

# PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY, COMMUNITY AND TOURISM OPPORTUNITY FOR CITY BEACH



Further Revegetation Along West Coast Highway Edge Subject to Funding

Revegetation to Intersection of Oceanic Drive and West Coast Highway (Bold Park Linc)



## Existing Condition

Connecting People with Nature Perth's Premier Beachfront

The BioLINC Project for City Beach

Landscape Integration for Natural Connections – a world-class coastal community and tourism opportunity to enhance local biodiversity and conservation values.

BioLINC 'is a message of hope in my opinion, in a world where local biodiversity of cities is under threat'  
-Professor Stephen D Hopper AC, FL, FTSE

Background

The 5.2km coastal zone in the Town of Cambridge is Perth's longest and most intact and pristine inner urban coastal ecosystem. The Town's coastal zone is a world-class asset with outstanding natural and biodiversity values that have potential to be a world-class community and tourism asset linked to the proposed beachfront redevelopment.

Cambridge Coastcare, a community group established by the Council in 1999, proposes to link the southern and northern dunes ecosystems to create a continuous wildflower garden and ecological connections to facilitate biodiversity movement. This will be at no cost to the Town with savings in water and maintenance resulting from the replacement of underused lawn areas and restoration enhancement of weed-infested dune areas.

The current City Beach infrastructure precludes biodiversity linkages with almost three quarters of a kilometre of carparks and buildings at central City Beach (carparks, restaurants, lawns, clubrooms). This infrastructure acts as a significant biodiversity barrier.

The BioLINC project represents the largest inner-urban coastal restoration project of its type in an Australian capital city. The project is a unique opportunity to deliver seamless ecological connections in a coastal ecosystem and to inspire sustainable development in partnership with the community while providing an outstanding tourism opportunity unparalleled along the Perth coast.

BioLINC will be a template for inspiring similar biodiversity linkages along the Perth coastline and rebuild ecological resilience into coastal ecosystems damaged and degraded by human impacts. Put simply, BioLINC is a world-class, internationally significant project situated on one of Perth's premier beaches and tourist destinations.

BioLINC: creating a Kings Park-by-the-Sea

BioLINC will create a 'Kings Park by the sea' with outstanding spring-time wildflower displays in landscaped, restored and reinstated dune-scapes using species selected from the 200 wild species native to the dunes. The plantings will be designed to represent natural dunes but in a way that will enhance biodiversity and provide beautiful and enduring landscapes. The design team will be led by nationally recognised landscape architecture company, NewForms (responsible for the landscape design of the QE2 children's hospital landscape). The concept design will create central City Beach as a major community focus and tourist destination akin to Kings Park in its natural beauty and amenity.

## Staging



STAGE 1

STAGE 2

STAGE 3

The project is timely in being coincident with the redevelopment of the City Beach surf club and nearby areas. BioLINC provides an important context for the City Beach redevelopment with stunning landscaped dune gardens for visitors and the community with an extensive network of wildflower garden and dunescape trails that will attract significant numbers of tourist and visitors to the area.

How will BioLINC work?

BioLINC will connect, reinstate and restore coastal dunes removed in the 1940-1965 period when the first major City Beach infrastructure was built. The landscape approach of BioLINC will be innovative and use best practice restoration principles to reconstruct dunes, restore bushland to under-used lawns designated for eco-zoning and deliver a message of ecological sustainability and water-wise landscaping. Unlike restoration projects per se, BioLINC will provide a world-class coastal and wildflower walks and trails, schools programs and community and tourism opportunities unparalleled along the coast.

This will be one of the largest and most significant coastal 'reconnecting with nature' projects undertaken in Western Australia and it is appropriate that it is showcased in the high profile City Beach main precinct.

The project will reconnect the North and South Dune complexes in the Town of Cambridge through the use of state-of-the-art ecological restoration techniques and selection of high quality wildflower species that:

- Will link 10km of coastal dunes from Scarborough to Cottesloe to enhance flora and fauna biodiversity.
- Provides a world-class visitor experience through development of new and innovative interpretive coastal trails, outstanding spring wildflower displays and link to the City Beach boardwalk.
- Incorporates 'Adopt-a-Dune' and 'Dune Watch' for local schools to help plant and then year-by-year record the birds and animals returning to the dunes.
- Provides new cycle-ways and pedestrian access that will enhance the serenity, natural beauty and family experience of the City Beach precinct.
- Promotes the Town as an Australian leader in sustainable biodiversity, tourism and coastal management.

Why Cambridge Coastcare can deliver BioLINC

The time is right for this proposal as Cambridge Coastcare, Perth's most active community coastal restoration group has developed the ecological capacity, practical skills, expertise and management capability in conjunction with the Town of Cambridge to deliver a project of this complexity and scale. Since its inception 11 years ago, Cambridge Coastcare has restored over 5km of dunes in the Town with a total value over \$0.5M; planted over 100,000 local native species and controlled weeds over 5km of dune ecosystems all with sponsorship. The group has developed programs with local schools, businesses and holds community and industry days where training is provided in coastal restoration and appreciation. Cambridge Coastcare is considered a leading coastcare group in Australia.

Linking with the Foreshore Redevelopment proposal

BioLINC provides an ideal framework and context to showcase the redevelopment now underway of the City Beach foreshore by providing a natural setting replete with binfile and coastal wildflowers for visitors to enjoy be educated and value natural biodiversity. And this is while the restored dunes and landscape deliver outstanding biodiversity and conservation benefits for local animals and plants requiring little additional financial inputs after the initial three year investment period is concluded.

Importantly biodiversity values and linkages are key concepts in the Town's publicly endorsed Coastal Natural Areas Management Plan, with BioLINC delivering in a single project the greatest benefits for biodiversity.

The long-term environmental and community benefits of BioLINC in conjunction with the City Beach redevelopment include:

- Makes a significant contribution to coastal planning and management in Western Australia.
- Encourages group community effort in achieving a common goal and builds community ownership.
- Fosters a sense of ownership of the coast by the local community.
- Promotes environmental and cultural awareness of our world-class coastal zone.
- Provides a world-class tourism opportunity.

Funding and Implementation

Phase 1 of the project is the major link known as the Jubilee Link. This phase will be the primary target of the sponsorship being the highest profile area for public interaction as well as the area impeding the biodiversity linkages. The area is an under-utilised lawn area on the western edge of a large grassed park and will provide the vital stepping stones for taking species on their north-south-north trajectories. Phase 1 will provide the most critical stage of the BioLINC program and success here will provide the adaptive management capabilities to move in later years to Phase 2 (the North Link).

Phase 1 is estimated to cost \$350,000 with the Town of Cambridge providing support for earthworks, mulch, installation of hard surfaces and trails as well as reworking of irrigation to provide supplemental water for the critical first two years of establishment of the native plantings. Supplemental watering is necessary given the drying climate that results in difficult predictions of planting times and often leads to very low plant establishment rates.

Cambridge Coastcare will provide on-going community support and engagement to manage the landscapes through replantings, weed control and assistance with public interpretation.

Public Consultation and Endorsements

The Town of Cambridge and Cambridge Coastcare undertook a comprehensive public consultation through Connecting Communities that involved a targeted letter drop and questionnaires to residences in the region as well as two open days at the Boulevard Centre in Floreat Park in 2012. Following a presentation by Cambridge Coastcare, the full council of the Town unanimously endorsed BioLINC at the Council meeting of 28 August 2013.

Of significance is that Cambridge Coastcare has received letters of support from some of the leading biologists and ecologists in Australia including Professor Stephen Hopper, former Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew who endorsed the BioLINC concept with 'reconnection of fragmented coastal corridors of vegetation such as BioLINC will help the long term persistence of these vital plant and animal communities, ensuring stability of dunes and protection from storms and waves' - (SD Hopper, March 2013).

Other endorsements include:

Professor Hans Lambers FAA, former Head of the School of Plant Biology at the University of Western Australia who stated the community of WA should proudly embrace this world-class opportunity and showcase it as a project on global ecological importance.

BirdLife Australia: 'This is a world class opportunity to enhance and protect the biodiversity and community values of this coastal dunal system' and 'It is important for the future conservation of [coastal bird] species in these coastal habitats .... that this habitat is enhanced with connectivity between remnants.'

Wildflower Society of Western Australia: 'this project would become a community attraction and a showcase of best practice environmental and sustainability and 'the incorporation of interpretation trails which are attractive, integrated and easily accessible to the public.'



Possible concept for how a biodiversity linkage may operate



Existing Park



Existing Intersection



BioLINC Intersection Revitalisation and Wild Flower Walk



LANDSCAPE INTEGRATION FOR NATURAL CONNECTIONS  
"Connecting People with Nature"

