



## WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (Inc)

31 May 2023

Office of the Appeals Convenor  
Level 22 Forrest Centre  
221 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000

### **RE: CPS9674/1 - Proposed Road Widening, Shire of Kellerberrin – Goldfields Road Reserve**

The Wildflower Society of Western Australia (hereafter referred to as “the Society”) wishes to lodge this appeal to request the Shire of Kellerberrin be requested to provide a summary of the alternatives considered in the decision to widen this section of Goldfields Road. The request is based on the assessment of the place of Goldfields Road in the broader landscape. The potential for genetic differentiation of the plant species identified to be removed in the project area is another consideration given the existing vegetation cover compared to the pre-European cover over the whole of the Kellerberrin Local Government area. This cover was identified as only being 7.4% in 2004 and it is expected to be less at this time given the permits granted and the exemptions available under the Clearing Regulations.

#### **Landscape Values**

As shown in Figure 1 overleaf, the section of Goldfields Road between Great Eastern Highway and Morris Road (the section described in the vegetation report accompanying the permit application), although narrow and comprising mainly trees and shrubs, provides a linkage between remnant blocks and stream corridors which are linked to more widespread block remnants and other linear corridors. The function of these corridors in the Kellerberrin area was the subject of several studies in the 1980’s and 1990’s conducted by the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology team based at Helena Valley. The findings were reported in several conference papers and journals, including Saunders et al (1987) and Saunders and Hobbs (eds) in 1991. These studies, and similar studies conducted by others since then, have found that even narrow corridors with incomplete vegetation structures, as evidenced along Goldfields Road, provide habitat linkages for a variety of fauna despite their incompleteness in areas where landscape fragmentation is as severe as occurs at Kellerberrin. Indeed, Goldfields Road in its entirety links a range of remnant areas that are a result of its early history as an access route to the Iligan and Goldfields. This resulted in the creation of many small reserves along the route to service the requirements of the travelling public of the time. These remnants serve as valuable sources of biodiversity across the wheatbelt.

The creation of an offset in a single isolated reserve does not offset the values of a linear corridor that connects small adjacent remnants or bigger remnants. Studies conducted as early as the 1980’s, by the WA Museum and researchers like Dr Denis Saunders, identified that fauna needs to be able to move between remnants to satisfy feeding, roosting and nesting requirements. The Society believes in this, and other cases, the offsets provided do not reflect the values lost.





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### Summary

The Society contends that the Decision Report and the proposed Permit Conditions have not fully addressed the values with the overall landscape that corridors, that are partially representative of the former vegetation of the landscape, provide for nature conservation and natural resource management. It is also concerned that the reports provided as support for the Clearing Permit are now aged and have not been updated.

The genetic variability of the vegetation identified in the proposed clearing area is not understood. The Society believes there needs to be some research into the genetic variability of the plant species identified in this area to establish if that variability has value and needs protection if we are to address issues associated with climate change and species suitability for the revegetation efforts that are required to address the land degradation issued and environmental changes that are currently evident locally and more broadly in the wheatbelt.

Lastly, the Society believes the offsets proposed for the suite of road developments described in Stephen Fry's report are grossly inadequate. They are diametrically opposite to the losses that are occurring in the landscape. The block remnant identified as an offset is not sustainable within a network of remnants and corridors in the landscape to allow movement of fauna to meet their combined habitat requirements.



<http://www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au/>