



NEWS RELEASE: 6 January 2026

And now we wait...

After 35 years' relentless opposition to the proposed North Stoneville urban townsite development, in the middle of an extreme Bushfire Zone, Save Perth Hills (SPH) now awaits the decision of State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) Judge, Henry Jackson.

The public hearing concluded in December with confirmation of the plan's third rejection, in five years, by WA's highest planning authority, the WA Planning Commission (WAPC) and the Shire of Mundaring.

2025 was a momentous year for SPH, taking on Australia's biggest private land developer Satterley Property Group representing North Stoneville landowner, WA's Anglican Church hierarchy, at SAT.

Against all odds, including Satterley's legal objection, Judge Jackson granted SPH historic 'intervention status' for the hearing, enabling SPH to be an official 'Party' to the hearing and bring six witnesses into Satterley's appeal. It was the first time a community group had been granted intervention under WA's Planning and Development Act 2005.

Satterley's appeal, seeking to overturn the WAPC's 2023 rejection of the plan, introduced surprise modifications including an 'on-site bushfire refuge', despite DFES evacuation advice to leave a bushfire scene as early as possible. Under cross-examination by lawyers for the WAPC, Satterley was unable to provide details on where the refuge would be built, how many people it might hold, what might happen when it reached capacity, who would manage it, who could use it, and parking arrangements.

Satterley also revealed it would split the Structure Plan into three mini stages to develop 135 lots rather than the intended 1001, pending a decision on East Link up Toodyay Road. Main Roads WA provided evidence to SAT that the proposed East Link highway was unfunded and might not start until 2036, 2041 – or ever. Satterley confirmed that North Stoneville's 60,000 trees, habitat to Endangered Black Cockatoos, would all be bulldozed to make way for 135 lots, despite no guarantees that the estate would be built to its planned entirety of 1,001, in the long-term future.

Save Perth Hills Chair, Debra Bishop, said that the highlight of the hearing for Save Perth Hills was the courageous appearance of SPH five Community witnesses.

"We thank, sincerely, our five Community witnesses, who volunteered to recount their personal and harrowing stories of bushfire evacuation trauma, on behalf of the local community, despite their experiences resulting in significant property losses and, tragically, lifelong personal losses," Debra said.

SPH Expert witness, Dr Ken Strahan, who Satterley had tried – and failed, to exclude from pre-hearing legal conferences, was instrumental in his evidence about unpredictable human behaviour during bushfire evacuation.

"Dr Strahan's long experience included working with 2021 Wooroloo bushfire victims. He described Satterley's evacuation plans, to secure evacuation of at least 3,000 proposed North Stoneville residents, while safeguarding the evacuation of surrounding residents, as 'lacking reality'," Debra said.

A decision by SAT to approve, reject, or approve the plan with modifications, is expected later this year.



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