

## CLAISE BROOK CATCHMENT GROUP

PO BOX 218, NORTH PERTH 6906

TEL: 9227 9514 EMAIL: [info@cbcg.iinet.net.au](mailto:info@cbcg.iinet.net.au)



John Giorgi  
Chief Executive Officer  
Town of Vincent  
PO Box 82  
Leederville WA 6902

18 September 2006

Dear John,

The Claise Brook Catchment Group would like to make the following submission on the proposal to plant London Plane Trees in William St, Perth.

The catchment group supports the proposal to plant street trees on William St and applauds the Town of Vincent for removing traffic lanes to allow trees to be planted on this street. We consider that it will be a great improvement to the street.

However we are concerned at the choice of an exotic deciduous tree for several reasons, most importantly because of the potential negative impact on stormwater quality which will impact on water quality in the receiving water bodies in Claisebrook Cove and the Swan River.

**Stormwater Quality:** The Swan River flows through the heart of Perth and is highly valued by both residents and visitors to Perth. The importance of the Swan River to the Perth community was recognised when it was declared Western Australia's first heritage icon in 2004. However the Swan River is under stress from increased nutrients flowing from rural and urban catchments. A significant source of nutrients in urban catchments is related to the widespread use of exotic vegetation in gardens and public landscaping, particularly deciduous vegetation. Deciduous plants drop all of their leaves over a short period and decompose quickly, resulting in an excessive release of nutrients into water bodies. Street trees are of particular concern since most of their foliage will end up being washed into the stormwater drainage system.

In addition, exotic plants are also more likely to require fertilising, because of their unsuitability to the low nutrient levels naturally found in the Swan Coastal Plain soils. Some of the applied fertiliser is likely to make its way into stormwater or groundwater, and ultimately into the Swan River contributing to elevated nutrient levels.

William Street is within the Claisebrook catchment and stormwater from William Street will empty into Claisebrook Cove and ultimately the Swan River. While the effect on stormwater of the proposed trees for William Street may seem insignificant overall, any increase in deciduous street trees will have a cumulative impact on stormwater quality in this catchment, resulting in a negative impact on water quality in this catchment and the Swan River.

**Unique character:** Another reason to use Australian and in particular Western Australian trees for urban landscaping is to use our local flora to create a unique character and aesthetic which will be like no-where else in the world. We are aware that the cafes and restaurants on William Street are popular with interstate and overseas visitors. Using local flora will give the area a unique identity which will stand out and not be confused with many other precincts within Perth, Australia and in fact the world that use the ubiquitous London Plane tree.

**Best Management Practice Guidelines:** The Department of Environment (now Department of Water) this year released guidelines to manage stormwater to achieve multiple outcomes including improved water quality management, protecting ecosystems and providing livable and attractive communities. In regards to landscaping, the guidelines recommend:

- ✓ **Plant local native species.** This will reduce the risks of grass cuttings, deciduous leaves, nutrients and pesticides entering water bodies. Local native plants require less irrigation and maintenance (e.g. little or no nutrient or pesticide application) than exotic species and provide habitat and food for native fauna.
- ✓ **Where local native species are not planted: - Minimise the use of deciduous plants.** Deciduous plants drop all of their leaves over a short period and decompose quickly, which results in an excessive release of nutrients into water bodies. The leaves also clog stormwater systems. Deciduous plants also change the local habitat values, such as altered shading levels over waterways and reduced micro-habitat zones on the plants. See Water Note 25: The effects and management of deciduous trees on waterways (Water and Rivers Commission, 2002) for more information.
- ✓ Minimise the extent of water-consuming planting.
- ✓ Match the plants to the soil type.

Our group does not support the use of London Plane Trees in William Street or in any street in the Swan region and urges the Town of Vincent to use a Western Australian or Australian tree instead. We also encourage the Town of Vincent to prepare a landscaping policy in line with example provided in the Local Government Natural Resource Management Policy Manual and review the current list of recommended street trees to ensure that the environmental impact of landscaping is minimised while achieving aesthetic and community needs.

If you would like to discuss this further please do not hesitate in contacting me on 9228 6916.

Yours truly

Warren McGrath  
Chairperson

Cc  
City of Perth  
East Perth Redevelopment Authority  
John Hyde MLA  
Swan River Trust  
Department of Water