



BOTANIC GARDENS & PARKS AUTHORITY

KINGS PARK AND BOTANIC GARDEN • BOLD PARK

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14 March 2008

Mr John Fraser  
Managing Director  
Jandakot Airport Holdings Pty Ltd  
16 Eagle Drive  
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Dear John

**DEWHA RECOMMENDATION REPORT**

Thank you for providing a copy of the Recommendation Report of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts regarding the proposed development at Jandakot Airport.

In terms of the statements regarding the Grand Spider Orchid (*Caladenia huegellii*) I believe that what is proposed in the research plan associated with the development proposal documents represents a significant opportunity to promote, not diminish the conservation status of the species.

The proposed research plan provides for the generation of critical, missing knowledge that is considered critical for managing and sustaining the Grand Spider Orchid. Previously funded research, contrary to what was indicated in the Recommendation Report, was dedicated only to the orchid populations within the Roe 7 Highway program (with some minor extension research beyond this precinct). The proposed Jandakot research program extends to understanding core factors critical for conservation of the species in general by benchmarking with biological information on other rare spider orchids (*Caladenia*).

Major thrusts of the Jandakot research program that represent species critical research cover three major areas that have only been peripherally investigated in current research:

- Defining reintroduction 'hotspots' throughout the range of the orchid for long term conservation introductions.
- Pollinator biology – currently there is a paucity of knowledge of pollinator biology including role ecological connections to guide conservation management and planning.
- Horticultural research to build capability in reintroduction technology.

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These areas are not likely to be funded by other mechanisms and without these core areas of knowledge the long-term conservation of the Grand Spider Orchid remains problematic.

Also there are issues raised in the Recommendation Report with regard to transplantation of the orchid. It is important to note that for plants in particular conservation biologists generally agree that transplanting success is a 'conservation bonus' – the success or failure should not be seen as a critical part of the conservation equation.

It should be noted that

- The orchids at Jandakot Airport are all from the one population ie. the plants proposed to be translocated from that site would not make a significant impact on the overall species.
- Effective conservation management of the proposed conservation areas will not be possible without the funding proposed by Jandakot Airport Holdings.
- The size of the proposed 210 ha conservation area is significant for the conservation and expansion of the orchid population.

Ultimately the long-term sustainable conservation of the Grand Spider Orchid will depend upon knowledge to manage the orchid within a regional and State context. This knowledge is lacking and puts at risk the future conservation of the species.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kingsley Dixon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kingsley Dixon  
Director, Science