

**Proposed Farrington Road duplication
Murdoch Drive to west of Bibra Drive**

City of Cockburn

**Report and recommendations of the
Environmental Protection Authority**

**Environmental Protection Authority
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Contents

	Page
1. Background	1
2. Proposal	1
3. Public submissions	1
4. Environmental issues	4

Figures

1. Location of Farrington Road	2
2. Proposed road alignment	3

Tables

1. Issues raised in submissions	4
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Appendices

1. Copy of conclusions from Bulletin 179 - "Report and Analysis by the Environmental Protection Authority on Farrington Road - North Lake"	7
2. Environmental commitments made by the proponent	13

1. Background

Farrington Road currently runs for approximately 5km between North Lake Road to the west and Karel Avenue to the east in North Lake (see Figure 1). The majority of the road at this time is a single carriageway, the exceptions being a section of dual carriageway (2 lanes in each direction) approximately 1.4km long at the eastern end, and a short section around the Murdoch Drive/Farrington Road intersection in the central portion.

Farrington Road was originally constructed in 1984 amid much protest by local residents and conservationists due to its route around the northern edge of North Lake through ecologically sensitive areas on the northern boundary of System 6 Area M93. The Environmental Protection Authority made 12 conclusions on the original road construction in 1984 in Bulletin 179 "Report and Analysis by the Environmental Protection Authority on Farrington Road - North Lake", and a copy of these conclusions is in Appendix 1. The debate was prior to the introduction of the current Environmental Protection Act, and thus there were no Ministerial Conditions set.

Conclusions 10 and 12 particularly should be noted, in that the Authority states that a dual carriageway is inappropriate but there was no additional information to indicate that a single 7.4m carriageway would have a detrimental effect on North Lake. The current proposal must be viewed in the light of these conclusions and the situation today.

Primarily on grounds of public interest created by the original Farrington Road debate, the Authority decided that formal assessment under Part IV of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 was warranted, and the level of assessment was set at Consultative Environmental Review (CER).

2. Proposal

The proponents, the City of Cockburn, propose to duplicate a section of Farrington Road approximately 450m long from just west of Murdoch Drive to approximately 150m west of Bibra Drive to increase the number of lanes from two to four (see Figure 2). The work will be carried out within the existing road reserve, with the new carriageway to be constructed to the north of the existing one. Vegetation clearing will be limited to grass and other groundcovers (predominantly weeds) in the road reserve as clearing in 1984 allowed for the provision of duplication in the future.

Relocation of the dual use path (existing cycleway) to the north is required and it is proposed to close the path during this process which is expected to take approximately 2 weeks. There is a possibility that the path may also be disrupted during the actual road construction process.

At the conclusion of the project it is proposed to revegetate the road verges and the median strip with local native species for the extent of the proposed roadworks.

The proponent has made environmental commitments to ensure that potential environmental impacts are managed in an environmentally acceptable manner and a copy of these is attached in Appendix 2.

3. Public submissions

For proposals assessed at the CER level, the Authority does not usually specifically elicit comment from the wider community, but rather targets its consultation on those individuals, groups and agencies known to be directly interested or affected. In this case however, the proposal was included in a group of "expedited" assessments for which there was an additional, broader opportunity for input during two "open days" on 29 and 30 October 1990.

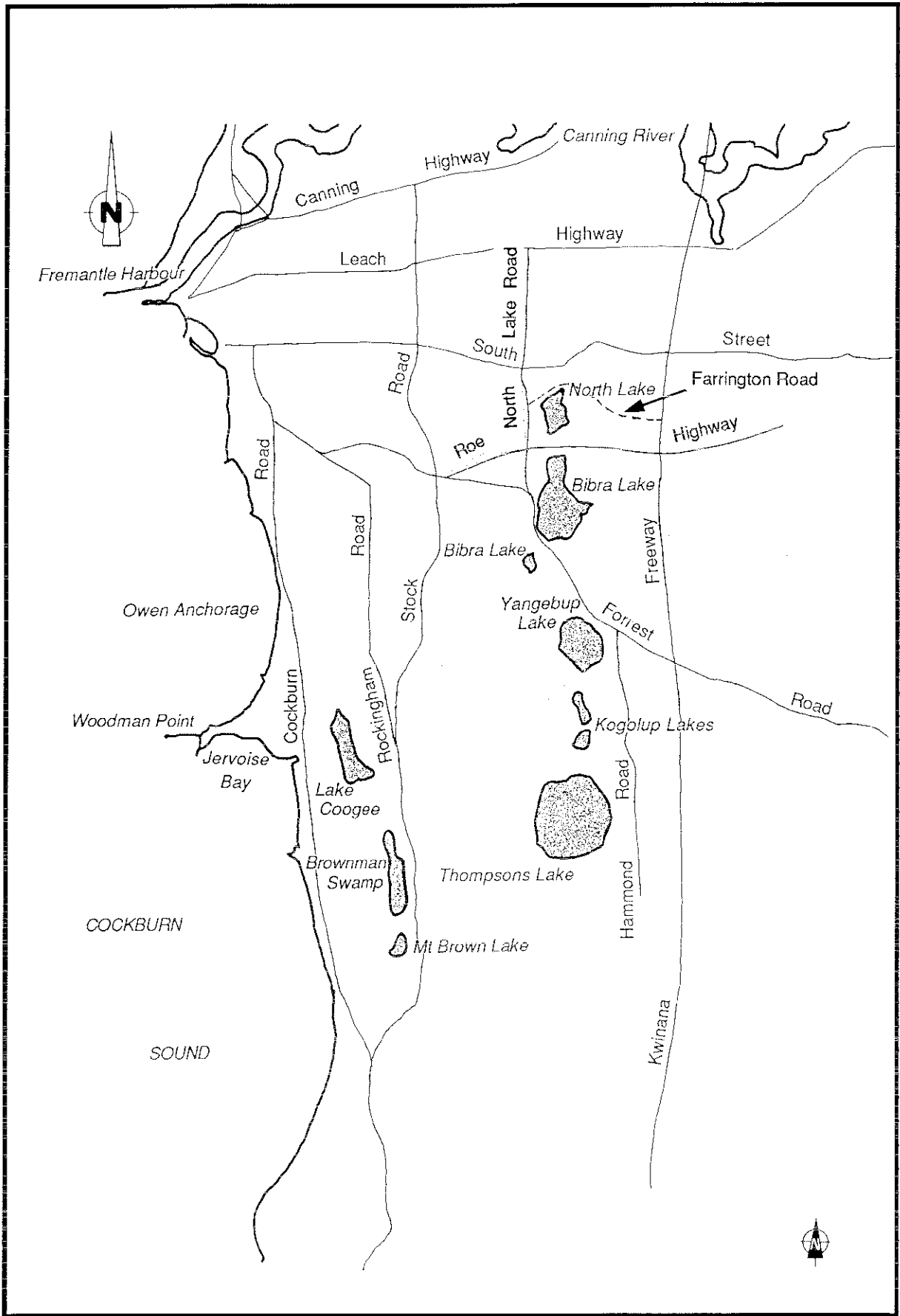


Figure 1. Location of Farrington Road

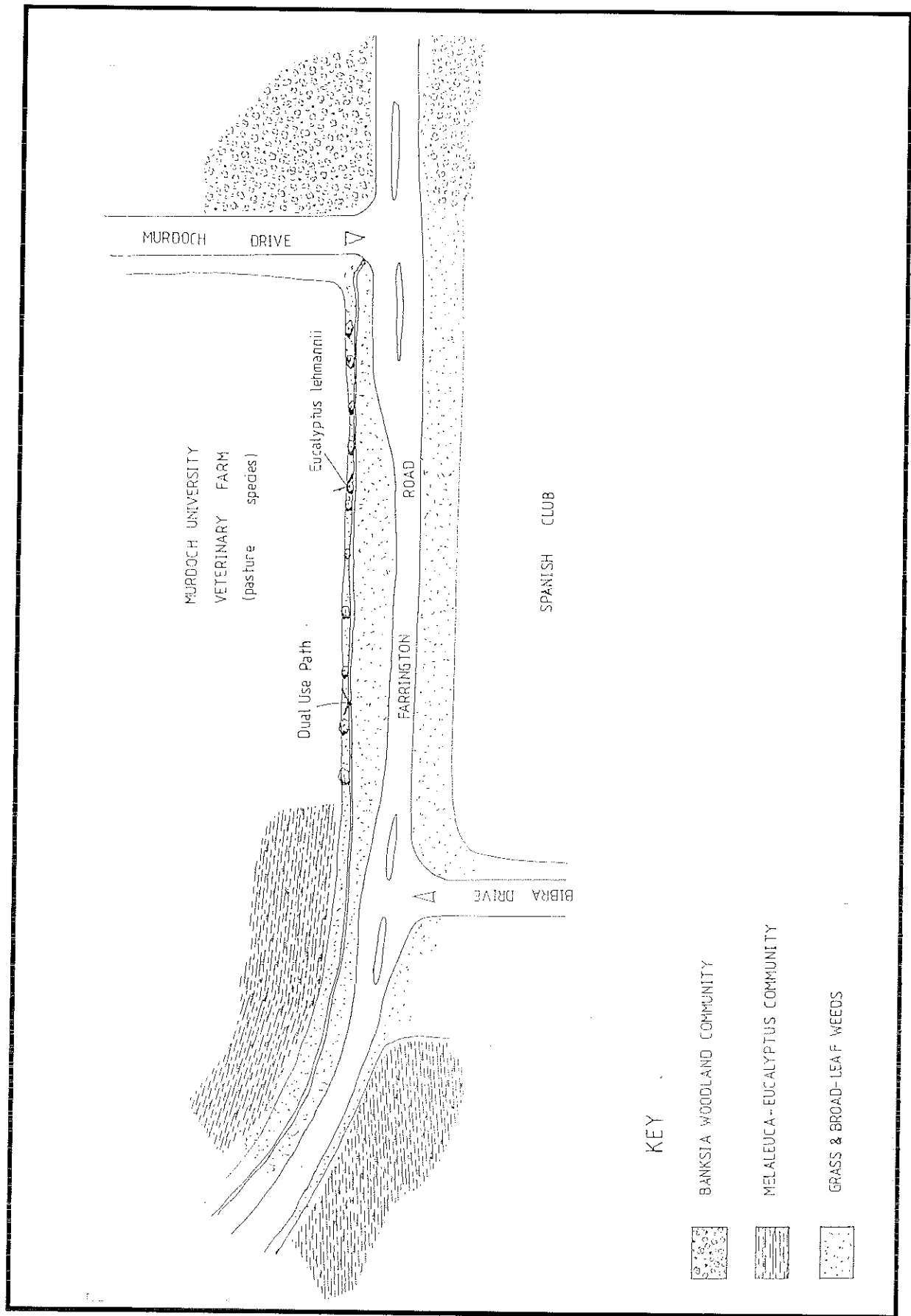


Figure 2. Proposed road alignment

Seven submissions on the proposal were received during this public review period. These included four individual submissions, one from a conservation group, one from a government department and one from a local authority.

Of these seven submissions, four were opposed to the current proposal, two offered conditional support and one offered full support.

The information in the submissions has been divided into issue groups as follows;

Table 1 - Issues raised in submissions

Issue	Number of submissions raising the issue
Environmental Issues:	
Drainage in the area needs investigating	3
Increased wildlife deaths	2
The road verges should be rehabilitated	1
Clearing undertaken in 1984 north of Roe Swamp should be rehabilitated	1
EPA should endorse its recommendations from 1984	1
Holding basins needed to contain chemical spills	1
The proposal should comply with the System 6 report	1
Planning Issues:	
Trucks should be banned between Bibra Drive and Progress Drive	2
Speed limit on Farrington Road should be lowered	2
Duplication of the carriageway will increase traffic in the area	1
Increased noise due to duplication	1
Increased traffic accidents	1
Increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists	1
Roe Highway to the south should be concentrated on	1
Duplication is needed to allow for safe, efficient traffic movement	1

As can be seen from the table, a variety of issues were raised, many of them being similar to issues raised in the Environmental Protection Authority's (then the Department of Conservation and Environment) Bulletin 179 in 1984. These include drainage management, the likelihood of increased fauna deaths and the need for the road verges to be rehabilitated.

4. Environmental issues

The Environmental Protection Authority believes that the issues affecting the current proposal can be managed such that the environmental impacts are not significant, but believes that issues raised in the 1984 proposal have not been adequately addressed. Accordingly, while the Authority considers that this particular proposal could proceed, it has made recommendations in this report aimed at ensuring its earlier 1984 concerns are addressed.

Recommendation 1

The Environmental Protection Authority has concluded that the proposed duplication of Farrington Road from Murdoch Drive to Bibra Drive as modified during the process of interaction between the proponent, the Environmental Protection Authority, the public and the government agencies that were consulted is environmentally acceptable.

In reaching this conclusion, the Environmental Protection Authority identified the main environmental factors requiring detailed consideration as:

- environmental impacts associated with the original construction of Farrington Road and the Authority's position on these;
- impacts on the dual use path;
- dust impacts;
- stormwater disposal; and
- impacts on System 6 area M93.

The Environmental Protection Authority notes that these environmental factors have been addressed adequately by either environmental management commitments given by the proponent or by the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendations in this report.

Accordingly, the Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the project could proceed subject to:

- the proponents environmental commitments; and
- the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendations in this report.

The Authority believes that the duplication of this segment of Farrington Road has negligible environmental impacts as it is contained in the already cleared road reserve and could proceed, but the Authority is concerned over long term plans to duplicate Farrington Road west to North Lake Road. Given that the existing road reserve is wide enough to accommodate duplication right through, the Authority believes it is only a matter of time before duplication of the whole road is considered. This would be against the conclusions of the Authority in 1984 and thus the following recommendation is made.

Recommendation 2

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the proponent be required to implement the following management provisions taken from Conclusion 10 in Department of Conservation and Environment Bulletin 179 of 1984:

- The second carriageway should be permanently deleted and the road reserve should be reduced to the 12m width, and the area freed replanted with native species local to this area.
- No street lighting should be installed between Gilbertson Road and Bibra Drive along Farrington Road because this will adversely affect the fauna in the Regional Open Space.
- The road verges should be rehabilitated with local flora.

These management provisions should be carried out on the length of roadway in the City of Cockburn to the satisfaction of the Environmental Protection Authority.

It should be noted that the Authority does not believe that all the management provisions from Bulletin 179 are still relevant and thus has only included the three above.

The Authority believes it unacceptable to close the dual use path given its significance as a pedestrian/cycle route and thus believe the City of Cockburn should be required to maintain access to the dual use path during all stages of construction.

Recommendation 3

The Environmental Protection Authority recommends that the proponent maintain access to the dual use path crossing the site by providing a temporary path to the satisfaction of the Environmental Protection Authority.

The Authority would also expect the proponent to undertake dust control measures during the implementation of the project but does not believe a specific recommendation is warranted.

The Authority believes that any approval for the project based on this assessment should be limited to five years. Accordingly, if the proposal has not been substantially commenced within five years of the date of this report, then such approval should lapse. After that time, further consideration of the proposal should occur only following a new referral to the Authority.

The Authority's experience is that it is common for details of a proposal to alter through the detailed design and construction phase. In many cases alterations are not environmentally significant or have a positive effect on the performance of the project. The Authority believes that such non-substantial changes, and especially those which improve environmental performance and protection, should be provided for.

Appendix 1

**Copy of conclusions from Bulletin 179 - "Report and Analysis by
the Environmental Protection Authority on Farrington Road -
North Lake"**

CONCLUSIONS

The EPA has concluded that a number of factors have contributed to what is an unfortunate sequence of events. The contributing factors are listed below.

1. The System 6 Green Book did not have EPA status and many agencies have therefore not paid it the attention it deserved in their planning. It appears that the MRD assumed having made a submission on the Green Book, that the Red Book would automatically accommodate its views and requirements.
2. Cabinet's comment on the EPA System 6 Red Book was for recommendations to be "progressively implemented, as far as possible". This has been read by some agencies as meaning that the recommendations do not have Cabinet status until implemented.
3. The Authority and the Department of Conservation and Environment have endeavoured over a long period of time to obtain undertakings from Government Agencies on how environmental assessments would be handled and understood that they had done so from the MRD letter of 11 July, 1983. (Attachment B).

It is regrettable that the NOI was prepared and submitted 11 months after the MRD letter of July 11, 1983 and after Bicentennial Funds had been sought from the Commonwealth.

The Authority has stated before and states again that it believes that all State Government and semi-government agencies should be subject to the same levels of environmental assessment that are applied to private organisations.

4. The Minister for Transport, acting upon the advice of his Department, advised the Commonwealth on 26 July, 1983 (Attachment D and No. 8 of Appendix) that:

"I advise that in this submission there are no environmentally significant projects for referral to the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Environment or Environmental Protection Authority".

The attachment to that letter cited Farrington Road from Karel Avenue to Gilbertson Road as one of the five projects.

At the time that the letter was sent the two agencies named had not been consulted by the MRD on the Farrington Road proposal in the vicinity of North Lake.

5. The EPA sought consultation with the two Local Authorities involved. In their applications for Bicentennial Road Funds (incorporated in the NOI) both Local Authorities indicated their desire for the project and City of Melville afforded the construction of Farrington Road a higher priority at that time than City of Cockburn did.

Each Local Authority supplied letters to the MRD (Cockburn, 13 July 1984 and Melville, 19 July 1984) supporting the need for the road and both impressed this view on the EPA at meeting No. 327 attended by representatives of the Local Authorities and an officer of the MRD.

The EPA received the Local Authority Officers and the views that they put, in good faith.

6. The EPA believes that there is a need to establish a mechanism by which procedures for environmental assessments agreed between the DCE or EPA and certain Government agencies are followed, and that documents such as the Green Book and Red Book are taken into account in proposals affecting sensitive areas.
7. The EPA believes that prior to giving assurances to the Commonwealth on environmental matters, the MRD should ensure that it has written advice from the DCE or EPA.
8. It is desirable that copies of correspondence sent from the Minister for Transport to the Commonwealth indicating that there are no environmental impacts of projects should be routinely copied to the EPA for noting.
9. It has become evident that there is some confusion in the public arena as to the status of the System 6 Red Book recommendations and that public attention has focussed on the content of the report rather than the means of implementation of the recommendations. At present Cabinet's indication on the report is "approval of the progressive implementation, as far as possible, of the detailed recommendations in Part II."

10. The EPA believes that construction of Farrington Road as a four lane dual carriageway is inappropriate and believes that a single 7.4m carriageway only be constructed and that the management provisions proposed in Section 3.1.5 be implemented.
11. The EPA believes that provision of Farrington Road as a major through road for all vehicles is inappropriate and that this would result in social amenity problems. Steps should be taken to restrict the use of the road to certain vehicles only and trucks should be prevented from using Farrington Road as a through route.
12. The EPA concludes that it has received no additional information on this proposal that indicates that the construction and operation of Farrington Road in the form of a single 7.4m carriageway would have a detrimental effect on North Lake.

Appendix 2

Environmental commitments made by the proponent

10. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

The following environmental commitments are made in this Consultative Environmental Review, by the proponent, the City of Cockburn:

1. Construction of the short length of second carriageway will be wholly within the existing road reserve, thus no further clearing of indigenous habitat will take place.
2. Spillage management will comply with the Western Australian Transport Emergency Assistance Scheme, and the City of Cockburn will provide resources and equipment to contain spillages when directed or requested by the control authority.
3. No street lighting will be installed west of Bibra Drive.
4. There will be no direct drainage of road runoff into Roe Swamp or North Lake, natural infiltration of runoff the preferred option.
5. During construction, standard dieback hygiene practices will be implemented. Construction is proposed for commencement in February 1991. To minimise dust problems water spraying will be utilised as necessary.
6. An extensive post-construction rehabilitation programme is to be implemented involving site-cleanup, weed control, revegetation and landscaping within the road reserve.
7. The current dual-use path is to be relocated towards the Murdoch fenceline, and will be linked with the existing dual-use path alongside Bibra Drive.
8. Fauna crossing warning signs will be installed and, if continued road deaths are observed, a fence will be installed along the southern boundary of the road reserve and regularly checked for trapped fauna.
9. The police will be asked to routinely check for oversize/overweight commercial vehicles and vehicles transporting dangerous goods using Farrington Road and to prosecute as necessary.