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M01 Albany Woolstores Preliminary Ecological Assessment

17 March 2023

Mr Andrew Cumming

Mainbeam Holdings Pty Ltd/Rowe Group

Level 3, 369 Newcastle Street

Northbridge, WA 6003

Via email: andrew.cumming@rowegroup.com.au

Albany Woolstores Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Dear Andrew,

Mainbeam Pty Ltd (Mainbeam) are preparing a Local Structure Plan (LSP) over nine lots on Woolstores Place, Mount Elphinstone, located within the City of Albany. The LSP area ("the site") includes Mainbeam landholdings, as well as other State, Commonwealth, and privately owned land, and is depicted in Attachment A. The Proposed Development's focus will primarily be on the future use and development of the Mainbeam landholdings, exploring a mixture of tourist and quality medium to high density residential, with non-residential commercial land uses considered in close proximity to the rail corridor and future road interchange.

The site is located approximately 3.5 km west of the Albany Central Business District and covers a land area of 19.66 ha within the area bound by Frenchman Bay Road, the Princess Royal Harbour waterfront, and the Princess Royal Drive.

In order to support the LSP preparation and lodgement with the City of Albany, Mainbeam commissioned a preliminary ecological assessment by a member of the JBS&G ecology team to undertake the following work to inform structure planning:

- confirm the presence/absence of the coastal samphire threatened ecological community identified in the desktop; and
- clarify the likelihood of occurrence of other key flora and vegetation values identified within the desktop assessment.

The preliminary ecological assessment was undertaken on 15 December 2022 by an Associate Ecologist with over 15 years of experience conducting ecological assessment in the South-west bioregion. A site walkover was carried out to visually inspect key features of the site, with a focus on identifying requirements for further ecological survey and any vegetation potentially representative of the *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* ecological community, which is listed as a Priority 3 priority ecological community (PEC) within Western Australia, and a 'Vulnerable' threatened ecological community (TEC) nationally under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The mapped extent of this TEC/PEC and its associated buffers was previously identified during desktop assessment as overlying the site.

Inspection of the site was carried out via on-foot traverses of the site and adjacent lands where access was permitted and could be safely achieved. Several portions of the LSP site could not be thoroughly inspected

due to boundary obstruction (both temporary and permanent structures) or for safety reasons where demolition works were in progress, building debris and rubble were present, or conditions were otherwise hazardous, however the majority of the site allowed for general visual overview. A visual inspection of existing lots 52, 53 and 54 from outside the northern and southern boundaries was also made, to see if any indicative information on broad vegetation units present could be gleaned.

The *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* TEC/PEC occurs in coastal areas under regular or intermittent tidal influence. In southern latitudes saltmarsh is often the main vegetation-type in the intertidal zone, consisting mainly of salt-tolerant vegetation (halophytes) including grasses, herbs, sedges, rushes and shrubs, and it commonly occurs in association with estuaries (DSEWPaC 2013). The TEC/PEC is mainly associated with sandy or muddy shores of estuaries and embayments and on some open, low wave energy coasts. It is characterised by some form of tidal connection and inundation, with most areas draining fully on the ebb tide, but intermittently or rarely-inundated supratidal areas may be incorporated.

Saltmarsh vegetation aligning with key criteria of the *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* TEC/PEC was observed adjacent to, but outside of, the LSP during the preliminary ecological inspection, on lower-lying coastal shores to the south-southwest and southeast of the site.

No areas of vegetation clearly identifiable as saltmarsh or considered likely to represent the *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* TEC/PEC were observed within the LSP boundary during the inspection visit. One small area of low-lying vegetation in the eastern-most portion of the LSP, adjacent to the rail corridor and north-east of existing lot 402 (Attachment A), exhibited superficial signs of periodic inundation and some lesser-defined features characteristic of saltmarsh vegetation and as such has some potential to constitute the TEC/PEC or an ecotone thereof. More detailed inspection of this portion of vegetation will be necessary in order to accurately characterise it with respect to the *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* TEC/PEC inclusion criteria.

Other areas of vegetation within the LSP boundary were not found to overtly exhibit any key characteristics of the *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* TEC/PEC, or any other listed ecological community reported from the desktop study. No Threatened flora or fauna species identified from the desktop study as having likely potential to occur were observed during the preliminary site walk-over. Further ecological survey in line with Government recommended methodologies (DBCA 2021; DSEWPaC 2013; EPA 2016; EPA2020) will be required in order to confirm presence or absence of these ecological features on the site.

The majority of the site was found to be comprised of structures or cleared/bitumenised areas devoid of vegetation, or lower stratum vegetation exhibiting varied degrees of degradation. Several small patches of native vegetation with all structural layers present (including canopy species) were observed within or adjacent to road reserve corridors in the LSP, and on distant visual inspection appear to be present in the southern portions of the adjacent existing lots 52, 53 and 54 (refer Attachment A). An accurate evaluation of the condition of this vegetation, and its value as fauna or flora habitat, will require ecological survey to assess native species composition and refine condition ranking.

Recommendations for further ecological survey:

A Reconnaissance flora and vegetation survey and Targeted flora survey should be carried out in October to characterise vegetation present in the LSP and record presence of any conservation-listed flora taxa identified from the desktop study as having 'Likely' potential to occur.

A Basic fauna habitat survey should be undertaken, as well as Targeted survey for conservation-listed fauna taxa, including Threatened bird species known from, or considered 'Likely' to occur at, the site.

The area of potential supratidal TEC/PEC saltmarsh vegetation at the eastern extent of the LSP should be thoroughly surveyed and assessed in spring to evaluate species composition and vegetation condition against criteria contained within the approved *Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh* TEC/PEC conservation advice (DSEWPaC 2013), to confirm if it should be excluded or included in the extent of the local occurrence.

Survey should be undertaken in line with Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) recommendations detailed in *Technical Guidance - Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA 2016), *Technical Guidance - Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment* (EPA 2020), and accordant with the *Conservation Advice for SUBTROPICAL AND TEMPERATE COASTAL SALTMARSH* (DSEWPaC 2013).

Should you require clarification regarding this report or the findings and/or recommendations herein, please contact the undersigned on 0456786342 or by email tjones@jbsg.com.au.

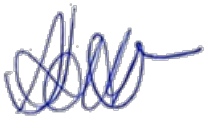
Yours sincerely:

Terri Jones

Associate (Ecology)

JBS&G Australia Pty Ltd

Reviewed/Approved by:



Annette Latto

Principal; Team Lead Ecology

JBS&G Australia Pty Ltd

ATTACHMENT A – Draft Development Concept (indicating LSP area) – (ROWE, 2023)

References:

DBCA [Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions] (2021). *Methods for survey and identification of Western Australian threatened ecological communities.* Draft for consultation. Version 2. 21 December 2021. Government of Western Australia. December 2021. Available from: https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/wa-s-threatened-ecological-communities

DSEWPaC [Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities] (2013). *Conservation Advice for SUBTROPICAL AND TEMPERATE COASTAL SALTMARSH*. Canberra: Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/communities/pubs/118-conservation-advice.pdf. In effect under the EPBC Act from 10-Aug-2013.

EPA [Environmental Protection Authority] (2016). *Technical Guidance - Flora and Vegetation Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment*. Government of Western Australia. December 2016. Available from: https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/policies-guidance/technical-guidance-flora-and-vegetation-surveys-environmental-impact-assessment

EPA [Environmental Protection Authority] (2020). *Technical Guidance - Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna Surveys for Environmental Impact Assessment.* Government of Western Australia. July 2020. Available from: https://www.epa.wa.gov.au/policies-guidance/technical-guidance-terrestrial-vertebrate-fauna-surveys-environmental-impact

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

VARIOUS LOTS, WOOLSTORES PLACE
MOUNT ELPHINSTONE, ALBANY

DRAFT

N

0 62.5 m
SCALE @ A3: 1:2500

9116-CON-02-A

DRAWN:	VR
DATE CREATED:	2023.02.01
PROJECTION:	MGA50 GDA94
CADASTRE:	LANDGATE
SURVEY:	HARLEY DYKSTRA 23304-01A

ROWE GROUP DESIGN