

HANG GLIDERS & PARAGLIDERS ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**HANG GLIDERS & PARAGLIDERS ASSOCIATION
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC**



MOUNT BAKEWELL WEST LAUNCH PROPOSAL

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Location

The Proposal is on behalf of the Hang Gliders and Paragliders Association of WA (HGPAWA) for the development of a paraglider and hang glider launching site on the upper western slope of Mt Bakewell, Shire of York on land in ownership of Telstra Corporation Limited (Telstra). The certificate of title includes the following information:

Land Description	Lot 28175 on Deposited Plan 169128
Reg. Proprietor	Australian Telecommunications Commission
Responsible Agency	Telstra Corporation Ltd

Part of Lot 28175 is occupied by a Telstra communications facility nominated NSA site number 6302003

As outlined in Section 2.1 below , Lot 28175 is enclosed within Reserve 17847.

An Application to Clear Native Vegetation requires “*Authority to access and clear native vegetation.*” In this regard Telstra Lease Administration has provided permission for the proposed land and vegetation disturbance to proceed. In addition, Telstra has requested an indemnity agreement with HGPAWA that is currently in process.

1.2 Overview

This document, submitted as an attachment to an *Application to Clear Native Vegetation*, is submitted on behalf of the Hang Gliders & Paragliders Association of Western Australia ([HGPAWA](#)) which is a state organisation recognised under the Sports Aviation Association of Australia (SAFA). The objective is to obtain the necessary approvals for the development of a new launch site on the western slope of Mt Bakewell.

Included is a brief overview of land tenure issues and the history and current use of Mount Bakewell by HGPAWA members for gliding activities. A summary of launch sites in current use by HGPAWA members is provided. Most importantly, an environmental assessment and rationale for the proposed West Launch site is provided.

Mt Bakewell is the premier inland gliding location for both ridge-soaring and thermalling activities for both paragliding (PG) and hang gliding (HG) sports in the Metropolitan and Central Wheat Belt regions. At present, Mt. Bakewell currently offers only gliding opportunities for south easterly wind directions. The opening of a westerly launch site would substantially increase the availability of gliding opportunities from Mt. Bakewell.

1.3 Governance of the Sport

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) controls all civilian aircraft activities in Australia, delegating responsibility for pilot and instructor training and accident investigation to SAFA for all Australian powered and unpowered PG/HG activities. The CASA-approved SAFA [Operations Manual](#) prescribes all rules and regulation governing PG and HG activities in Australia. Under law, all active PG and HG pilots are required to carry a current pilot certificate issued by SAFA or be under the supervision of a SAFA approved instructor. Third-party insurance cover that goes with SAFA membership provides members of the public with the assurance that all PG & HG pilots are members of a highly regulated organisation and that lawful actions of member pilots are backed by their governing body. Further down the chain of command, SAFA delegates the management of launch sites down to state organisations and associated flying clubs.

New pilots are required to undergo a ten-day training program and are required to undergo personal supervision until graduating to the next level of competence. In all, pilots are required to pass through five levels of assessment of theoretical and flying competence before achieving independent pilot status.

2.0 Mount Bakewell

2.1 Location and Vesting

Mt Bakewell is the highest point of the Dyott Range located on the northern outskirts of the town of York, Western Australia (Figure 1). Mt Bakewell lies on the southern edge of the Dyott Range rising to approximately 300 m above the surrounding plain, giving a commanding view of the York township and farmlands beyond.

The upper reaches of the range are covered by mostly native vegetation within State Reserves and privately owned lots extending to the northern part of the escarpment.

Mt Bakewell is largely contained within Reserve 17487 which is vested in the Shire of York for the purposes of Parks and Grazing. The reserve consists of the following.

Lot 29123 Leased to Ms K Dorsogna for grazing horses. These consist of cleared grazing paddocks.

Lot 29124 As for Lot 29123

Lot 29277 A road easement between the above two lots.

Lot 29141 This block that has the South and ESE Launches on it; currently leased to Mt Bakewell Stud. The block extends from North Road in the south east to the edge of the escarpment on the north west of the block and consists of an open parkland of trees on grazed undergrowth on the slopes of Mt Bakewell.

Lot 29140 This is the main reserve on top of Mt Bakewell. This Lot consists of mostly undisturbed native vegetation except for the access tracks to the communications towers, related parking area and the areas occupied by communications infrastructure. Access to the South and East-South-East launch sites is via established vehicle tracks on this Lot.

Lot 28715 Ownership in the name of Australian Telecommunications Commission. This lot is enclosed within Lot 29140. Telstra has provided permission for the development of the proposed western launch site.

A summary of Mount Bakewell Land Tenure is as follows:

Land Tenure: Reserve 17487

Current Purpose: Parklands and grazing

Notes: *With power to lease for any term not exceeding 21 years subject to the consent of the Minister for Lands.*

Current area: 133.6 ha

Current Vesting: Management Order Shire of York

Responsible Agency: Dept for Planning and Infrastructure

Reserve Comprises: Lots: 29123, 29124, 29140, 29141, 29277.



Figure 1 Mt Bakewell; looking ENE along the Dyott Range. The location of the proposed launch site adjacent to the Telstra town is indicated

2.2 Existing Environment

Patrick (1997) has reviewed the extant knowledge of surface soils, geology and known plant species occurring in the Dyott Range.

“The summit of Mt Bakewell is composed of massive quartzite which is resistant to erosion and forms areas of high relief. A quartzite-feldspar-biotite gneiss is exposed on the southern and western slopes (Wilde & Lowe 1978).”

“The quartzite gives rise to soils which support *Wandoo* (*E. wandoo*) woodland, while York Gum (*E. loxophleba*) woodlands occur on the more basic soils of the gneiss, which are fertile red loams, some of which are high in the landscape. The sandy areas support a species-rich heath and shrub land, and there are woodlands of Rock Sheoak (*Allocasuarina huegeliana*) on many of the lower slopes”.

The vegetation of the Reserve remains in good condition as there is no open public access. Hang and paraglider pilots represent a small group who limit their access to Mt Bakewell for transit to approved launch sites located on privately managed land adjacent to Lot 29140. A Code of Conduct promulgated through flying clubs is required to be observed by pilots who use launch sites on private or public land. Day to day access is only achieved through permission of a private landowner. Other visitors to Mt Bakewell include technicians servicing the telecommunications facilities located at the summit. Occasional walking groups gain access to Mt Bakewell by climbing up the slope through Reserve land. The *River Conservation Society* has made several trips to Mt Bakewell to conduct an ongoing assessment of the native bushland of the reserve.

Adjacent blocks to the north and west of Lot 29140 Reserve 17487 are privately owned. These consist mostly of undisturbed bushland not used for agriculture or grazing as these blocks contain plants poisonous to stock.

2.3 Rare Flora likely to be found on the Dyott Range

According to Patrick (1997), the remaining natural vegetation on the Dyott Range is an important remnant of the original bushland that covered the hills before much of this was removed or modified for agriculture. There are extensive areas of undisturbed natural vegetation which have not been fully surveyed. Patrick lists 108 species for Dyott Range including one Declared Rare Flora (DRF), one Priority 1, and three Priority 4 species. The current status of rare flora listed by Patrick has been confirmed (see below) using [Florabase](#) and the *Wildlife Conservation (Rare Flora) Notice (2018)*. Images provided below are used with the permission of the Western Australian Herbarium.

Thomasia montana (Figure 2)

Rare Flora notice 11/9/2018: Rare flora taxon Schedule 3 Division 1 (Photo 5). “Flora that are considered likely to become extinct or rare, as vulnerable flora”

Florabase: Conservation Code “Threatened”. Upright shrub, 0.5-1 m high. Fl. blue-purple-red, Sep to Oct. Loamy soils. Rocky granite knolls, lateritic hills

Patrick (1997) “It is an upright shrub, 0.5 – 1 m high; flowers are blue to purple and red, appearing September to October. The species prefers loamy soils found on rocky granite knolls and lateritic hills.

Senecio gilbertii (Figure 3)

Rare Flora notice 11/9/2018: Not listed

Florabase: Priority one. Erect, slender perennial, herb, to 1.5 m high. Fl. yellow, Sep to Nov. Peaty sand. Swamps, slopes

Patrick (1997) “Flowers are yellow and appear September to November. The species prefers peaty sands found in swamps and slopes. The species has been collected in the past from three locations in Jarrah forest between Bindoon and Woorooloo. The population at Mt Bakewell is the most easterly known for the species and is the only currently known population as it has not been rediscovered recently at other locations.

Caladenia integra (Figure 4)

Rare Flora notice 11/9/2018: Not listed

Florabase: Priority four. Tuberos, perennial, herb, 0.2-0.5 m high. Fl. green & red, Sep to Oct. Clayey loam. Granite outcrops, rocky slopes

Patrick (1997) "This is an orchid found to be represented by a large population in the Sheoak woodland burned in the 1985 fire. The species has been found to be quite common, occurring in Rock Sheoak woodlands around granites."

Hemigenia platyphylla (Figure 5)

Rare Flora notice 11/9/2018: Not listed

Florabase: Priority four. Spreading shrub, 0.2-1.5 m high. Fl. blue-purple, Sep to Nov. Sandy & loamy soils. Granite rocks, slopes.

Patrick (1997) "A low shrub where the type species is represented by a large population around the summit of Mt Bakewell."

Hibbertia montana

Rare Flora notice 11/9/2018: Not listed

Florabase: Not threatened.



Thomasia montana

Photos: S.J. Pa

Figure 2 *Thomasia montana*, from *Florabase*, by SJ Patrick



Senecio gilbertii Photo: S.J. Patrick

Figure 3 *Senecio gilbertii*, from *Florabase*, by SJ Patrick



Figure 4 *Caladenia integra*, from *Florabase*, by G. BrunnHauer, WM Cusack; I&M Greeve; S&J Patrick



Figure 5 *Hemigenia platyphylla*, from *Florabase*, by SJ Patrick

3.0 Mt Bakewell Launch Sites

Foot launching a glider requires a steady breeze at approximately right angles to the slope of the hill on which the launch site is located; an open area of at least 20 m width is required to manoeuvre a wingspan of approximately 10m. Altogether, where there is tall surrounding vegetation, an open area of about 400 m² is required for a launch site. The only launch sites regularly used over time by the paragliding and hang gliding community are the South and South-Eastern Sites. These are both located on the upper eastern slopes of Mt Bakewell and are suitable for launching in light south easterly wind conditions. Use of these sites is only achieved by both long-term approval and day-to-day contact with the landholder whose property is traversed for access. Furthermore, use of Mt Bakewell South and ESE launches are only achieved with the permission of the lessee of the land on which launch sites are located.

Other sites have been considered and explored over the duration of foot-launch gliding at Mt. Bakewell (Including Lou's, Bowl, South West) but these have not had continued use due to safety or optimum launching needs.

3.1 South Launch

Located on grazed land on the upper (north western) boundary of Lot 29141 on the eastern perimeter of the escarpment. Access is via a road through private land and then along a road through Lot 29140. The launch site is an open parkland of trees over grazing on lower slopes and adjacent areas. This site is favoured for South to SE launches due to its height above ground level and low-risk rating for launching.

Land Tenure	Lot 29141 within Reserve 17487.
Launching	SE to South
History	The launch site has been in use since 1976
Landing Site	On open farm land to the north of the launch owned by Mr L Kosta, the gravel pits and paddocks of Mt Bakewell Stud below.

3.2 ESE Launch

Located on the upper boundary of Lot 29141 on the eastern perimeter of the Mt Bakewell escarpment. Access is as for the South Launch via a road through Lot 29140. The launch site itself is on an open grassed area with an open parkland of trees on lower slopes and adjacent areas which are used for stock grazing. The surface of the launch itself is stabilized with rubber conveyor belt sections laid across the site.

Land Tenure	Lot 29141 within Reserve 17487
Launching	ESE to SE
History	The launch site has been in use since 1971
Landing Site	On open farm land to the north of the launch owned by Mr L Kosta, the gravel pits and paddocks of Mt Bakewell Stud below

4.0 Proposed Westerly Launch Site

4.1 Why this site?

Foot-launched gliding at Mt Bakewell is currently restricted to south-easterly wind directions. The proposal is to expand the available time available for the sport by opening a site facing westerly wind conditions.

As stated in the introduction, three other sites have been considered and utilised over time (Lou's, Bowl, South West) but none have had continued use due to safety or optimum launching requirements. The proposed westerly site has a significant number of advantages:

- The site is at maximum altitude on Mt Bakewell presenting a clear westerly flight path from the launch site over open scrubland on suitably sloping terrain (Figure 6).
- Existing car parking is available within a short walking distance.
- Access to the site will be via the existing Telstra access (Figures 7 & 8)
- An area previously cleared by Telstra, will be available for glider lay-out (see Figure 7). Telstra does not use this area for any purpose – this was formed during the leveling of the Telstra site during construction.
- Minimal disturbance to ground and vegetation will be required

4.1 Site Description

Location -31.852289 116.760475 degrees and 426 m amsl.

Land Tenure Lot 28175 in the name of Telstra.

Launching: West

Soils Shallow quartzite gravels over rocky outcrops.

The site consists of exposed rock and shallow quartzite gravel over rock sloping towards a quartzite ridge (Figure 6). The flight path will be over open sloping ground mostly vegetated by low parrot bush (*Banksia spp*) scrubland. An open woodland lies on either side of the flight path with a mixed overstory of Wandoo (*E. wandoo*) woodland, York Gum (*E. loxophleba*) and Rock Sheoak (*Allocasuarina huegeliana*).

The proposal has been under consideration for approximately two years - lead by two local paragliders – John Salmon and Rod Merigan, both long-time York Residents and senior member of the WA paragliding community. Consequently, both are very familiar with the local terrain of the proposal and over time have observed changes in the flora over the seasons. No rare flora, as identified in Section 2.3 above, have been observed in or near to the area of disturbance (Figure 7).

4.2 Proposed Works

As stated in Section 3.0, approximately 400 m² is normally required for a launch site – however, the attraction of the proposed site is such that safety issues are accounted for with minimal disturbance to the existing vegetation and terrain surrounding the site. At most, the launch site will be constructed by deposition of soil over granite rocks and parrot bush shrub to a maximum area of approximately 8x12 metres (Figure. 6). For safety reasons, a limited number of isolated trees will need to be felled (Figure 7). Along the flight path, branches may need to be removed from time to time – also for safety reasons.

4.3 Impacts and Management.

The loss of two Marri will have no impact on the long-term viability of the surrounding woodland. As an offset to the development of the site - over the previous two winters Wandoo saplings have been planted on the periphery of the flight path (Figure 9).

5.0 Interested Parties

5.1 Shire of York

Mt Bakewell is located within the Shire of York and consequently is subject to Shire of York Local Planning Scheme No.3. A portion of *Map 3 - York Town Site* is shown in Figure 10 - indicating that the proposal is located within an area reserved for “*Environmental Conservation*”.

Scheme Text, Table 1 “Reserve Objectives” lists the following for “*Environmental Conservation*”:

- To identify areas with biodiversity and conservation value, and to protect those areas from development and subdivision.
- To identify and protect areas of biodiversity conservation significance within National Parks and State and other conservation reserves.
- To facilitate passive recreation and enjoyment within environmental areas that does not detract from biodiversity and conservation values.

The proposal appears to be consistent with Scheme Objectives. The Shire of York was contacted in regard to the proposal. A request was made that the proposal to be submitted with the clearing application be submitted to the Shire for consideration.

5.2 Contact Details

Cloudbase Paragliding Club of WA (Inc)

Rod Merigan (President) 0439 967 971

Hang Gliders & Paragliders Association of WA (Inc)

Richard Breyley (Secretary, 0417 986 896) Shire of York

Chris Linnell (CEO) 9641 0500

Telstra Lease Administration

Lisa Thomas (Lease Administration Manager) 0436 852 933

lisa.thomas@team.telstra.com

6.0 References

Patrick, S.J. (1997). Mount Bakewell, an important remnant vegetation in the York area. CALM Science. Vol 2/3 pp225-230.

Wilde, S.A. & Lowe, G.H.(1978). 1:250 000 Geological Series Explanatory Notes. Geological Survey of Western Australia, Perth WA.



Figure 6 The proposed Launching Site looking west. Parrot Bush that will be impacted is indicated. See Figure 8 for aerial view.



Figure 7 Aerial view, launching site. Orange circles: trees to be removed. M: Marri.



Figure 8 Aerial view. Approximate position of the launching site is indicated



Figure 9 One of several Marri Saplings planted over previous winters

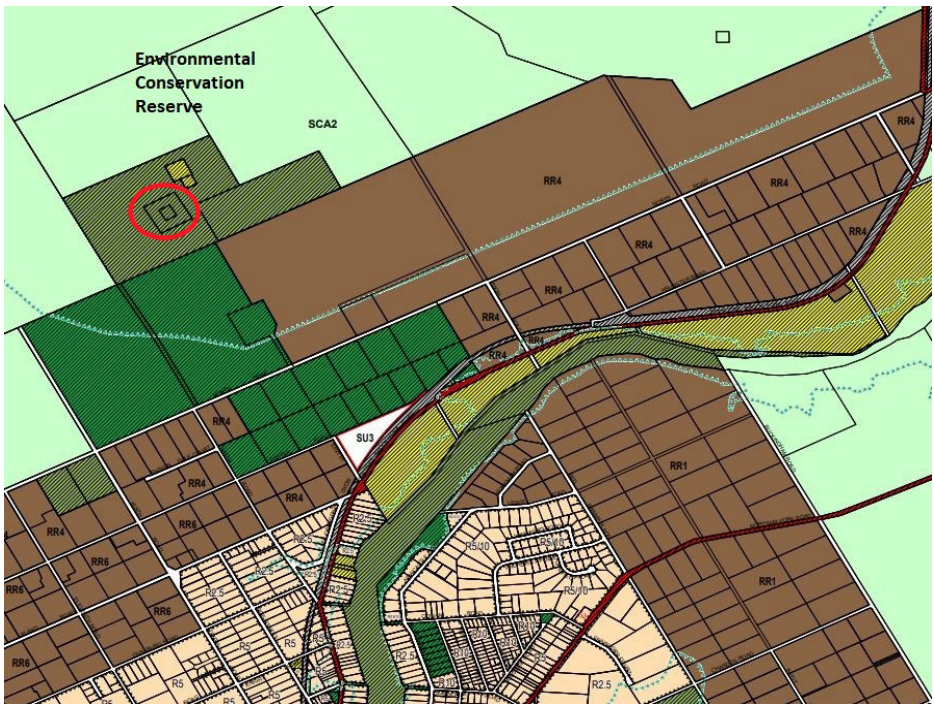


Figure 10 Shire of York Local Planning Scheme No.3; Map No.3. The location of the Proposal is indicated.