



*Working to conserve and  
restore water quality and  
wildlife habitat in the  
Perth inner city catchments*

Think About The Link  
East Perth Redevelopment Authority  
Reply Paid 83387  
PERTH BC WA 6849

7<sup>th</sup> May 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **SUBMISSION ON THE NORTHBRIDGE LINK**

I am writing to you as the Chair of the Claise Brook Catchment Group with our comments on the Northbridge Link draft Masterplan. I apologise that this submission is a few days late and hope that it can be considered.

The Claise Brook Catchment Group is a community based environmental group working to improve water quality and habitat within Perth city and the inner city. Our group is particularly interested in seeing urban developments manage surface and groundwater more sensitively to achieve improved water quality in surface runoff and re-use of stormwater in private and public spaces. We also consider that remediation of contaminated soil and groundwater should be undertaken as part of any major redevelopment where former industrial land uses may have resulted in contamination. This is particularly important within the inner city where former land uses included market gardens, industries and manufacturers.

Our members discussed the Northbridge Link at our April meeting and have the following suggestions:

The redevelopment of this area gives an opportunity to consider water as a fundamental theme given the site's location on a former wetland on the northern edge of the original city, one of a string of wetlands that previously connected Lake Monger to Claise Brook in East Perth.

The water theme would include innovative water management in buildings and public spaces, water and wetlands in art and interpretive works and demonstrations of innovative water management in an urban environment.

The former wetland could inspire the shapes of spaces within the development, such as landscaping and seating areas using the natural curves of a water body.

Developments within the area should be required to capture stormwater runoff from the buildings and re-use for air-cooling, flushing toilets and/or irrigating planters/rooftop gardens.

Roads, footpaths and public spaces should be designed to encourage infiltration through vegetated landscape areas which will provide a welcome visual relief and have a cooling effect. All street trees should be surrounded by infiltration boxes into which stormwater runoff is directed.

While there is a temptation to include fountains and ponds in urban landscapes, and they certainly provide visual interest and are cooling, these can often have high water demands as pools and fountains evaporate on hot days and in windy weather. We consider that more innovative ways of incorporating water into the public spaces, which do not have such a high water demand, should be explored. Alternatively fountains and pools should be restricted to smaller semi- enclosed areas which will not experience as much evaporation through wind or direct sun.

The water table may be quite close to the surface and the proposed underground bus station may require ongoing dewatering. If this is required, we suggest that the water removed is used for another purpose such as to irrigate landscapes within the area or the uses listed above.

Along with the water theme we suggest that the landscaping should showcase Western Australia's unique floral heritage, particularly the plants of the south-west region which corresponds to the area occupied by the people of the Bibbulmun tribes. This region is internationally recognised as a biodiverse region with a high level of plants which are unique to the area.

Using plants from the Bibbulmun region will be of interest to international visitors as well as to locals. Many of the plants have unusual and striking forms, leaf shapes and flowers which are well suited to creating a visually spectacular display against a backdrop of modern architecture.

Using plants from this region has added environmental benefits. These plants are suited to the local climate and soil conditions, requiring less water and nutrients than exotic plants. This also means that stormwater runoff from the area will be less polluted by nutrients, particularly the damaging rush of nutrients that results from leaf fall from deciduous trees. We consider that deciduous trees should not be planted anywhere that the leaves can reach stormwater drains. We consider that there are Western Australian trees which can provide a solid shade and spreading canopy equivalent to that provided by exotic deciduous trees.

This area is an important link along the northern edge of the city, connecting to the railway corridor. Tingay [A *Strategic Plan for Perth's Greenway*. Alan Tingay and Associates. 1997] identified the railway line as an important corridor to provide a vegetated link through the city connecting to the freeway, western suburbs and to Kings Park. Providing a vegetation link through this area should be an important consideration in any landscaping plan for the area. We consider that a vegetation corridor could also act as a multi-purpose corridor, providing a pleasant shaded environment for pedestrians and cyclists as well as for wildlife. While consideration of biodiversity may seem pointless in such a highly urban environment, in fact Perth City's location adjacent to Kings Park and with river on two sides, along with the natural biodiversity of the region make Perth one of the most biodiverse cities in the world.

Finally information on the innovative ways in which water has been conserved, re-used and celebrated within the artworks, public spaces and buildings within the area can be provided to people who live, work or visit the area. Tours of the area could be added to the tours lead by the City of Perth's volunteer guides and the area could be a focus of activities within the city on World Environment Day.

Some ideas for innovative stormwater management and use of Western Australian plants can be seen within the nearby area at Point Fraser on the city's foreshore and at Piazza Nanni in Northbridge. Information about these and biodiversity within Perth city is available on the catchment group's website [www.cbcbg.org.au](http://www.cbcbg.org.au).

Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on this important project.

Regards

Warren McGrath  
Chair