

POLICY			
TITLE:	CONSERVATION OF LOCALLY NATURAL FLORA AND FAUNA	CODE:	ET.520
PURPOSE or OBJECTIVE:	To provide for the conservation of locally natural plants and animals on land managed by the City of Canning and to ensure that locally natural plants and animals are appropriately managed when City of Canning owned land is proposed to be developed.		
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:	Local Government Act 1995 s 2.7.(2)(b) Environmental Protection Act 1986 (State) Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (Federal) City of Canning Local Environment Management Strategy 2015 City of Canning Local Biodiversity Strategy 2018 City of Canning Land Utilisation Plan 2020 - 2025		

POLICY STATEMENT
<p>The intent of this policy is to avoid the unnecessary loss or disturbance of vegetation with conservation value and the unwanted impacts of displaced fauna as well as to ensure that the mortality of fauna is a decision of last resort, by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising the importance of conserving locally natural flora and fauna on land managed by the City of Canning to support local biodiversity. Ensuring that locally natural flora and fauna are properly identified and appropriately managed when City of Canning owned land is proposed to be developed.

1. Scope

This policy applies to land managed by the City of Canning and to the development of land owned by the City. This policy does not apply to freehold land that is not owned by the City of Canning or State reserve land not managed by the City of Canning.

2. Definitions

<i>Animal focused welfare group</i>	A not-for-profit organisation and/or registered charity which is concerned with the health and safety of animals, including animal rescue groups and wildlife rehabilitation centres.
<i>Biodiversity</i>	A contraction of the term 'biological diversity'; the variety of all living things including the plants, animals and fungi that interact to create healthy and productive natural environments.
<i>Conservation</i>	The preservation, care and management of natural resources with the aim of protecting species, their habitats and ecosystems from degradation.
<i>Consultant</i>	An independent expert or firm with professionally recognised, formal qualifications and extensive experience in the relevant field of expertise, including any required licences, who is engaged by the City administration to provide information, advice and recommendations on matters related to their field of expertise.
<i>Development</i>	The construction or installation of infrastructure including but not limited to buildings, roads, paths, gardens, ovals, fences and services (drainage, power, water, sewer, gas, telecommunications, etc).
<i>Fauna</i>	The animals living in an area, including but not limited to mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and insects and other invertebrates. Fauna may be present permanently, seasonally or intermittently. Fauna may be introduced or natural to the area.

<i>Feral animal</i>	Introduced non-locally natural animal species including species that have reverted from domestication to a wild state.
<i>Flora</i>	The plants living in an area, including but not limited to trees, shrubs, herbs, grasses, reeds, sedges and aquatic plants. Flora may be introduced or natural to the area and of varying conservation status.
<i>Fungi</i>	A group of multicellular organisms, separate from plants and animals, that have an important role in nutrient recycling in natural ecosystems.
<i>Habitat</i>	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism. The area and resources used by a particular species. Habitat can therefore be a type of environment, such as Banksia Woodland, or the features of an environment that support a particular species.
<i>Locally natural</i>	Native species of flora and fauna that are or were naturally occurring in the area prior to European settlement; not introduced from other areas. Locally natural flora species may be remnant or may have been planted. Locally natural fauna species may dwell permanently, seasonally or intermittently in an area.
<i>Remnant vegetation</i>	Individual plants or groups of plants that are naturally occurring and were not deliberately planted. Remnant vegetation may regenerate for example after clearing or fire damage and will still be classed as remnant.

3. Conservation of locally natural flora and fauna for protecting biodiversity

Urban remnant flora is at risk from clearing, weed invasion and other degradation, loss of pollinators and excess foraging. Locally natural fauna is at risk from habitat loss and fragmentation (ie loss of connectivity), mortality (roadkill, predation by feral and domestic predators). Therefore, conservation depends on addressing these threatening processes.

The successful conservation of locally natural flora and locally natural fauna are interdependent. The City of Canning recognises the importance of conserving and supporting locally natural flora, fungi and fauna, particularly but not solely in natural areas, as a key part of protecting and increasing biodiversity in the City, as set out in the City of Canning Local Biodiversity Strategy 2018.

4. Locally natural fauna on land managed by the City of Canning

- (1) The conservation of locally natural fauna requires the protection of a range of suitable habitats of sufficient size, quality and connectivity to support sustainable fauna populations without placing serious stress on the sustainability of populations or reducing the condition of vegetation in the habitats.
- (2) In addition to programs to protect and improve remnant bushland and rehabilitation sites, the management of habitats that support locally natural fauna may include specific measures including:
 - (a) The control of roaming domestic cats and feral animals including foxes, rabbits and European honeybees.
 - (b) The retention of *in situ* of fallen logs, provided they are not blocking access or creating a hazard, or, if there is insufficient suitable material on site, the placement of externally sourced logs, preferably of locally natural species, provided they are not from areas known or suspected to harbour detrimental pathogens including *Phytophthora spp.*, *Quambalaria spp.* or *Armillaria spp.*
 - (c) The provision of suitable permanent water stations and other habitat enhancement features.
- (3) Some fauna such as birds range over a wide area and are not confined to a single location. They may rely on a variety of sites to remain viable. Consequently, the retention and protection of individual trees or small pockets of vegetation in parkland and other areas not managed for conservation may have value for locally natural fauna.
- (4) Where practicable, the City will prioritise the retention, protection and extension of locally natural vegetation in parkland and other areas not managed for conservation, particularly if it is known to support locally natural fauna.
- (5) Some introduced flora may be beneficial for the survival of locally natural fauna. The retention of this vegetation should be considered as an interim measure in areas where there is insufficient established locally natural vegetation.

5. Active management of locally natural fauna

- (1) Active fauna management on City of Canning managed land may be required in certain circumstances, including:
 - (a) Where a habitat is not of sufficient size to sustainably support the locally natural fauna inhabiting it, potentially resulting in negative effects on the health or viability of the fauna or the habitat or both.
 - (b) Where the fauna may have a significant detrimental effect on public health or safety.
 - (c) Where a development that will disrupt or reduce the existing habitat is approved for City of Canning owned freehold land.
- (2) The requirement for active fauna management shall be determined by a suitably qualified and experienced officer or a consultant holding relevant licenses as required under legislation including the Environmental Protection Act 1986, Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2018. The determination will incorporate consideration of current animal welfare science, advice and information from a relevant animal focused welfare group.
- (3) Where it has been determined that locally natural fauna requires active management, a review of available options must be undertaken prior to the management activity commencing. Where practicable, preference will be given to non-lethal, humane options including fauna relocation.

6. Development proposals for City of Canning owned land

This section applies where Council intends to undertake development on land owned by the City.

- (1) When land that is owned by the City is proposed to be developed it shall first be assessed by a suitably qualified and experienced officer or consultant to determine the presence, type, extent, quality and complexity of locally natural flora in order to identify the flora's conservation value, conservation potential and its capacity to support locally natural fauna, if any.
- (2) The results of the initial assessment will be used to determine the requirement for a more detailed assessment and reporting program.
- (3) If a detailed assessment and report is required, it shall be designed by a suitably qualified and experienced officer or consultant. A detailed assessment may include specific elements such as monitoring at seasonal intervals, nocturnal monitoring, bird counts, trap and release programs.
- (4) The initial assessment or, if required, the detailed assessment and report will incorporate consideration of current animal welfare science, advice and information from a relevant animal focused welfare group and will include options and recommendations for mitigating the impact of the proposed development on the locally natural flora and fauna that occur on the land, whether permanently, seasonally or intermittently.
- (5) The project plan and program for the development proposal shall allow sufficient time for any required detailed conservation value assessment and reporting.
- (6) The results of the assessment will be reported to Elected Members as part of a proposal for the land development and prior to the application for any approval for funding, clearing or development of the land.
- (7) If a development is approved by Council, any recommended fauna monitoring and management shall continue through all stages of the development.

7. The role of local environmental community groups and animal focused welfare groups

- (1) The City recognises the important contribution to conservation made by local environmental volunteer community groups including:
 - (a) Their detailed knowledge of the habitats they care for and the occurrence and behaviour of locally natural fauna in their areas of focus including the detailed records of flora and fauna many groups hold as a result of regular surveys.
 - (b) Their presence in and connection to the local communities of which group members are a part.
 - (c) The on-ground work they undertake in particular areas to protect remnant vegetation, manage threats, including practicing weed control and improve the quality and extent of natural habitats including planting and watering locally natural flora.
 - (d) Their access to sources of support and funding not available to Local Government Authorities.

- (2) The City will provide support and assistance to local environmental community groups in accordance with the Local Biodiversity Strategy 2018, the Environmental Community Group and Organisation Manual 2015 and relevant Local Area Management Plans.
- (3) The City recognises the contribution that animal focused welfare groups make to conservation and will seek the advice of an animal focused welfare group for guidance on the management of locally natural fauna in accordance with parts 5 and 6 of this policy.

GOVERNANCE REFERENCES

Statutory Compliance	<i>Nil</i>
Process Links	<i>Local Biodiversity Strategy 2018 (D19/22601)</i>

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Program responsible		Officer Title	
Canning Environment		Manager Parks and City Greening	
Version	Decision Reference	Meeting type and date	Delegation No. (or N/A)
1	CM-097-09 12 May 2009	Policy adopted	N/A
2	EN-013-22, 21 June 2022	Revised policy adopted	N/A
3			N/A
4			N/A