

### Attachment 3

#### WAPC Tree Farm Publication (November 2023)

In November 2023 the WAPC released a fact sheet to clarify the planning arrangements for tree farms, as set out in State Planning Policy 2.5 – Rural Planning (SPP 2.5) and the Rural Planning Guidelines. It provides information about the planning issues relevant to tree farming, for application by local governments and other decision makers.

Growing of trees for timber is similar to other crops, however there are some planning issues associated with tree farming that may require further assessment and management, if relevant. As set out in SPP 2.5, these include:

- Bushfire risk – tree farms may establish a bushfire risk where not occurring before. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services has published guidelines to assist in the management of bushfire risk for tree farms. Any development conditions to manage bushfire risk should accord with these guidelines.
- Environmental and economic issues, including planting thresholds – the location of tree farms relative to environmental and/or biodiversity assets, and management of potential impacts (eg wildling spread).
- Water availability and recharge – potential impacts on groundwater and surface water systems may need to be considered.
- Visual landscape impacts – local governments may identify rural prominent landscapes to exclude tree farms for visual reasons. While the converse may occur, these areas can be identified in keeping with the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) Visual Landscape planning manual.
- Transport impacts – where tree farming involves harvesting, local governments may need to make arrangements with developers for road and/ or intersection upgrades to manage potential haulage impacts.
- Separation from sensitive land uses – local governments may establish buffers to exclude tree farming around these land uses e.g. electrical substations or transmission lines.

WAPC policy is that tree farms should be supported and encouraged on rural land. Therefore, any local planning strategies or schemes seeking to prohibit or severely restrict tree farming would not be in keeping with State policy. Some local governments have local planning policies expressing a preference for tree farms to occupy a percentage of the overall land area e.g. 10% or 30% of a lot or property. It is the WAPC's position that, if a land use is capable of being approved in a local planning scheme, and a development application has addressed relevant scheme requirements, it may not be open to a local government to prevent a landowner from using the landholding for an approvable land use. Any local planning policy seeking to prohibit or restrict the extent of tree farms would need to have a planning reason for taking such an approach.