



Draft forest management plan 2014–2023 and heritage

Heritage comprises the things we value and want to protect as a community and includes cultural values and natural heritage.

Natural heritage is strongly linked to features of the natural environment and is covered in the Draft plan under the biodiversity, ecosystem health and soil and water chapters. The focus here is cultural heritage valued by Aboriginal and other Australians.

Aboriginal people have had a connection to country in the plan area for more than 40,000 years. This connection and stewardship encompass both traditional ecological knowledge of land, archeological records of places and ceremony and an ongoing physical and spiritual attachment to the land.

The *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) sets out the management objectives for each category of CALM Act land. Under recent amendments to the CALM Act, these include protecting and conserving the value of the land to the culture and heritage of Aboriginal people in a way that does not have an adverse effect on the conservation of flora and fauna.

The amendments also provide for joint management arrangements and will build on existing entitlements to enable Aboriginal people to undertake customary activities, such as preparing and consuming food and engaging in ceremonial activities, on land vested in the Conservation Commission.

The Draft plan proposes:

- ensuring compliance with the provisions of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1975* and associated 'Register of Aboriginal Sites', and the State Government's *Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Guidelines*
- the Conservation Commission and the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) will develop a program to assess areas of the plan area for their importance for Aboriginal heritage – DEC will progressively undertake this assessment in consultation with Aboriginal people and relevant stakeholders and agencies
- DEC will work with representative Aboriginal groups to identify appropriate opportunities for joint management of areas within the plan area.

Joint management arrangements will establish how the land is managed and how decisions are made about the management of the land. The underlying tenure of the land will not change as a result of a joint management agreement.

Joint management arrangements will provide increased opportunities for Aboriginal people to be actively involved in, and contribute their knowledge to, managing land. The agreements will also help clarify roles and responsibilities of both Aboriginal people and DEC while preserving public access rights and interests.

As well as the rich Aboriginal heritage of the lands in the plan area, there is a wealth of evidence of other Australian cultural heritage, including timber towns, sawmills, transport systems, dams and weirs, tree nurseries, buildings and other sites. There are also folklore, traditions and the ongoing use and care for the land and forests.

There is a range of historic places on lands vested in the Conservation Commission, variously listed as Commonwealth Heritage places or included on the State 'Register of Heritage Places' or 'Municipal Inventories' maintained by local governments.

The Draft plan notes that DEC is developing a policy on management of other Australian cultural heritage and proposes activities aimed at identifying and managing places of other Australian heritage significance. These include DEC maintaining a central database of such heritage places and values.

The *Draft Forest Management Plan 2014-2023* is available at www.conservation.wa.gov.au and is open for public comment until 7 November 2012.



Department of
Environment and Conservation

