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Media Release

## Plea to community to help prevent spread of Dieback in Gidgegannup

Phytophthora Dieback, the plant disease that is killing our forests, woodlands and heathlands is now prevalent in the reserve surrounding Percy Cullen Oval (Reserve 2145) in Gidgegannup.

The Dieback Working Group is appealing to the local community to help prevent its spread this spring by being extra vigilant when bush walking in this bushland conservation area.

Ian Colquhoun, Chair of the Dieback Working Group, says Dieback is widespread across the south west of the state and that once it is established in an area it can never be eradicated.

"We need to overcome the major misconceptions surrounding this disease that have been caused by the old name 'Jarrah Dieback'," he says.

"The facts are that the disease affects thousands of plant species, not just Jarrah. It is present throughout much of the south west of WA, not just the Jarrah forest as the old name implies and, perhaps most importantly, many plants don't just 'die back', they look sick one day and are dead the next.

"Preventing Dieback is everyone's responsibility and increased community understanding is badly needed to prevent its spread throughout more of the local area."

Phytophthora Dieback is a water mould which prevents plants from absorbing water and nutrients. The plant-pathogen is spread when infested soil or root material is moved, often by trail bikes and other off-road vehicles, machinery such as trucks and graders, horse riders and bush walkers.

To prevent its spread, the Dieback Working Group is asking people to remain on tracks and pathways and to keep out of quarantined or Dieback areas, both in local reserves and parks and also when recreating in bushland whilst on holiday elsewhere in the south west. In addition, plants should not be taken from bushland areas and planted in suburban back gardens.

The Dieback Working Group project "Stop Dieback – the Biological Bulldozer" is funded by the Swan Catchment Council through the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust (NHT), matched by the State Government providing in-kind contributions and Alcoa.

More information about Phytophthora can be gained by visiting [www.dwg.org.au](http://www.dwg.org.au) .

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