



# **Coastal Walk Trail from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet - Fitzgerald River National Park**

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**Department of Environment and Conservation**



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

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**Environmental Protection Authority  
Perth, Western Australia**

**Report 1396  
May 2011**

## Assessment on Proponent Information – Category B Environmental Impact Assessment Process Timelines

Date	Progress stages	Time (weeks)
15 August 2010	Referral received	
14 April 2011	Level of assessment set	34
2 May 2011	Publication of EPA report	2
16 May 2011	Close of appeals period	2

Timelines for an assessment may vary according to the complexity of the project and are usually agreed with the proponent soon after the level of assessment is determined.

In this case, the Environmental Protection Authority met its timeline objective in the completion of the assessment and provision of a report to the Minister.



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Chairman  
2 May 2011

Proposal: Coastal Walk Trail from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet - Fitzgerald River  
National Park

Proponent: Department of Environment and Conservation

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## 1. Introduction and background

This report provides the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) advice and recommendations to the Minister for Environment on the proposal by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) to construct and maintain a 45 kilometre (km) coastal walk trail (walk trail) from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet, through the Wilderness Management Zone of the Fitzgerald River National Park (Fitzgerald River NP) (Figure 1). Camping facilities such as sleeping huts, water collection facilities and toilets would be constructed at camping points along the walk trail. The proposal would also require vehicle access tracks for ongoing maintenance of the walk trail, camping facilities and emergency response.

The Fitzgerald River NP is located on the south coast of Western Australia between Bremer Bay and Hopetoun (Figure 2) and encompasses an area of approximately 330,000 hectares (ha). The Fitzgerald River NP is situated within one of two International Biosphere reserves in Western Australia recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This status was originally conferred in recognition of Fitzgerald River NP's extremely high biodiversity (CALM, 1991).

Section 44 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) requires the EPA to report to the Minister for Environment on the outcome of its assessment of a proposal. The report must set out the:

- key environmental factors identified in the course of the assessment; and
- EPA's recommendations as to whether or not the proposal may be implemented, and, if the EPA recommends that implementation be allowed, the conditions and procedures to which implementation should be subject.

The EPA may include in the report any other advice and recommendations as it sees fit.

The proposal was referred by a third party to the EPA, on 15 August 2010, pursuant to section 38 of the EP Act. In response to the third party referral, the EPA requested further information from the DEC about the proposal and its potential environmental impacts. The DEC has submitted further information to the EPA setting out the details of the proposal, potential environmental impacts, consultation undertaken to date and proposed commitments to manage those impacts. The DEC's proposal information is included as Appendix 3 to this Report.

The EPA considers that the proposal, as described, cannot meet the EPA's environmental objectives for biodiversity due to the potential introduction and spread of *Phytophthora* dieback into uninfected areas of the Fitzgerald River NP Wilderness Management Zone.

The EPA has, therefore, determined under Section 40 of the EP Act that the level of assessment for the proposal is *Assessment on Proponent Information* (API) Category B (environmentally unacceptable). The EPA's decision was made on 14 April 2011. This report provides the EPA advice and recommendations in accordance with Section 44 of the EP Act.

## 2. The proposal

The proposed walk trail is part of the State Government's broader *Fitzgerald River National Park Improvement Project* (Fitzgerald River NP Improvement Project) which aims to enhance tourist access and facilities in the Fitzgerald River NP and assist economic and social developments in local communities. The Fitzgerald River NP Improvement Project was announced by the State and Federal Governments in December 2009.

Other aspects of the Fitzgerald River NP Improvement Project include:

- sealing 16 km of existing roads from Culham Inlet to Hamersley Inlet;
- sealing 66 km of existing roads from Bremer Bay to Point Ann;
- redeveloping associated spur roads, car parks, day-use areas and camping facilities;
- enhancing signage and interpretive information; and
- developing a 100 km walk trail linking Bremer Bay to Hopetoun. (The trail from Hamersley Inlet to Point Ann is Stage 1).

The referral to the EPA only relates to Stage 1 of the proposed walk trail. Other parts of the Fitzgerald River NP Improvement Project are not part of the proposal being assessed by the EPA.

As mentioned above, the DEC proposes to construct a 45 km walk trail along the coast from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet, through the Wilderness Management Zone of the Fitzgerald River NP (Figure 1). In addition to the walk trail, other elements of the assessed proposal include overnight camping areas, trail heads and access tracks.

Overnight camping areas with facilities of a shelter, a toilet and a water tank are proposed to be located at Fitzgerald Inlet, Twin Bays and Quoin Head. Twin Bays is within the Wilderness Management Zone. Overnight camping areas at Fitzgerald Inlet and Quoin Head are at the boundary of the Wilderness and Natural Environment Management Zones.

The shelter will be a building with a wooden floor, sleeping platform to sleep at least 12 people, walls, roof and space to prepare and eat meals. The toilet will be a sealed vault unit and the metal water tank will be a minimum 15,000 litre capacity. The DEC is proposing to use a sealed vault toilet as construction and maintenance are simpler than a composting toilet or alternative, with a reduced risk of spillage or leaks.

A trail head is proposed to be constructed at each end of the walk trail at Point Ann and Hamersley Inlet. The trail head will comprise of a shelter, boot cleaning station and an information panel with details of the park, the walk, disease hygiene and boot cleaning, and registration. Smaller trail heads will be installed at the overnight camping areas at Fitzgerald Inlet, Twin Bays and Quoin Head to enhance disease hygiene.

The main characteristics of the proposal are summarised in the table below.

**Table 1: Summary of key proposal characteristics**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Description</b>
Coastal walk trail	45 kilometre walk trail from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet, Fitzgerald River National Park, alignment as shown on Figure 1.  Construct the trail to various classifications between Class 3 and Class 4 according Australian Standards AS 2156.1-2001 Infrastructure Design and 2156.2001 Walking Tracks-Classification Signage.
Overnight camping facilities	Shelter, toilet, and 15,000 litre water tank at Fitzgerald Inlet, Twin Bays and Quoin Head.
Trail Head	Shelter, boot cleaning station and an information panel at Point Ann and Hamersley Inlet. Smaller trail heads at Fitzgerald Inlet, Twin Bays and Quoin Head.
Access tracks	Use existing access tracks for construction and maintenance, including Fitzgerald Inlet, Twin Bays, Marshes, Lagoon, Telegraph and Quoin Head tracks. Twin Bays track is the only maintained track to the coastline within the Wilderness Management Zone.
Clearing of native vegetation	15 hectares

The details of the proposal and its potential impacts and management are set out in further detail in Appendix 3.

Figure 1 - Coastal walk trail and facilities from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet in the Fitzgerald River National Park

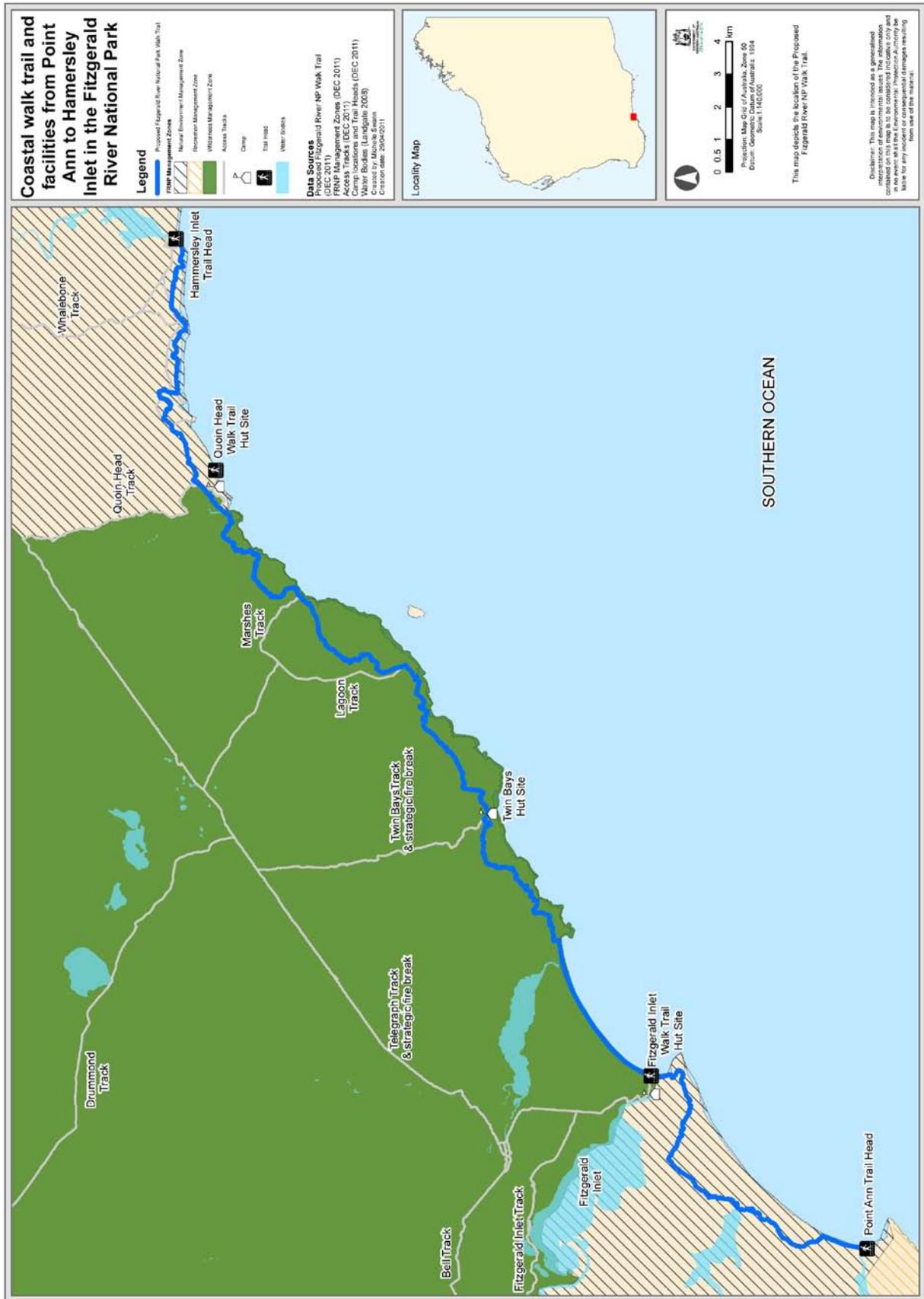


Figure 2 - Regional location of the Fitzgerald River National Park

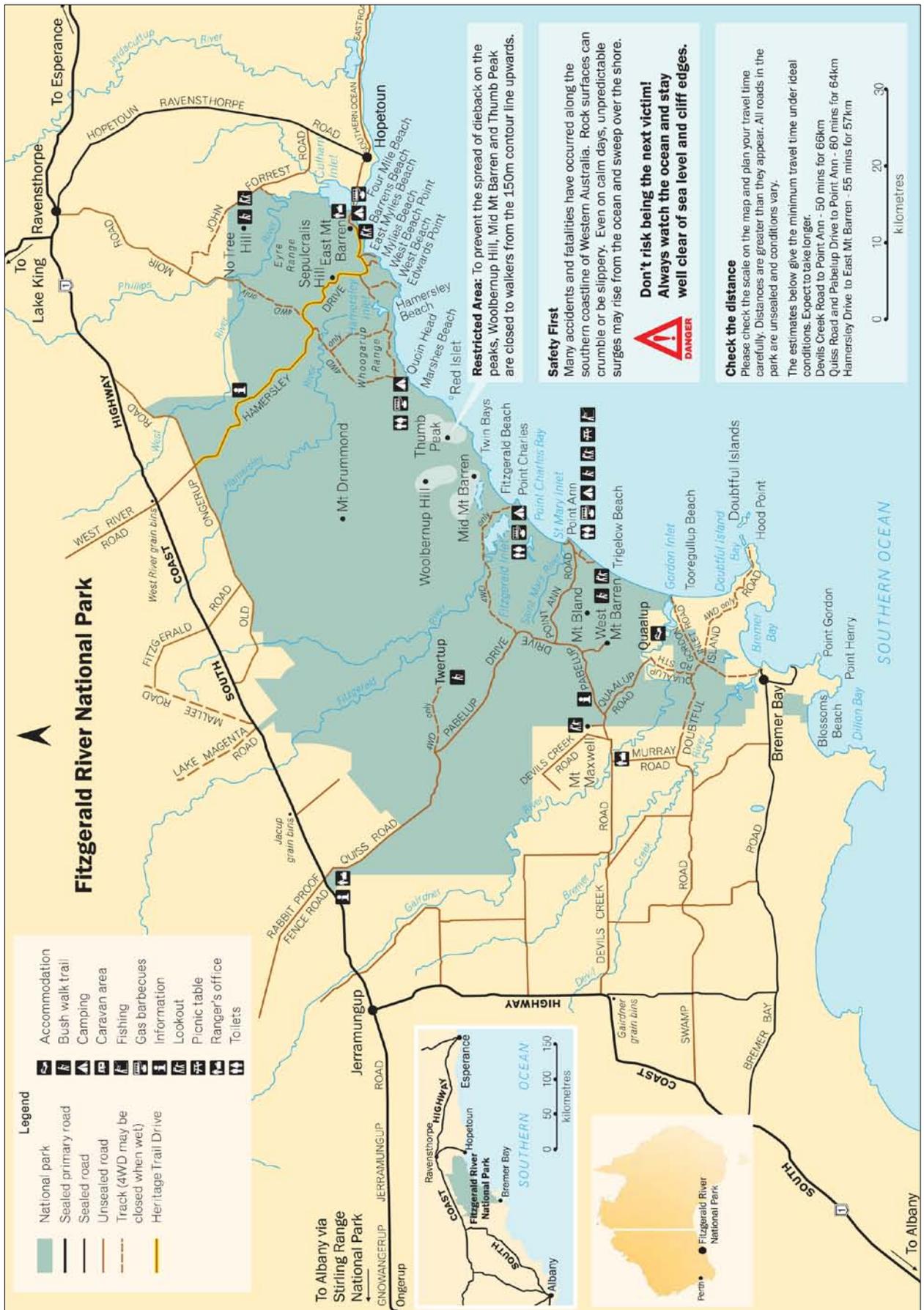


Figure 3 - Known *Phytophthora* dieback locations within Fitzgerald River National Park (March 2010)

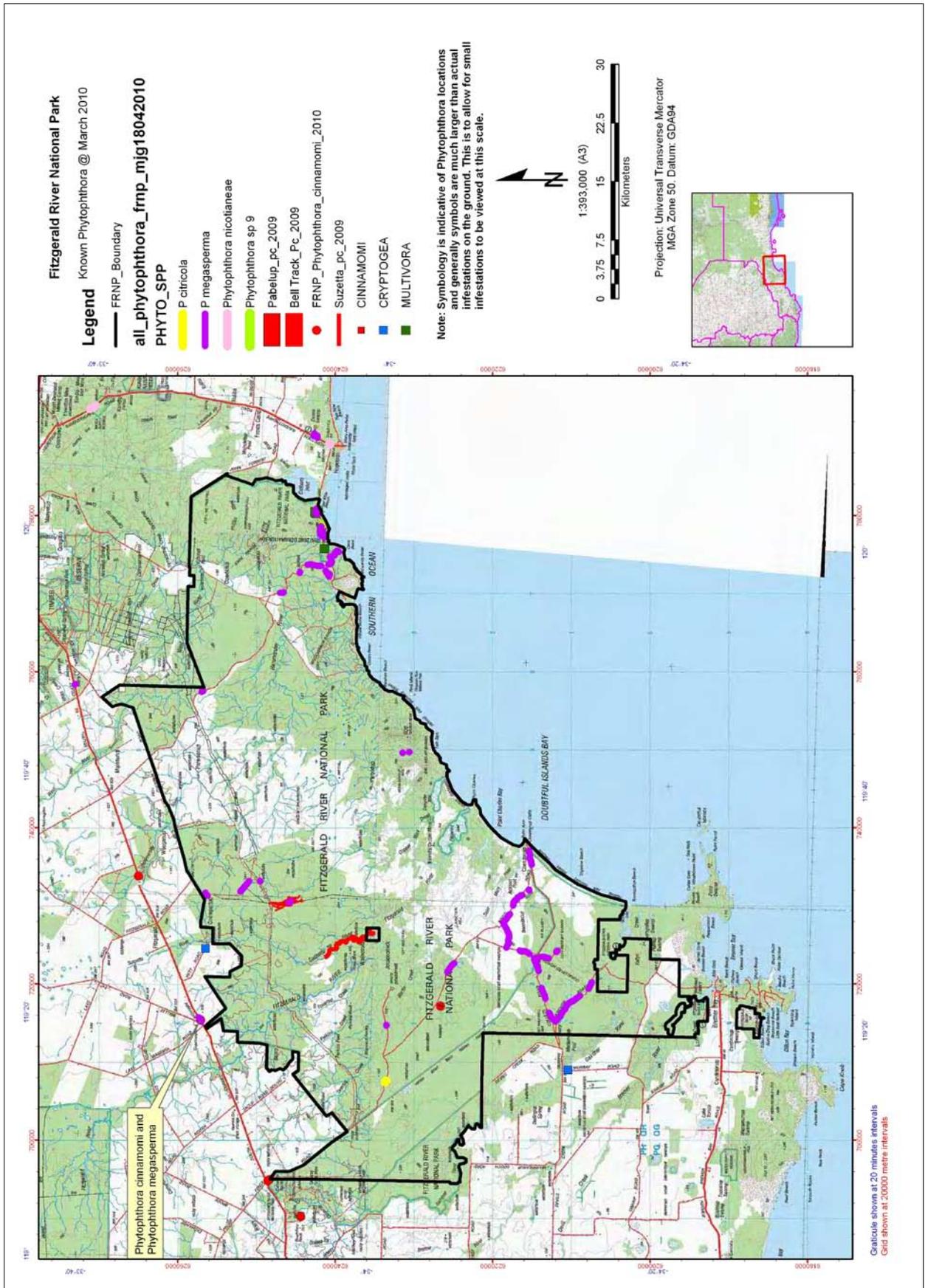


Figure 4 – Potential modified proposal



### **3. Fitzgerald River National Park Management Plan 1991-2001**

The Fitzgerald River NP was officially gazetted in January 1973. The Fitzgerald River NP is managed in accordance with the Fitzgerald River National Park Management Plan 1991-2001 (Fitzgerald River NP Management Plan) which is a statutory management plan prepared under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act). Under the Management Plan the National Park is divided into four management zones – special conservation, wilderness, natural environment and recreation.

The principal management goal of the Fitzgerald River NP Management Plan is to conserve all flora and fauna, particularly the large number of rare species and those in need of special protection.

It was recognised by the DEC during the preparation of the Management Plan that the Fitzgerald River NP was the last opportunity to set aside a substantial wilderness area in southern Australia (National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (NPNCA), 1999b). The Management Plan establishes a Wilderness Management Zone (78,000 ha) in the centre of the National Park where vehicle access is not permitted except in emergency situations (NPNCA, 1999b). The Management Plan also restricts access to the peaks of Mid Mt Barren, Woolbernup Hill and Thumb Peak to approved permit holders for research and critical management only. This is to prevent the spread of dieback to these high points where there are a large number of rare plants susceptible to dieback.

A walk trail through the Fitzgerald River NP Wilderness Management Zone is permitted under the current Fitzgerald River NP Management Plan. However, as the proposed camping facilities (eg. sleeping huts, water collection facilities and toilets) are not permitted under the current Management Plan, amendments to the Management Plan to allow the walk trail facilities were prepared and published for public comment. The CALM Act (section 60) requires that an amendment to a management plan be approved by the Minister for Environment, on advice from the Conservation Commission of Western Australia.

The proposed amendments to the Fitzgerald River NP Management Plan were advertised for two months during 2010 seeking public submissions. The Conservation Commission has considered the submissions and has advised the EPA that it has now provided advice to the Minister for Environment for his review, prior to making a decision on the proposed amendments.

### **4. Key environmental factors**

It is the EPA's opinion that biodiversity is the key environmental factor relevant to the proposal requiring evaluation in this report.

The key environmental factor, biodiversity, is discussed in Section 4.1 including why it is relevant to the proposal, how it will be affected by the proposal and whether or not the proposal meets the EPA's environmental objective in relation to biodiversity.

## 4.1 Biodiversity

### Description

It is proposed to clear native vegetation within the Fitzgerald River NP to construct the proposed walk trail (45 km) and associated camping facilities. The DEC has advised it has located the walk trail to minimise the potential impacts from dieback which includes taking account of coastal catchments. Different sections of the walk trail would be constructed to different standards for various types of walkers and skill levels. Each classification would require different amounts of vegetation clearing, ground disturbance and ongoing maintenance. For example a Class 3 trail must have a 1200 mm maximum width and Class 4 and 5 trails are recommended to have a maximum width of 700 mm.

The Fitzgerald River NP is situated within one of two International Biosphere reserves in Western Australia recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This status was originally conferred in recognition of Fitzgerald River NP's extremely high biodiversity (CALM, 1991).

The *Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve* is also recognised as being within one of Earth's 25 global biodiversity 'hotspots' and within one of five world Mediterranean-type hotspots (Myers et al, 2000).

There are 1,748 plant species, including 75 endemics, identified in the Fitzgerald River NP making it one of the richest flora conservation areas in Western Australia (DEC, 2010a). Fitzgerald River NP contains 20% of the known plant species in Western Australia and 42% of the known species for the South West Botanical Province. (DEC, 2009a).

There are more species of vertebrate fauna within Fitzgerald River NP than any other conservation reserve in the south-west of Western Australia. The Fitzgerald River NP has 22 species of native mammals (seven declared rare), 184 species of birds (three declared rare and two declared as otherwise in need of special protection), 41 species of reptile (one declared in need of special protection), 12 species of frog and four species of inland fish.

The National Park offers one of the best long-term survival prospects in Western Australia for the western ground parrot and dibbler (DEC, 2010a).

#### Potential impact of *Phytophthora dieback*

*Phytophthora cinnamomi* is recognised nationally and internationally as a major threat to biodiversity and the ecological functioning processes of many ecosystems (EPA, 2001). It has been referred to as a "biological disaster of global significance" (Podger et al, 1996) and "the biological bulldozer" by the World Wildlife Fund (2004).

There are currently no proven methods to eradicate *Phytophthora cinnamomi* from a site, or to prevent spread (DEHWA, 2006) and there is little prospect at all that science might deliver a novel, affordable and effective cure in the foreseeable future (Podger et al, 1996).

Managing *Phytophthora cinnamomi* to prevent it spreading is very difficult (EPA, 2001) and the Fitzgerald River NP is the single largest area of susceptible native vegetation across the entire south coast of Western Australia that is not extensively infested with the *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (DEC, 2009c).

More than 65% of the Stirling Range National Park is affected by dieback where many native animals that depend on the vegetation are threatened with extinction. Other conservation areas infected include Cape Le Grand, Cape Arid and Torndirrup NP in Albany. (DEC, 2006).

The financial cost involved in trying to prevent the spread of dieback once introduced is high and ongoing.

The Centre for Phytophthora Science and Management advises that a number of factors place the Fitzgerald River NP at risk from dieback disease (Conservation Commission, 2011):

- the area's warm, relatively moist climate;
- high clay content soils impedes drainage causing sub-surface ponding and suitable environment for the proliferation of the disease;
- ponding results in muddy conditions causing infected soil to adhere to vehicles; and
- due to the clay layer, water tends to drain laterally, spreading the pathogen further.

Consistent with this advice, the DEC recognises *Phytophthora* dieback as the most significant threat to Fitzgerald River NP (DEC & MRWA, 2009) and the greatest management concern (CALM, 1991).

Over 40% of the flora species in the Fitzgerald River NP are likely to be susceptible to infection by *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (Conservation Commission, 2011), therefore, dieback is a significant threat to the biodiversity of the Fitzgerald River NP.

The Fitzgerald River NP is surrounded by *Phytophthora* dieback infestations (Conservation Commission, 2011). *Phytophthora* dieback was first confirmed in the Fitzgerald River NP in the early 1980s (Dell et al, 2005). There are now four known infestation centres in the Fitzgerald River NP that pose a threat to the remainder of the Fitzgerald River NP (Figure 3). These are known as the Bell Track infestation (1976), Jacup Ranger Station infestation (1990), Sussetta River infestation (2007) and Pabelup Drive infestation (2009) (DEC, 2009c). The EPA has been advised that the cost of managing these dieback infestations has been significant and will be ongoing.

The current *Fitzgerald River NP Management Plan 1991-2001* (CALM, 1991) states that the more widespread occurrence of dieback, now confirmed within the National Park, means that extra care must be taken to protect the remaining uninfected areas, and to minimise any further spread in areas already infected.

Humans have the potential to spread *Phytophthora cinnamomi* further and faster than any other vector (DEHWA, 2006). International research indicates that

*Phytophthora* dieback more commonly occurs in soil on walking trails used heavily by humans, than in soil from adjacent areas off trails. This supports the hypothesis that humans disperse *Phytophthora* dieback within already infected areas and into uninfected areas (Cushman et al, 2008).

A Californian study found one-third to one-half of the walkers tested during the rainy season were carrying infested soil on their shoes. In two separate trials, *Phytophthora ramorum* was isolated (isolated seven times from 15 people, and five times from 15 people) from soil collected from the footwear of hikers who had traversed an infested site (Davidson et al, 2005).

## **Assessment**

The EPA's environmental objectives for this factor are to:

- maintain the abundance, diversity, geographic distribution and productivity of flora and fauna at species and ecosystem levels through avoidance or management of adverse impacts and the improvement of knowledge; and
- protect the environmental values of areas identified as having significant environmental attributes.

The EPA is very concerned that the proposed walk trail would:

- traverse the Wilderness Management Zone in the Fitzgerald River NP, which is currently not infected by *Phytophthora* dieback;
- require regular use by DEC Rangers of the existing vehicle tracks within the Wilderness Management Zone to maintain the camping facilities at Twin Bays; and
- pass near Thumb Peak which has high biodiversity values and currently has restricted access under the CALM Act to prevent the introduction of *Phytophthora* dieback.

The EPA is aware that the current Fitzgerald River NP Management Plan allows a walk trail through the Wilderness Management Zone, however, the EPA understands that the current trail is unmarked and in some sections is nonexistent and infrequently used by walkers. The proposed walk trail would be constructed to contemporary standards with camping facilities which will attract a greater number of walkers into the Wilderness Management Zone. This higher level of usage will in turn increase the risk of spreading *Phytophthora* dieback, increase the risk of causing accidental bush fires and provide easy access to Thumb Peak.

The EPA understands that vehicle access using existing tracks in the Wilderness Management Zone would be required so that the walk trail and camping facilities can be constructed and maintained by DEC. However, the EPA is very concerned that increased usage of the vehicle tracks will raise the risk of spreading *Phytophthora* dieback into the Wilderness Management Zone. The EPA is also concerned that upgraded camping, water supplies and toilet facilities at Twin Bays may encourage members of the public to use the vehicle tracks to access these facilities.

The DEC has prepared a Dieback Management Plan for the construction of the overall Fitzgerald River NP Improvement Project (Attachment 16 of Appendix 3). The Plan includes protocols for the management of impacts from the use of earth moving equipment and the movement of soil, water and vegetation in significant dieback-free areas of the Fitzgerald River NP.

However, the proposed management of dieback from the ongoing use and management of the walk trail are not as well understood. The DEC has advised that the management of dieback would consist of visitor education and interpretation facilities on the risk posed by *Phytophthora* dieback and the introduction of boot cleaning stations throughout the park. It is noted however that the effectiveness of such strategies are reliant on voluntary adherence by trail users.

The DEC has also advised that it has commenced a risk assessment process in order to further identify appropriate strategies for the management of the walk trail, following its construction. However, in the absence of a Dieback Management Plan for the ongoing management of the NP (including for the walk trail in the Wilderness Zone), which sets out the strategies for visitor management, resources and response plans to demonstrate how dieback will be managed to the highest possible standard, the EPA holds the view that the risk of dieback introduction is very high and largely unmanageable.

As part of its consideration of the proposal, and in recognition of the significant environmental values of the Fitzgerald River NP and potential environmental impacts of the walk trail, the EPA Board met with representatives from the Conservation Commission, DEC, Shire of Ravensthorpe, Shire of Jerramungup, Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park, and Gondwana Link Coordination Unit in Hopetoun, on 21 February 2011. The EPA also visited Cave Point in the Fitzgerald River NP.

The EPA is mindful of the Conservation Commission's performance assessment of the DEC's management of *Phytophthora* dieback (Conservation Commission, 2011). The performance assessment was undertaken pursuant to section 19(g) of the CALM Act. The EPA considers that the following findings of the Conservation Commission's assessment are of particular relevance to the management of *Phytophthora* dieback in the Fitzgerald River NP and the EPA's assessment of the proposed walk trail from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet:

- There are only two on-site rangers in the Fitzgerald River NP.
- The DEC does not have a dieback management strategy which clearly states strategic goals of management.
- There is an inadequate commitment to dieback training and education in the DEC.
- It is not possible to directly assess any progressive improvement or otherwise in relation to dieback environmental outcomes as there is no system for monitoring or recording disease spread across the Conservation estate.
- The DEC has not had a full time dieback coordinator since 2006. (Conservation Commission, 2011).

While acknowledging the ongoing difficulty in setting and resourcing conservation priorities by the DEC, it is the EPA's view that the current resources allocated by the DEC to manage the Fitzgerald River NP are inadequate and insufficient to manage the **existing** risk to the National Park of further outbreaks of *Phytophthora* dieback.

The EPA is also of the view that the proposed walk trail poses a significant **additional** exposure risk to the National Park. A considerable increase in dedicated funding would be needed to manage the Park and walk trail to ensure effective management and enforcement of dieback hygiene protocols, policing camp fires and preventing illegal access by walkers and vehicles. The additional resources needed to prevent the spread of *Phytophthora* dieback, particularly into the Wilderness Management Zone would need to be ongoing for as long as the trail was open to walkers.

The findings of the *Review of Dieback in Western Australia* (Podger et al, 1996) are of particular relevance to the EPA's assessment of the proposed walk trail in the Fitzgerald River NP. In relation to management strategies to abate the spread of dieback the review advised that:

*“the only broadly applicable stratagem which remains is to continue to target the vectored spread of the pathogen and to constrain as far as is possible the establishment of new centres of infestation”.*

The EPA strongly recommends that this advice be followed in relation to the Wilderness Management Zone in the Fitzgerald River NP. The EPA considers that because the Fitzgerald River NP is the largest and most biologically significant conservation area in the south west of Western Australia and is also an internationally recognised significant area of biodiversity, every measure available to prevent increasing the risk of spreading *Phytophthora* dieback should be taken, especially when those risks are preventable.

## Summary

Having particular regard to the:

- internationally significant biodiversity values of the Fitzgerald River NP;
- extent of dieback infestation throughout the south coast of Western Australia and surrounding the Fitzgerald River NP;
- clay soils and moist climatic conditions providing favourable conditions for the proliferation and spread *Phytophthora* dieback;
- high number of flora species in the Fitzgerald River NP susceptible to infection by *Phytophthora* dieback;
- high number of fauna species that would be severely impacted by the loss of habitat;
- high likelihood that users of the proposed walk trail, camping facilities and access track will eventually spread *Phytophthora* dieback into the Wilderness Management Zone of the Fitzgerald River NP;

- catastrophic effect that *Phytophthora* dieback would have on Western Australia's biodiversity if dieback spread into the Wilderness Management Zone of the Fitzgerald River NP; and
- inability to eradicate *Phytophthora cinnamomi* from a site and no foreseeable prospect that science might deliver a novel, affordable and effective cure in the future,

it is the EPA's opinion that the proposal cannot meet the EPA's environmental objectives for this factor.

## 5. Conclusions

The EPA has considered the proposal by the DEC to construct a 45 km walk trail (including camping facilities) along the coast from Point Ann to Hamersley Inlet, through the Wilderness Management Zone of the Fitzgerald River NP. The EPA has also considered, as part of the proposal, the requirement to use existing vehicle tracks through the Wilderness Management Zone to maintain the walk trail and camping facilities at Twin Bays.

The EPA concludes that it is highly likely that the proposed walk trail and use of vehicle tracks for maintenance would eventually spread *Phytophthora* dieback into the Wilderness Management Zone of the Fitzgerald River NP, significantly impacting on internationally significant environmental values present in the Park. On this basis, the proposal cannot meet the EPA's environmental objectives and is considered to be environmentally unacceptable.

If the Minister, after considering this report and any potential appeals that may be lodged against it, decides to allow a coastal walk trail to be implemented, the EPA recommends that approval, should only be given for a modified walk trail, that does not traverse the Wilderness Management Zone between Point Charles and Quoin Head, as depicted in Figure 4.

Approval should **not** be given for:

- a walk trail through the Wilderness Management Zone between Point Charles and Quoin Head;
- upgraded camping facilities at Twin Bays; nor
- use of the existing vehicle access tracks through the Wilderness Management Zone to service the Twin Bays camping facilities.

## 6. Recommendations

The EPA submits the following recommendations to the Minister for Environment:

1. That the Minister considers the report on the key environmental factor of biodiversity as set out in Section 4;
2. That the Minister notes that the EPA has concluded that the proposal as described by the DEC (Figure 1 and Table 1) cannot meet the EPA's

environmental objectives for biodiversity and is considered to be environmentally unacceptable;

3. If the Minister, after considering this report and any potential appeals, decides to approve the walk trail, the EPA would support a modified proposal as depicted in Figure 4 subject to the following requirements:
  - A *Phytophthora* Dieback Risk Assessment for the Fitzgerald River NP and the proposed walk trail must be completed by the DEC, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission, prior to the construction of the modified walk trail.
  - A *Phytophthora* Dieback Management Plan should be prepared by the DEC for the Fitzgerald River NP (including the proposed walk trail) prior to construction of the walk trail, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission.
    - The purpose of the *Phytophthora* dieback management plan should be to ensure that *Phytophthora* dieback risk management practices are implemented to a level acceptable to the Conservation Commission, to reduce the risk of introducing *Phytophthora* dieback into the Wilderness Management Zone.
    - The *Phytophthora* dieback management plan should include monitoring and public reporting mechanisms and a dieback response plan detailing, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission, what action should be taken if the walk trail is found to be infected by *Phytophthora* dieback.
  - Appropriate flora and vegetation surveys of the proposed walk trail should be undertaken, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission, prior to finalisation of the walk trail alignment.
    - The flora and vegetation surveys should be undertaken consistent with the requirements of the EPA's Guidance Statement 51 - Terrestrial Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment in Western Australia.
    - The potential impacts of the proposed walk trail on the regional representation of vegetation communities should be considered during the design of the walk trail alignment.
4. The EPA recommends that any proposed modified coastal walk trail (as identified and described at Figure 4 of this Report) should not be constructed until:
  - there is long term commitment to substantially increase resourcing for the Fitzgerald River NP so that the potential risk of spreading *Phytophthora* dieback can be properly managed, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission;
  - additional resources are dedicated to the walk trail in perpetuity to ensure the use of the walk trail is properly managed by DEC, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission;

- a dieback response plan has been prepared to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission; and
  - resources are available, as part of the dieback response, for containment and remedial treatment of Phytophthora dieback, to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission, in the event that Phytophthora dieback is introduced into the Wilderness Management Zone.
5. The EPA also recommends that the coastal walk trail should be permanently closed to the public:
- if it transpires that resources are not available to adequately monitor and manage the risk of introduction and spread of Phytophthora dieback to the satisfaction of the Conservation Commission; or
  - in the event that Phytophthora dieback is detected along the walk trail.
6. If the Minister, after considering this report and any potential appeals, decides to allow the proposal (45 km walk trail, camping facilities and use of existing vehicle access tracks) to be implemented without modification (as identified and described at Figure 4 of this Report), the EPA recommends that the proposal should be subject to the same requirements as above.

# **Appendix 1**

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## **Appendix 2**

### **Identified Decision-making Authorities**

### Identified Decision-making Authorities

Section 45(1) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) requires the Minister for Environment to consult with decision-making authorities, and if possible, agree on whether or not the proposal may be implemented, and if so, to what conditions and procedures, if any, that implementation should be subject.

The following decision-making authorities have been identified for this consultation:

<b>Decision-making Authority</b>	<b>Approval</b>
1. Minister for Environment	Amendment of Fitzgerald River National Park Management Plan, in accordance with <i>Conservation and Land Management Act 1984</i>

# **Appendix 3**

## **Proposal Information**