



## **D'Entrecasteaux Coalition**

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### **Protection of Lake Jasper and the Gingilup – Jasper Wetlands**

We recently wrote to you regarding the recommendation that a mining lease be granted (pending) by the Mining Warden's Court of the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) next to Lake Jasper and within the Gingilup - Jasper Wetlands. Since then there has been some initiatives by the State Government which may lead to the protection of Lake Jasper from the threats of mining.

In a recent letter from the Premier Mark McGowan to Andy Russell of the D'Entrecasteaux Coalition, the Premier stated "I am also aware of the environmental and cultural sensitivities of the Gingilup-Jasper wetland system, and community concern for how a proposed mining operation could affect Lake Jasper and D'Entrecasteaux National Park. Changing the purpose or class of reserves involves addressing a range of matters, including native title and stakeholder input. Noting this, I can advise that processing of the mining lease application has been suspended while a greater understanding of the issues is obtained, and our intention is to reinstate this area into D'Entrecasteaux National Park."

The Jasper – Gingilup area has been the focus of major social, cultural and environmental activism ever since the State government excised land from the D'Entrecasteaux National Park to facilitate exploration and mining next to the ecologically significant and archeologically important Lake Jasper - South West WA's largest permanent freshwater lake.

Major mineral sand mining companies, such as Cable Sands and BeMax Mining, have investigated ways of operating a mineral sands mine within the Gingilup-Jasper Wetlands and adjacent (300 metres away) to Lake Jasper. The fact this area is a wetland, underlain with high risk acid sulphate soils, part of the winter surface water catchment zone of Lake Jasper and hydrologically linked via groundwater to the Lake makes mining environmentally dangerous.

In 2010 the previous mining proponent withdrew its mining application citing the environmental problems related to acid sulphate soils that could not be overcome. Indeed, two examples highlight the pollution legacies from mineral sands mining in areas of high-risk acid sulphate soils. BHP's Beenup mine closed due to acid sulphate contamination and other factors, caused by mining activity, that mining became untenable. Today a large acid sulphate groundwater plume exists beneath the mine-site which is moving off-site towards the Scott River. The former Jangardup mineral sands mine also has an acid sulphate groundwater plume beneath it. This is also migrating off-site towards farmland and the ecologically important Lake Quitjup.

Despite a history of community concern and care for Lake Jasper and the Gingilup-Jasper Wetlands and countless previous Mining Warden's Court hearings. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, through the Mining Warden's Court recommended that a mining lease be granted (pending) to Strategic Sands within the Gingilup-

Jasper Wetlands and adjacent to Lake Jasper without any consultation with, or notification of, past stakeholders. This highlights a flaw in the Department's processes when historical evidence of community input is ignored to expedite a mining lease.

In 1996, the then Minister for Mines Norman Moore, made a commitment that if Cable Sands did not proceed with its proposed mine the land excised from the D'Entrecasteaux National Park would be returned to its National Park tenure – (ref: Hon Norman Moore – Hansard - 25<sup>th</sup> May 1996). The Minister restated this commitment in May 1998 (ref: Hon Norman Moore – Hansard - 27<sup>th</sup> May 1998 page 3237).

Since the previous mining application was withdrawn in 2010, we believed that previous state governments were working towards the promised objectives of returning the excised land to national park tenure. We welcome the Premier Mark McGowan's commitment to reinstate this area into the D'Entrecasteaux National Park and look forward to the next reserves bill being presented to Parliament this year with its inclusion. Your support when this Bill is tabled is essential for the long-term protection of these Wetlands

Thank you in advance

Yours Andy Russell and Geoff Evans

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