevin Thiele, President of the WSWA. “While 3.8 ha may seem like a small area, all native vegetation in the Wheatbelt is important as habitat for native plants and animals”.

Following submissions from the WSWA and a local resident, objecting to the proposed clearing, DWER asked the Shire to reassess its plans.

In response, the proposed clearing was reduced from 3.8ha to just 11 trees. DWER granted a clearing permit on these grounds, on condition that the Shire plants at least 22 similar trees to replace those that will be removed.

“This is a fantastic outcome”, said A/Prof. Thiele. “We have been calling on DWER for a long time to assess the true and cumulative impacts of proposals to clear native vegetation in the already heavily cleared Wheatbelt”.

As part of its assessment of the Shire’s Clearing Permit application, DWER also asked the Shire to undertake a flora and vegetation survey of the area and identify all options to avoid and reduce clearing. While the survey found no Threatened species or ecological communities, DWER still considered the roadside vegetation to be significant as an ecological linkage and rare remnant of native vegetation in the area.

Dr Thiele said he hoped other local governments in the Wheatbelt would follow the example of the Shire of Wyalkatchem and identify ways to retain their extremely valuable roadside vegetation while making necessary upgrades to local roads.

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