

Our ref: 01-019743

Ms Alex Jones  
alx\_jones@yahoo.com.au

Dear Ms Jones

### **PROTECTION OF MATURE TREES ON PUBLIC LAND IN URBAN AREAS**

Thank you for your email of 18 December 2007 regarding progress on the preparation of a Model Tree Policy.

I have asked the Department of Local Government and Regional Development (the Department) to examine this matter and provide recommendations as to how it is to be dealt with. I understand that in the process of examining the matter, the Department will initiate discussions with both the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Western Australian Local Government Association.

You may be aware that local governments have a high degree of independence in both the making of their decisions and in their implementation. The issues raised by you in your petition are all matters currently dealt with by local governments under their local laws and policies, and through operational decisions. The *Local Government Act 1995* provides local governments with general competence powers for the good governance of their districts. Accordingly, they may adopt whatever local laws and polices they so desire so long as they are not in conflict with any other statute.

While the Department provides assistance to local governments during the local law adoption process, this is essentially restricted to technical matters. Local governments are not directed to adopt either particular local laws or policies. In this respect, a model tree policy would be of limited value unless it was subsequently adopted by local governments. Consequently, the Department's examination will also explore other practical ways of preserving mature trees in urban areas. This will include a search for existing programs and mechanisms which might facilitate or provide for the preservation of mature trees in urban areas.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and will advise you further once this matter has been examined.

Yours sincerely

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC**

Minister for Local Government; Racing and Gaming;  
Multicultural Interests and Citizenship; Government Enterprises;  
Minister Assisting the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure;

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