

## **LIMESTONE & DEVELOPMENT – LIVING WITH KARST IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Urban development and its associated impacts (which include housing, roads and industry) is one of the major karst conservation and management issues within south-west Western Australia. The unique karst system north of Perth in Western Australia faces many issues: water abstraction, catchment vegetation, impacts by development, visitation and management impacts. Protecting the karst system from current development and the impact of Perth's expanding population is a huge task.

There has been a range of karst issues and outcomes to date. In some areas, speleologists have been able to work with landowners, developers or the local Government to assess a proposed subdivision for caves and karst features. In other areas, speleologists are not allowed access to land to make appropriate comment on potential impacts to caves and karst.

This paper discusses two case studies within the karst system. One locality has had several known cave entrances destroyed or directly impacted by development, despite the features being identified by speleologists.

The Government proposes that part of this area will be bisected by a road and a large number of caves and karst features that exist in native Tuart bushland are at risk.

In the other locality, speleologists have been able to contribute to the protection of the karst in a proposed subdivision. As a result, the part that contains karst may be either incorporated into a bushland reserve or be purchased by the Government to add to the National Park.

The Speleological groups are working with numerous local groups and Government agencies to improve recognition of environmental management and safety issues associated with karst in the area. The paper reviews the outcomes of the actions that have been taken.

As Perth's population increases, subdivision and development will continue to occur. Karst impacts will continue unless there is a change in attitudes regarding the importance of karst and karst features, and their management. A collaborative approach is essential to achieve appropriate management of karst in this area. This paper will propose some options for successful outcomes.