

DIS099: COUNCIL POLICY - MAINTENANCE OF WATERCOURSES AND DRAINAGE CHANNELS-VERSION TWO

Land Description	: City of Albany
Proponent / Owner	: City of Albany
Attachments	: Draft Council Policy - Maintenance of Watercourses and Drainage
Report Prepared By	: Manager City Engineering (D King)
Responsible Officers:	: Executive Director Infrastructure & Environment (M Thomson)

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

1. This item relates to the following elements of the City of Albany Strategic Community Plan or Corporate Business Plan informing plans or strategies:
 - **Theme:** Clean Green and Sustainable.
 - **Objective:** To Build, maintain and renew city assets sustainably
 - **Community Priority:** Design construct and maintain infrastructure cost effectively in a manner that maximises it's life, capacity and function.

In Brief:

- This policy recognises that watercourses and drainage channels and their associated vegetation should be left in as undisturbed a state as possible, unless extraordinary circumstances apply.
- The City recognises that there are instances in which the condition of watercourses may deteriorate as a result of erosion and/or sedimentation, overgrowth with weeds or dumping or accumulation of rubbish. In such cases, it is recognised that maintenance and/or rehabilitation of these waterways may be required.

DIS099: RESPONSIBLE OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council NOTE that the Policy for Maintenance of Watercourse and Drainage Channels will be advertised for public comment for a period of 21 days.

Following the public advertising period a further report will be presented to Council for adoption of the policy with or without amendments.

BACKGROUND

2. Albany town site was developed over a number of decades when open drainage was accepted as suitable infrastructure. As community expectations change, some areas of Albany have been upgraded with kerb and pipe drainage systems.
3. However, there are a number of instances where drainage channels exist. Sometimes these channels exist as open drains alongside a roadway but more significantly, larger capacity truck drains exist to convey stormwater to a natural watercourse.
4. The City of Albany has a number of natural watercourses, the most significant example of this is the Yakamia Creek. The definition of a watercourse is 'A stream of water whether perennial or intermittent, flowing in a depression of a natural channel or a natural channel artificially improved or in an artificial channel, which has changed the course of the stream.'
5. Although a number of the above drains and channels sit within a City of Albany controlled land, there are many instances where they sit in private ownership
6. There is no current policy to guide officers in the decision making of maintenance of drainage channels and watercourse in private or City ownership.

DISCUSSION

7. The objective of the policy is to define Council’s obligations and policy regarding the maintenance, improvements and rehabilitation of watercourses including Drainage Reserves and Channels.
8. The policy makes statements to maintenance and improvement issues regarding drainage easements and natural watercourses,

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC CONSULTATION

9. If the Council resolves to support the Maintenance of Watercourse and Drainage Channels Policy. Formal advertising of the proposed policy via newspaper will be undertaken, giving details of:
 - Where the draft policy can be inspected;
 - The subject and nature of the draft policy; and
 - In what form and during what period (being not less than 21 days from the day that the first notice is published) submissions may be made.
10. After expiry of the period within which submissions may be made, the Local Government is to:
 - Review the policy in light of any submissions made; and
 - Resolve to adopt the policy with or without modification, or not to proceed with the policy.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no statutory implications relating to resolving to advertise the proposed Policy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

12. The proposed policy aims to provide officers with guidance on decision making with respect to maintenance and improvements of drainage channels and natural watercourses.

RISK IDENTIFICATION & MITIGATION

13. The risk identification and categorisation relies on the City’s Enterprise Risk and Opportunity Management Framework.

Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Analysis	Mitigation
<p>Reputation</p> <p><i>Risk: Policy position may have an impact on property owners that have private drainage channels or watercourses.</i></p> <p><i>Advertising the proposed policy, could give rise to objectionable comments from the above noted owners</i></p>	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<p><i>Policy can be amended once feedback is assessed; this is the purpose of advertising prior to final adoption.</i></p>
<p>Opportunity: Increase consistency equity with regards to decision making</p>				

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. Minimal advertising costs already budgeted for.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no legal implications relating to resolving to advertise the proposed Policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

16. Nil

ALTERNATE OPTIONS

17. Council has the following alternate options in relation to this item, which are:

- To resolve that the draft policy is unacceptable and refuse advertising.
- To resolve to amend the proposed policy prior to advertising.

CONCLUSION

18. The proposed policy seeks to provide guidance and clarification on the application of City funds to maintain and improve drainage channels and natural watercourses.

19. Council is requested to support the new policy for the purpose of advertising.

Consulted References	:	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i>
File Number (Name of Ward)	:	EM.PLA.26 (All Wards)
Previous Reference	:	Nil