



# Expansion of the Wellington National Park



[www.imaginegwnp.com](http://www.imaginegwnp.com)  
Facebook | [imaginegwnp](#)  
March, 2019

# Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Background	4
2. Wellington National Park boundary expansion proposed by Promote Preston	5
3. Benefits of existing and further areas to be incorporated the expansion boundaries	11
3.1 Under represented floral communities	11
3.2 Threatened species	12
3.3 Edge to Area Ratio	14
3.4 Interconnectivity	
3.5 High conservation value	15
4.0 Additional areas for consideration	17
5.0 Land use opportunities	19
5.1 Eco and cultural tourism opportunites	19
5.2 Education	23
5.3 Research	24
5.4 Community	24
5.5 Conservation	25
Appendix 1 Strategic Plan (2017)	27

We acknowledge and respect  
the Noongar community  
as the traditional custodians of  
the Preston River Valley region.

To contact us please email [promotepreston@gmail.com](mailto:promotepreston@gmail.com)

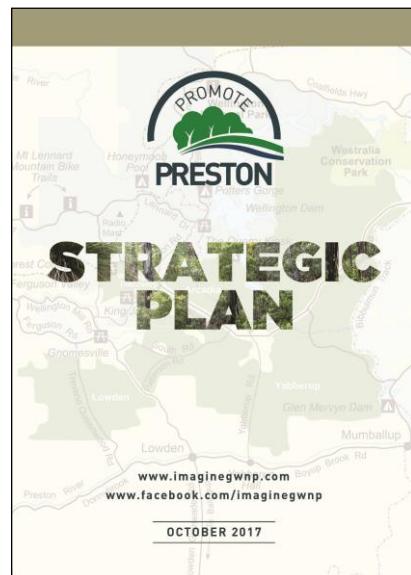
# Executive Summary

**Promote Preston** is a subgroup of the Yabberup Community Association and is comprised of community members and microbusiness owners. We welcome the expansion of the Wellington National Park as it is an integral part of our 2017 [strategic plan](#) (see appendix 1) for the Preston River Valley.

Promote Preston welcome that the expansion *focuses on the Preston River Valley*.

## *What we like*

1. The expansion highlights the ‘special’ assets of the Preston River Valley.
2. Yabberup will become the ‘southern gateway’ to an expanded Wellington National Park
3. A national park becomes a pivotal asset and enabler for future ecotourism opportunities for Preston River Valley as the host community. A *Greater Wellington National Park* will enable the Preston River Valley to become an innovative ‘biosocial - ecotourism’ zone. A place where people will want to live and visit.
4. The new boundaries provide a clear link with the Ferguson River Valley and Collie River Valley and the broader Bun-Geo tourism strategies.
5. Areas of state forest to the east and south of Wellington National Park would add not only area and habitat, but different vegetation communities to Wellington National Park. Inclusion of this southern region is important from a conservation perspective as they are catchment areas for the Preston River. They are also important habitat zones for at least nine threatened animal species. As changes to our rainfall and temperature occurs in response to climate change it will be the ‘cooler’ southern slopes which will become even more critical as protected habitat zones. The proposed expansion will connect two important water sources (ie Wellington Dam and Glen Mervyn Dam) and create a protected corridor for the movement of fauna.



## *What could be improved*

1. Minimum expansion to the Wellington National Park of **9,928 hectares** to incorporate *all* Balingup (BL), Grimwade (GR) and Catterick 1 (CC1) vegetation complex groups and allows for boundaries to be realigned to known points (roads, powerline easements, property boundaries). Addition of these zones also seeks to increase connectivity and reduce edge to area ratio to support wildlife movement and biodiversity resilience in response to climate change and tourism impacts. Ideally an expansion of **10,069 hectares** would optimise connectivity and edge to area ratios.
2. Further consideration needs to be given to selected areas which would add Lowden North, Arcadia North, Wellington Discovery Forest and Mungalup West to the expansion which will enhance connectivity even further, along with maximising tourism and education opportunities. This would bring the total expansion to **12,053 hectares**.
3. Any reclassification ensures it is a Class A reserve – with no ‘depth limit’.

## 1. Background

The expansion of the Wellington National Park is a welcomed development in honouring a pre-election pledge by the WA State Government which promotes the wealth of natural resources surrounding the Preston Valley and Ferguson Valley communities.

### VISION

Our vision is for an interactive park that enables people of all ages and abilities to access and engage with our beautiful Jarrah/Marri forests. A place where people can learn more about Noongar ways of caring for country, participate in citizen science programs or reconnect with their 'WILD' selves.

### CONNECT

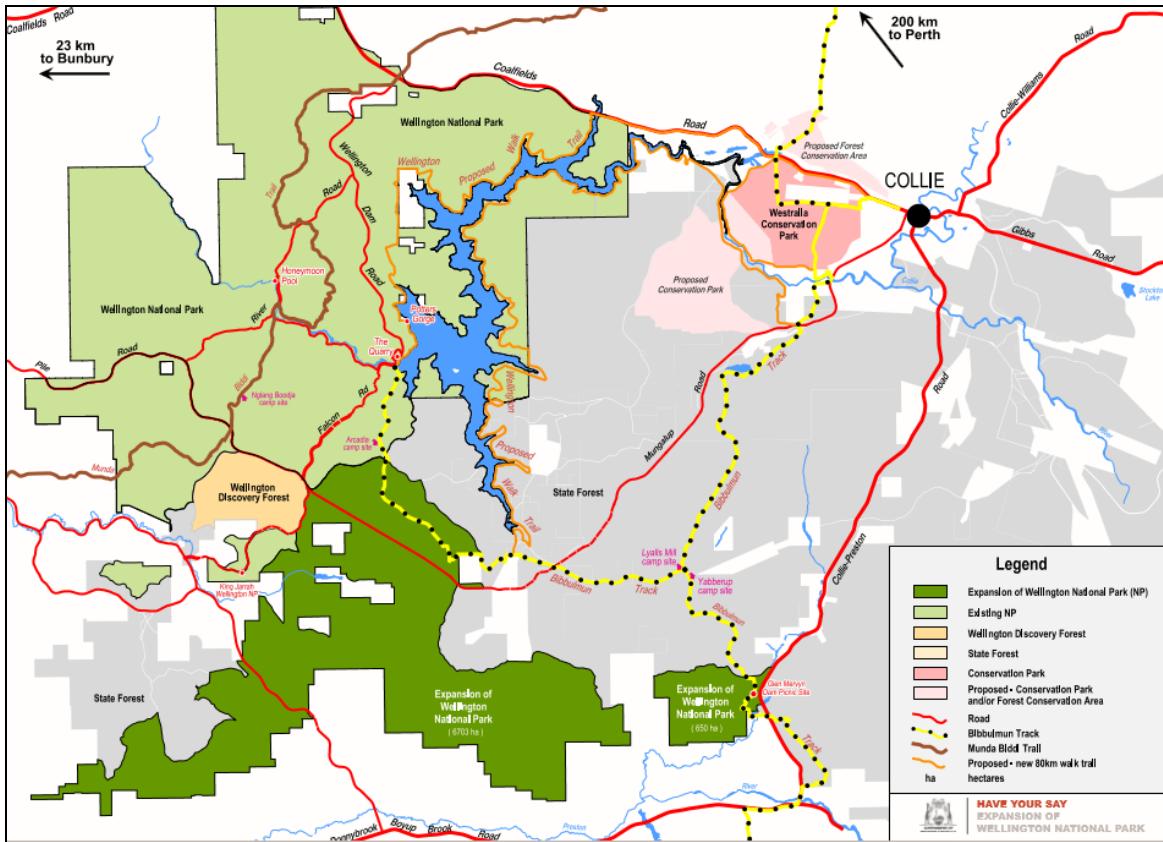
Our goals as outlined in our plan focus on:

### GOALS

The image shows a close-up of a forest floor with tall, thin grasses and some low-lying plants. Overlaid on this image are five circular icons, each containing a white icon and the word 'GOAL' below it. The icons are arranged in two rows: the top row contains three icons (red, green, purple) and the bottom row contains two icons (orange, teal). The red icon represents 'TOURISM' (two people with a map). The green icon represents 'EDUCATION' (two people with a presentation screen). The purple icon represents 'RESEARCH' (a person with a plant). The orange icon represents 'COMMUNITY' (three people). The teal icon represents 'CONSERVATION' (a hand holding a small plant).

The proposed expansion is assessed against each of these goals.

The original proposal submitted by Promote Preston was for an expansion of 17,000 hectares. The current proposal represents additional 7360 hectares or 30% expansion on the existing national park.



We support these areas being added and would like to propose additional areas also be included in the expansion.

## 2. Wellington National Park boundary expansion proposed by Promote Preston

Promote Preston seeks to increase the current Wellington National Park by a minimum addition of **10,069 hectares** (ha.) based on: under-represented vegetation communities in the current reserve system, threatened species habitat, key wildlife corridors and a more ecological sustainable area resilient to deleterious effects. This submission has extensively ground truthed the areas discussed supported by detailed desk top analysis of vegetation communities and their role as habitat for threatened animal species. The rationale behind a further boundary shift is based on the scientific importance of key ecological communities and their position in the landscape rather than defined by resource extractive road networks. Consequently, by increasing the reserve area the West Australian State Government, would also be future proofing the existing Wellington National Park from external forces detrimental to the reserves integrity.

The increase in area to form the ‘Greater’ (Wellington National Park) area will provide a crucial ecological corridor to Arcadia, Lowden and parts of Yabberup State Forest under a single conservation management plan. This proposal will increase the current Wellington National Park

from 17,000 ha. to a minimum of **27,069 ha.** supporting a more sustainable conservation core zone within the pre-existing reserve.

The following series of maps outlines the boundary proposed by Promote Preston.

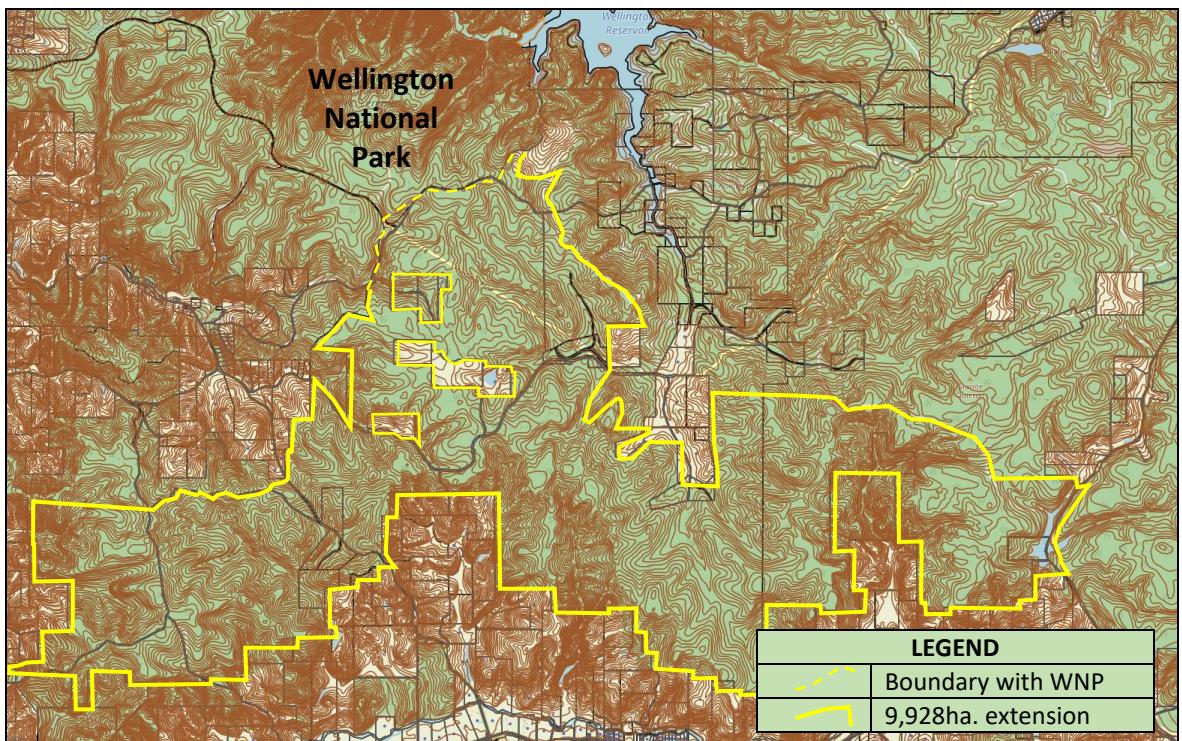
Using [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) guidelines for protected lands, the Environmental Protection Authority has set a target of 15% of pre-European extent for each ecological community to be protected in a reserve system. A number of the vegetation types in our proposal are inadequately represented in the conservation estate, with some being well below this benchmark.

Poorly represented vegetation communities total **8,840.4 ha.**

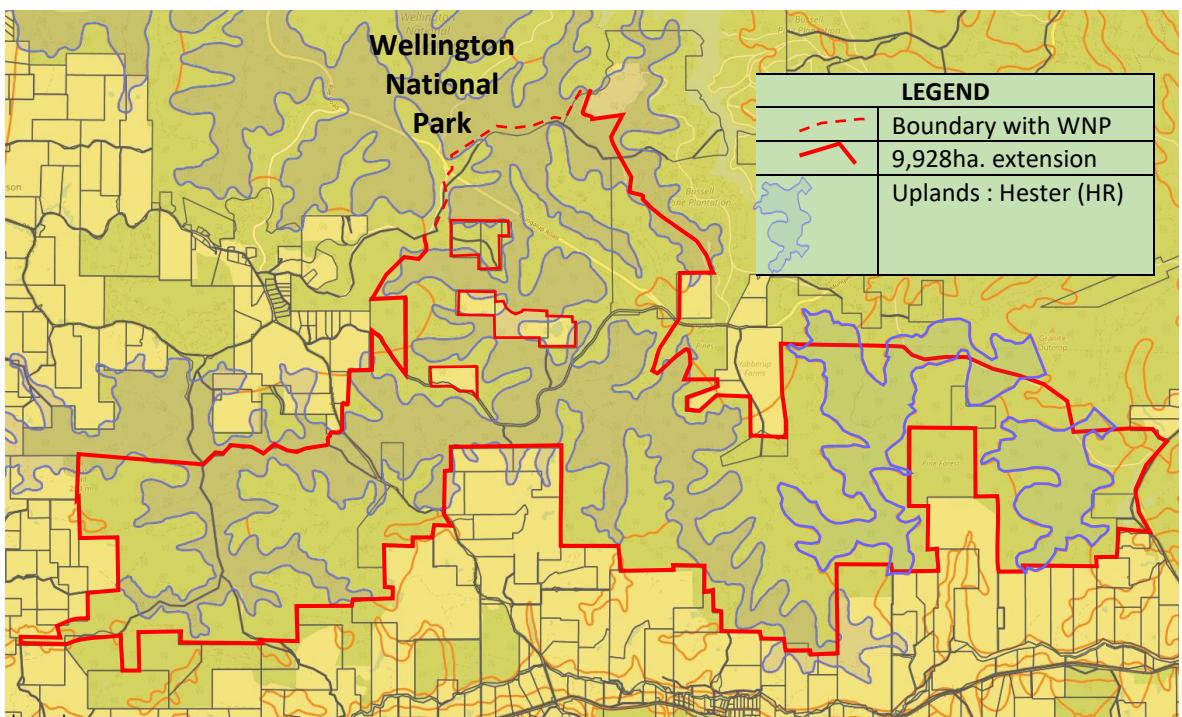
<b>Vegetation Community</b>	<b>Current Extent</b>	<b>GWNP Extent +</b>	<b>New Extent</b>	<b>Current %</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>New %</b>
<b>Balingup, BL (valleys)</b>	883.52	1,690	2,573.52	1.49	191%	4.33
<b>Grimwade, GR (valleys)</b>	1,307.17	762	2,069.17	5.93	58%	9.39
<b>Catterick 1, CC1 (valleys)</b>	1,875.17	849	2,724.17	6.85	45%	9.95
<b>Yarragil 1, Yg1 (valleys)</b>	7,914.01	1,151	9,065.01	9.87	15%	11.30
<b>Lowden, Lo (valleys)</b>	2,047.46	67	2,114.46	11.84	3%	12.23
<b>Murray 1, My1 (valleys)</b>	-	18	18	Insignificant increase (<1%)		
<b>Sub-total Valleys</b>	14,027.33	4,537	18,564.33			
<b>Hester, HR (uplands)</b>	4,825.98	4,287.4	9,113.38	14.96	89%	28.26
<b>Dwellingup 1, D1 (uplands)</b>	-	16	16	Insignificant increase (<1%)		
<b>Sub-total Uplands</b>	4,825.98	4,303.4	9,129.38			
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>18,853.31</b>	<b>8,840.4</b>	<b>27,937.71</b>			

If these boundaries are realigned to known points (roads, powerline easements, property boundaries) the total area increases to **9,928 ha.**

<b>Vegetation Community</b>	<b>Current Extent</b>	<b>GWNP Extent +</b>	<b>New Extent</b>	<b>Current %</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>New %</b>
<b>Balingup, BL (valleys)</b>	883.52	1,693	2,576.52	1.49	192%	4.33
<b>Grimwade, GR (valleys)</b>	1,307.17	762	2,069.17	5.93	58%	9.39
<b>Catterick 1, CC1 (valleys)</b>	1,875.17	867	2,742.17	6.85	46%	10.01
<b>Yarragil 1, Yg1 (valleys)</b>	7,914.01	1,218	9,132.01	9.87	15%	11.39
<b>Lowden, Lo (valleys)</b>	2,047.46	57	2,104.46	11.84	3%	12.17
<b>Murray 1, My1 (valleys)</b>	-	54	54	Insignificant increase (<1%)		
<b>Sub-total Valleys</b>	14,027.33	4,651	18,678.33			
<b>Hester, HR (uplands)</b>	4,825.98	5,261	10,086.98	14.96	109%	31.28
<b>Dwellingup 1, D1 (uplands)</b>	-	16	16	Insignificant increase (<1%)		
<b>Sub-total Uplands</b>	4,825.98	5,277	10,102.98			
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>18,853.31</b>	<b>9,928</b>	<b>28,781.31</b>			

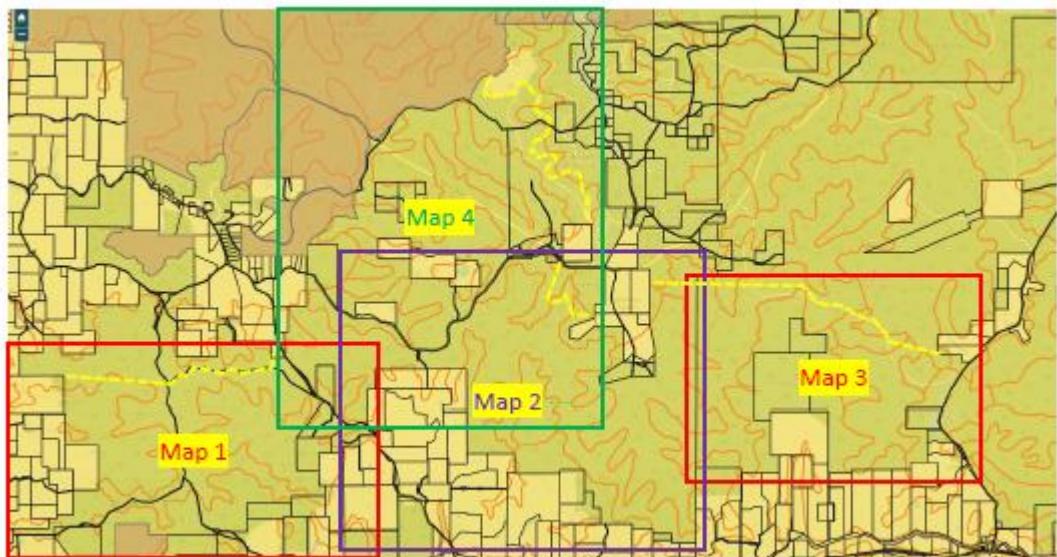


9,928 ha. extension over topography

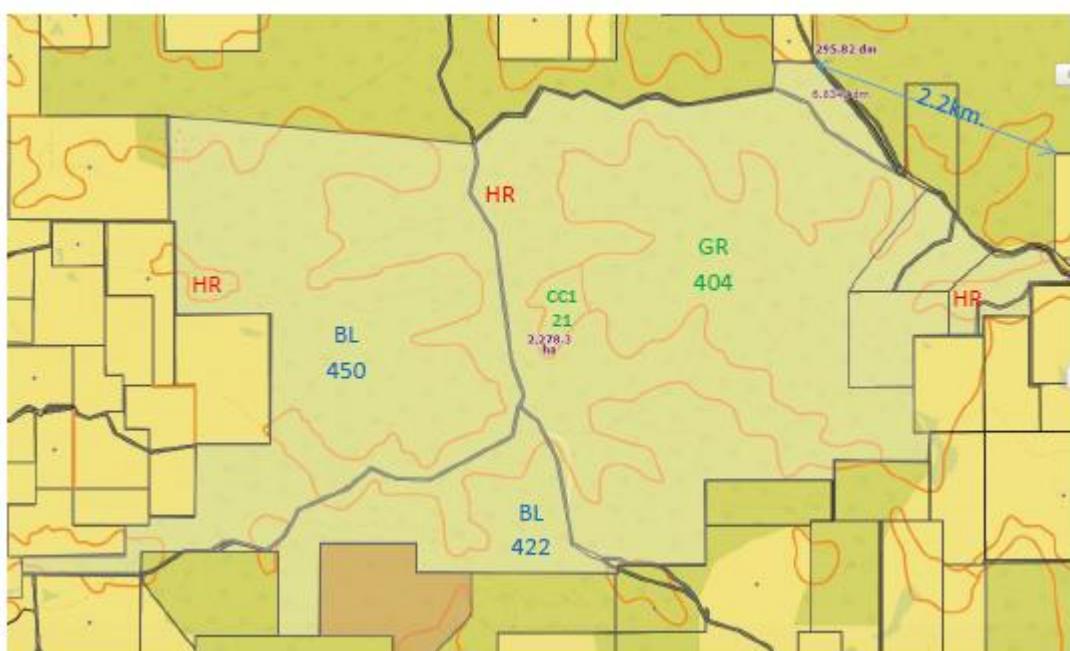


9,928 ha. extension over landforms

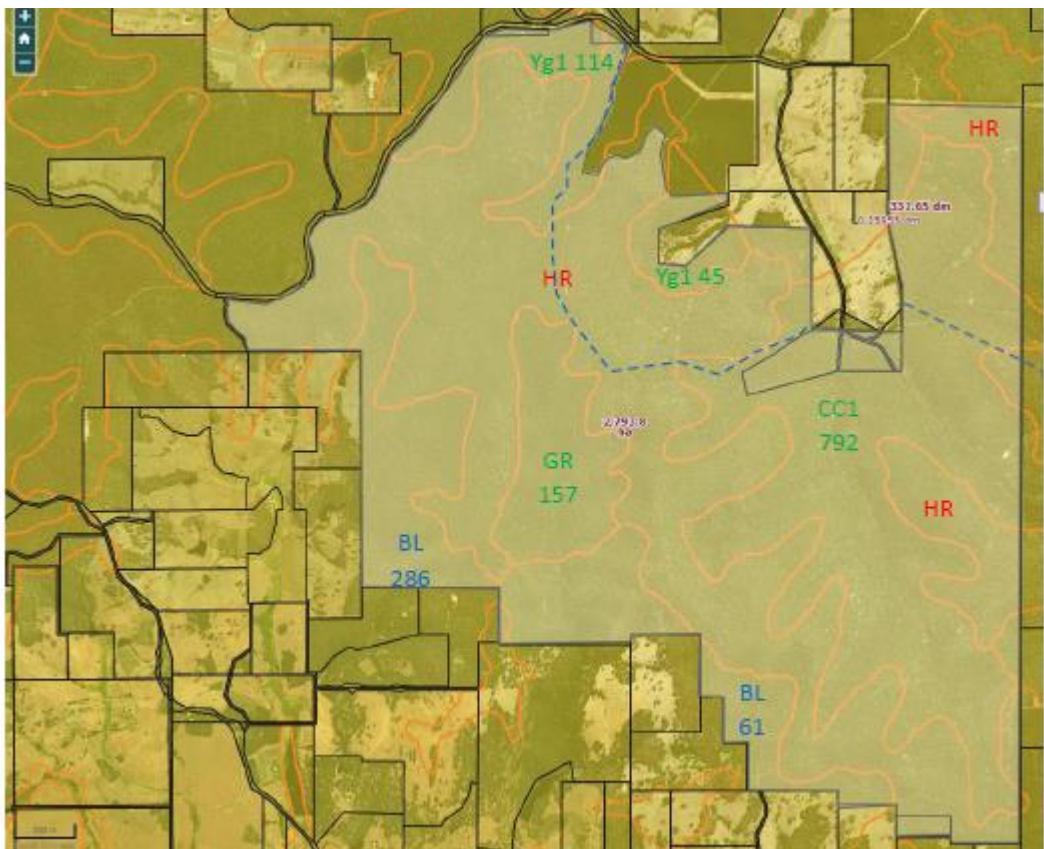
An expansion of **10,069 ha.** optimises connectivity and edge to area ratios, along with maximising tourism and education opportunities. This is represented in the maps below.



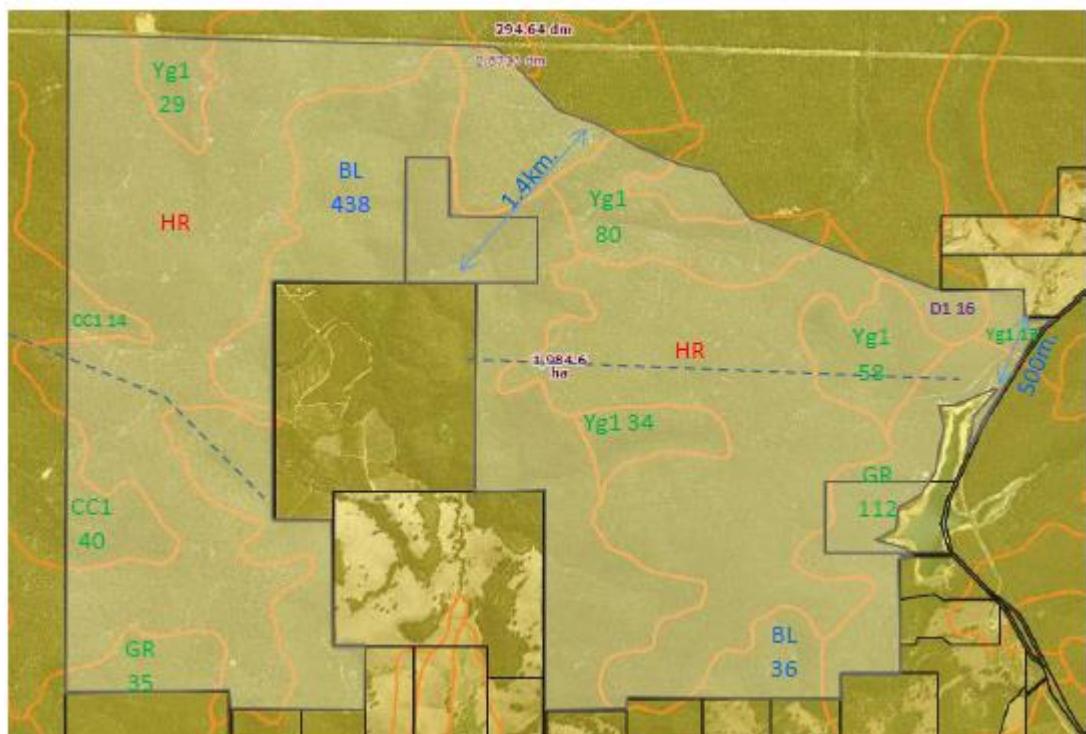
Main map showing approximate location of the maps below



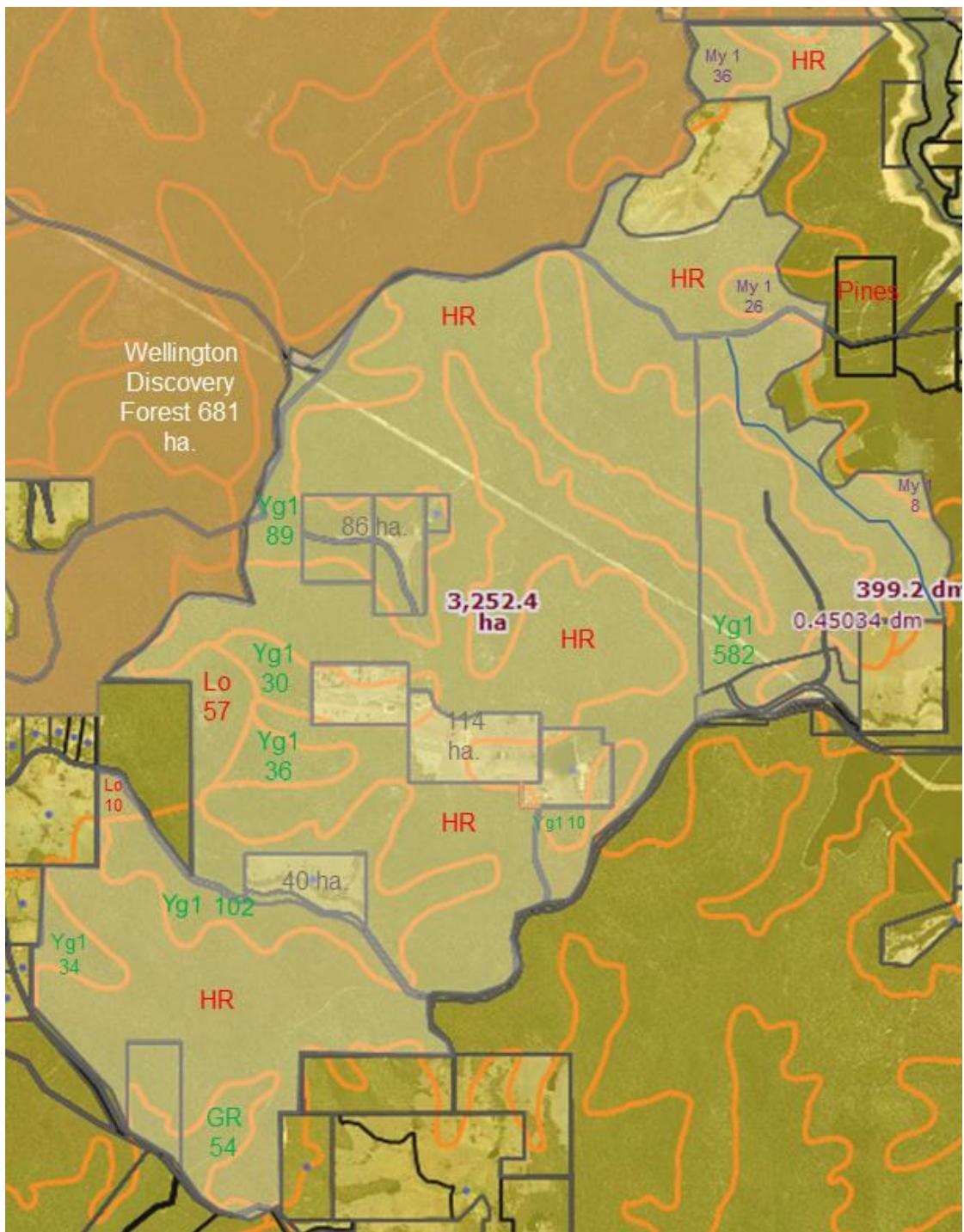
Map 1 - Lowden  $\cong$  2,278.3 ha. (BL 872 ha., GR 404 ha., CC1 21 ha., HR 981.3 ha.)



**Map 2 - Arcadia East-Yabberup West  $\cong 2,793.8$  ha.**  
 (BL - 347 ha., GR - 157 ha., CCI - 792 ha., Yg1 - 159 ha., HR - 1,338.8 ha.)



**Map 3 - Glen Mervyn Land Bridge  $\cong 1,984.6$  ha.**  
 (BL - 474 ha., GR - 147 ha., Yg1 - 214 ha., CC1 - 54 ha., HR - 1,079.6ha., D1 - 16ha.)



**Map 4 - Arcadia West  $\cong 3,012.4$  ha. (3,252.4 ha. – 240 ha. private property)**  
 (GR – 54 ha., Yg1 – 883 ha., Lo – 67 ha., My 1 – 70ha., HR – 1,938.4ha.)

	BL (ha.)	GR (ha.)	CC1 (ha.)	Yg1 (ha.)	Lo (ha.)	My1 (ha.)	D1 (ha.)	HR (ha.)	Total (ha.)
Map 1	872	404	21	0	0	0	0	981.3	2,278.3
Map 2	347	157	792	159	0	0	0	1,338.8	2,793.8
Map 3	474	147	54	214	0	0	16	1,079.6	1,984.6
Map 4	0	54	0	883	67	70	0	1,938.4	3,012.4
Total	1,693	762	867	1,256	67	70	16	5,338.1	<b>10,069.1</b>

### **3. Benefits of existing and further areas being incorporated the expansion boundaries**

The following outlines the benefits on the current proposed expansion as well as outlines why further areas have been included to increase the expansion to **10,069 ha.**

#### **3.1 Under represented floral communities**

Areas of state forest to the east and south of Wellington National Park as proposed would add not only area and habitat, but different vegetation communities to the overall park.

The following information was accessed from Vegetation Complexes – South West Forests (DPaW) in December, 2018. It highlighted:

**Balingup (BL)** Open forest of *Eucalyptus marginata* subsp. *marginata-corymbia calophylla* on slopes and woodland of *Eucalyptus rudis* on the valley floor in the humid zone. Most of the cleared farmland of the Preston Valley between Donnybrook and Noggerup, was once Balingup (BL). Only 29.4% of this vegetation community remained in 2016.

It is proposed that the extension would include approximately 1,693 ha. of Balingup (BL) (valleys) [872ha. (Lowden), 347ha. (Arcadia), 474ha. (Yabberup)]. Current extent (2016) of this vegetation associations within lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation is 883.52ha. (1.49%). This would almost treble the area of this very poorly represented vegetation association to 2,573.52ha. (**4.33%**)

**Grimwade (GR)** Tall open forest to open forest of *Corymbia calophylla-Eucalyptus marginata* subsp. *marginata* with *Eucalyptus patens* on slopes and *Eucalyptus rudis* over some *Agonis flexuosa* on lower slopes in the humid zone. 50.31% of the pre-European extent of this vegetation community remained in 2016 with just 5.93% in protected lands.

It is proposed that the expansion include approximately 762ha. of Grimwade (GR) (valleys) [404ha. (Lowden), 211ha. (Arcadia), 147ha. (Yabberup)]. Current extent (2016) of this vegetation associations within lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation is 1,307.16ha. (5.93%). This would add 55% to the area of this poorly represented vegetation association to 2,028.16ha. (**9.2%**)

**Catterick (CC1)** Open forest of *Eucalyptus marginata* subsp. *marginata-Corymbia calophylla* mixed with *Eucalyptus patens* on slopes, *Eucalyptus rudis* and *Banksia littoralis* on valley floors in the humid zone. 61.08% of the pre-European extent of this vegetation community remained in 2016 but only 6.86% was in lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation.

It is proposed that the expansion include approximately 867ha. of Catterick (CC1) (valleys) [21ha. (Lowden), 846ha. (Arcadia and Yabberup)]. Current extent (2016) of this vegetation associations within lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation is 1,875.17ha. (6.86%). This would add 43% to the area of this poorly represented vegetation association to 2,688.17ha. (**9.82%**).

**Yarragil (Yg1)** Open forest of *Eucalyptus marginata* subsp. *marginata-Corymbia calophylla* on slopes with mixtures of *Eucalyptus patens* and *Eucalyptus megacarpa* on the valley floors in humid

and subhumid zones. 81.11% of the pre-European extent of this vegetation community remained in 2016 but only 9.87% remained in lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation.

1,256 ha. of Yarragil (Yg1) (valleys). Current extent (2016) of this vegetation associations within lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation is 7,914.01ha. (9.87%).

5,228.1 ha. of Hester (HR) (uplands). Current extent (2016) of this vegetation associations within lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation is 4,825.98ha. (14.96%).

Minor areas of Lowden (Lo) (57ha.), Murray (My1) (54ha.) and Dwellingup (D1) (16ha.)

**Breakdown of 10,069.1 ha. expansion - Valleys 4,715 ha. - Uplands 5,354.1 ha.**



### 3.2 Threatened species

Addition of Balingup (BL), Grimwade (GR) and Catterick1 (CC1) vegetation complex groups are currently underrepresented in lands Protected (IUCN I-IV) for Conservation and are vital habitat zones for the following threatened and endangered species (as recorded on [NatureMap](#) and by local citizen scientists).



*Setonix brachyurus* (Quokka) are to be found in small numbers in the area, favouring vegetation along watercourses where the dense vegetation provides additional protection from introduced predators. Yarragil (Yg1) is the known favoured vegetation community of this species.

*Pseudocheirus occidentalis* (Western Ringtail Possum) are frequently recorded on private properties adjoining the southern edges of the proposed extension to the Wellington National Park where they appear to favour Balingup (BL) and Grimwade (GR) vegetation communities. Both these vegetation communities support small areas of *Agonis flexuosa* (Peppermint) favoured by WRP on the coastal plain. Western ringtail possums are under threat on the coastal plain from urban expansion and an extended Wellington National Park could provide protection for this species, particularly in the valleys that slope south.



*Dasyurus geoffroii* (Chuditch) are occasionally seen crossing roads or as road kills on Preston Road near Glen Mervyn Dam and intersection of Ferguson Road and Pugsley Road. Chuditch are not as habitat specific as other threatened species and would roam Wellington National Park and surrounding forested lands.

*Calyptorhynchus banksii naso* (Forest Red-tailed Black-cockatoo) are widespread in the area. They are the bird species most frequently heard in the forest areas, apart from Kookaburra (an introduced species). Usually seen in pairs or small family groups. They feed on Marri and on borers in Jarrah, often debarking trees in the process. They breed in the area and fledgling young are often observed with parents.



*Calyptorhynchus baudinii* (Baudin's White-tailed Black-cockatoo) are common in the area. They feed on Marri, Bull Banksia, Snottygobble and Pines and nest in the area.

*Calyptorhynchus latirostris* (Carnaby's White-tailed Black-cockatoo) are seen in flocks with Baudin's mainly during the non-nesting season. They feed on the same plant species as Baudin's White-tailed Black-cockatoo. In recent years they appear to have taught the Baudin's to eat *Erodium* sp. in paddocks, a habit they have learnt in the wheatbelt



*Phascogale tapoatafa* subsp. *wambenger* (Brush-tailed Phascogale) are relatively common in the area, even occasionally seen around dwellings near the forest.

*Notamacropus irma* (Western Brush Wallaby) are common in the area and are frequently seen crossing roads or as road kills. They are not habitat specific but appear to avoid areas that have been recently burnt.



*Isoodon fusciventer* (Quenda) are frequently recorded on private properties adjoining the southern edges of the proposed extension to the Wellington National Park where they appear to favour denser areas of vegetation that provide them with additional protection from introduced predators. Areas of rushes and sedges, *Darwinia citriodora* and grasstrees with long skirts are favoured habitat.

Note. Images used in this section sourced from the internet.

### 3.3 Edge to Area Ratio

The ideal shape of a national park is a circle. A circle has a minimal edge to area ratio thus mitigating against disturbing influences such as feral weeds and animals on its perimeter. The core within the circle is buffered from these edge effects. However, the geometry of a national park in the real world is not governed by the natural amenity that the community deem are of intrinsic

value but by free hold tenure, road networks, state utilities (power, communication and water) and resource extraction. Consequently, the proposed boundary of the Wellington National Park is likened to ‘Swiss cheese’ with islands of private property ownership, Mungulup Road et.al. the Muja – Bunbury transmission line and significant timber extraction coupes. These land use factors have dictated the parks shape and compounded the edge effects with a long perimeter to area ratio, thus degrading the core of the national park. In order for the Wellington National to be a sustainable ecological community, it is imperative that key tracts of land which connect disparate vegetation communities are included in the proposal to decrease the boundary length whilst increasing the reserve area.

### 3.4 Interconnectivity

Wildlife corridors are an integral part of any sustainable vegetation community allowing the exchange of DNA to occur within and to a lesser extent between species. Isolated vegetative islands lead to poor genetic diversity and limited system recovery. Intensive land use such as mechanised timber extraction reduces biodiversity and places an added stress on the ecosystems (ie increased exposure to solar radiation, loss of habitat). In order to encourage hybrid vigour, key ‘squeeze’ points bordering the proposed boundaries need to be addressed by the inclusion of the following areas:

**Glen Mervyn Land Bridge** The inclusion of Glen Mervyn being on the extreme eastern edge of the proposed Wellington National Park is separated from the rest of the southern reserve. The sustainability of this pocket is highly dependent on the interconnectivity with the eastern edge of Yabberup Forest. A proposed corridor of some **1984.6 ha.** bridges this gap (see Map 3 on page 9). Whilst this land bridge has historically experienced intensive timber extraction, the conservation value is in its geographical position in the landscape rather than its biodiversity (see photo to right). Over time it is hoped this area would recover to some semblance of ecological functionality.



### 3.5 High Conservation Value

The term high conservation value is defined here as: an interconnecting link (discussed above), forest that has had relatively minimal disturbance from past land use history and a vegetation system that is under represented in the reserve system or harbours suitable habitat for threatened species. The following areas are high conservation areas worthy of inclusion.

#### Arcadia East

The area (**262 ha.** Map 2 on page 9) to the east of Arcadia has large stands of *E. patens* (Swan River Blackbutt) with significant nesting hollows adjoining the riparian zones that drain into Bussel Brook (see photo below left). These winter wet areas are floristically diverse, lacking a mid-storey (see middle photo below) and contain pockets of old growth forest (see photo below on right).



Whilst the pockets of old growth consisting of **10 ha.** are small in area, a significant tract of undisturbed forest need to be retained for its core preservation.

This area has been the focus for many guided walks particularly those interested in bird life with a wealth of nesting hollows and dense riparian vegetation. Promote Preston has used this area to conduct its springtime walk programme with walks drawing people from diverse interest groups. Therefore, Arcadia East serves a critical ecological function in the landscape whilst providing a high priority key recreational ground for people to interact with the natural environment.



### **Lowden South**

(**2041.5 ha.** as per map 1 on page 8)

Situated on the north west edge of the current proposal, this block is characterised by a step escarpment draining into the Preston river with deep gullies and slabs of granite shelving (see below).



These thin and depauperate soils are home to highly specialised plant and animal communities particularly reptiles. Again *E. patens* are significantly featured in the riparian zones with *Corymbia calophylla* (Marri) on the valley shoulder. Whilst, Marri is quite ubiquitous in the Wellington National Park expansion proposal, the species is singled out here as Lowden South escaped the Marri woodchip prescription in the 1990's. Consequently, significant bole diameter trunks can be found in significant numbers making the mid-elevation landscape relatively intact. That said, the ridge lines we have personally scoped on numerous walks have been subjected to a history of Jarrah extraction. Lowden South sits within the 1200mm isohyet and may have a reasonable chance at recovering from extractive histories, particularly in a drying climate.

## 4.0 Additional areas for consideration

The following areas are also proposed for consideration as they will further enhance the interconnectivity and maximise tourism, recreation, education and tourism opportunities. This would bring the total proposed expansion to **12,053 ha.**

### Arcadia North

The expansion boundaries has omitted the northern tip of Arcadia (**335 ha.**) which connects the existing Wellington National Park to the north with the proposed area to the south (see photos to the right and map below).

The current Wellington National Park adjoining the main southern water body of the Wellington Dam is surrounded on three sides by water with no land reserve corridor to the south.



This geographical isolation is further compounded by an historic CSIRO piezometer salinity monitoring area (see photo to left) which is cleared paddock that currently agists sheep. The provision to include Arcadia north would alleviate a serious squeeze point for the traffic of wildlife commuting from a place of refuge with water to vegetation communities to the south.

## Wellington Discovery Forest

Sandwiched between the upper and lower Ferguson Road lies an isolated remnant consisting of the Lowden vegetation complex. This vegetation community is within the existing Wellington National Park management plan and is surrounded by a thin ribbon of pines to the south and private land to the north with a width no greater than a few kilometres to existing state forest. The Lowden complex has limited connection to the current reserve system. The future biodiversity of this remnant is reliant on its interconnectivity with other substantial tracts of forest ecosystems. Therefore, it is proposed that the Wellington Discovery Forest (**681ha.**) be included in the Greater Wellington National Park as it is the closest conduit to support the diversity of the isolated Lowden Complex.



Furthermore, the harvest history has seen only two rotations prior to the 1960's (DPAW, 2017) with Jarrah being selectively extracted. The geographical elevation and steep terrain may in part reflect why it escaped modern heavy machinery with large stands of both Jarrah and Marri and a relatively intact understorey. The area may be geographically categorised as having an elevated ridge with deeply incised valleys draining into the upper Ferguson catchment.

## Mungulup West

A real opportunity exists to include areas outside the existing proposal for current and future tourism management.

Mungulup West lies east of the Southern branch of the Wellington reservoir and is the only pocket of native forest to the south east abutting the water's edge (see photo to right).



DPAW struggle to manage 'wild camping' in this region as the majority of the landscape is soft wood plantation and outside their purview. However, the inclusion of Mungulup West (**minimum 10 ha.**) (see photo to right) gives license for rangers to periodically patrol this foreshore. Paul, a long term itinerate camper of some 14 years on the reservoir said "you get a lot of F### W### out here especially during the school hol's and they leave their S### behind" (see photo below).



Paul seasonally migrates from the water line into the pines "when it gets crowded" and is on 'security detail' on behalf of plantation contractors who leave their equipment with his dogs. Similarly, he offers rubbish collection on the foreshore after the punters have left offering a valuable service for Parks and Wildlife with whom he has a good relationship. Paul would like to see more "safari suits" checking in on anti-social behaviour.

## **Lowden North**

An opportunity arises in this process to include Lowden North (938 ha.) which connects the Lowden Vegetation Complex (mentioned previously) with the proposed Southern end of the national park. The proposed area could be as little as a ribbon adjoining Queenwood Road. Visual resourcing would satiate conservation objects of interconnectivity whilst maintaining a facade for a forest tourist drive (see photo to right).

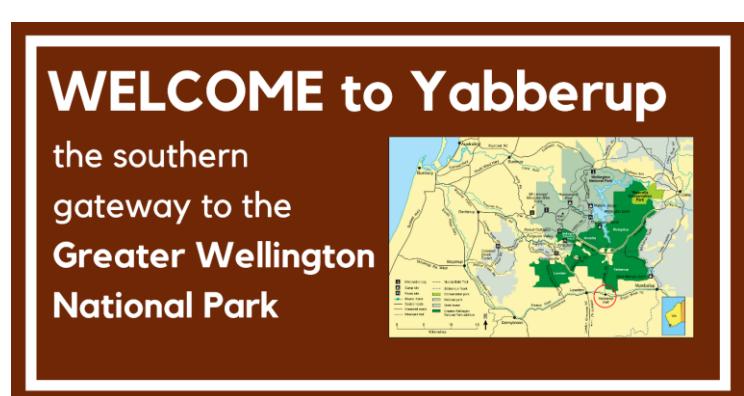


## **5. Land Use opportunities**

The following outlines the land use opportunities this expansion provides for the Preston River Valley in line with our strategic plan (see appendix 1). Each opportunity is prioritised in terms of 'readiness', current opportunities and / or minimal financial investment required.

### **5.1 Eco and cultural tourism**

The expanded Wellington National Park will enable the integration of the scenic Preston Valley Catchment into a complimentary tourist precinct where visitors can experience local produce, boutique wines, walk trails, mountain bike tracks, virgin jarrah forests, unique flora, endemic wildlife, artisans, eco stays and more. It is envisioned that this additional forest will decrease pressure from an over prescribed national park due to regional expanding popularity.



As a community group we have developed strong partnerships with key leaders over the past three years. We have met with community, local government, tourism bodies, state government department and ministers along the way. We look to draw/build on these to implement the strategic plan.

We support cultural tourism to promote the Noongar heritage of the region along with disability tourism:

- Disability tourism and ensuring all people based land use provides as a minimum universal access for all.
- Ecotourism to promote the Wellington region as an eco and adventure tourism hub in collaboration with Ferguson Valley and Collie River Valley strategies.
- Support Noongar tourism operators to access this area.



## **Current tourism statistics**

- Ecotourism is a large, and growing sector
- International tourist seek nature based experiences
- ‘Day trips’ are on the rise for WA residents. Wellington National Park is well placed for this as less than 2 hours from Perth and 45 minutes from Bunbury
- Aboriginal tourism in Western Australia continues to be of great interest to visitors (at 78% in 2016-17) and has grown in enthusiasm over the past five years ([Tourism WA, 2017](#))
- Disability tourism is a bigger market than the Chinese tourism market. Estimated at 10.88 million dollars per annum (Disability Tourism forum, Bunbury 2018)

It is recognised that some national parks should be set aside for conservation with minimal human impact allowed. However, whilst some highly sensitive areas will need to be 'lock out/exclusion' areas to the general public, Wellington National Park, in general, should be a national park primarily for people - recreation, tourism and education. A park that helps build positive community connections and relationships with our bush environments and wildlife. We would encourage:

- Adoption of a Noongar name and joint management with the local Noongar community
- Support cultural tourism celebrating Noongar culture
- Universal access providing a park for ‘people of all abilities’
- Citizen Science opportunities including monitoring of wildlife and supporting predator free enclosure for threatened and endangered species
- Rehabilitation projects (eg unused roads, clearings, weed management)
- Ecotourism that is responsible and sustainable

We are keen to partner with other tourism leaders (eg [Kings Park](#) with a focus on WA flora; [Rottnest Island](#) and our association with quokkas; [Dolphin Discovery Centre](#) and be the eastern end of trails acknowledging the six Noongar seasons)) and peak community bodies such as the [Bushwalking WA](#) who have already started to help us map a potential new walking route that will link Yabberup with the existing Wellington National Park Arcadia walk and with the [Bibbulmun track](#).

The following are our key priorities:

**Priority 1: Development of campgrounds with ablution blocks**



**Universal access camping ground at Glen Mervyn dam.** Consideration of having part of the camping area to allow for dogs or at a minimum, a dog exercise area in adjacent state park. This campground could provide a commercial venture and campground hosts to assist with campground management at peak times.

Image sourced from internet.

**Lovers Tree campground** and Lowden bushwalk (see pictures below) which would utilise a cleared old home site and is very accessible to Ferguson Valley Road.



### **Stella Brook campground**

This could be a 'pop up' campground linked to citizen science research associated with a sanctuary for threatened species.



**Priority 2: Southern gateway statement** at Yabberup road. Ideally with the support of the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire Council in front of Yabberup Hall (see picture on right). An art installation incorporating interpretative information would be welcomed.



**Priority 3: Nature play ground to create a ‘play trail’ between Gnomesville and Donnybrook playground. Potential sites include:**

- Near Yabberup Hall
- Glen Mervyn dam
- Lovers tree campground



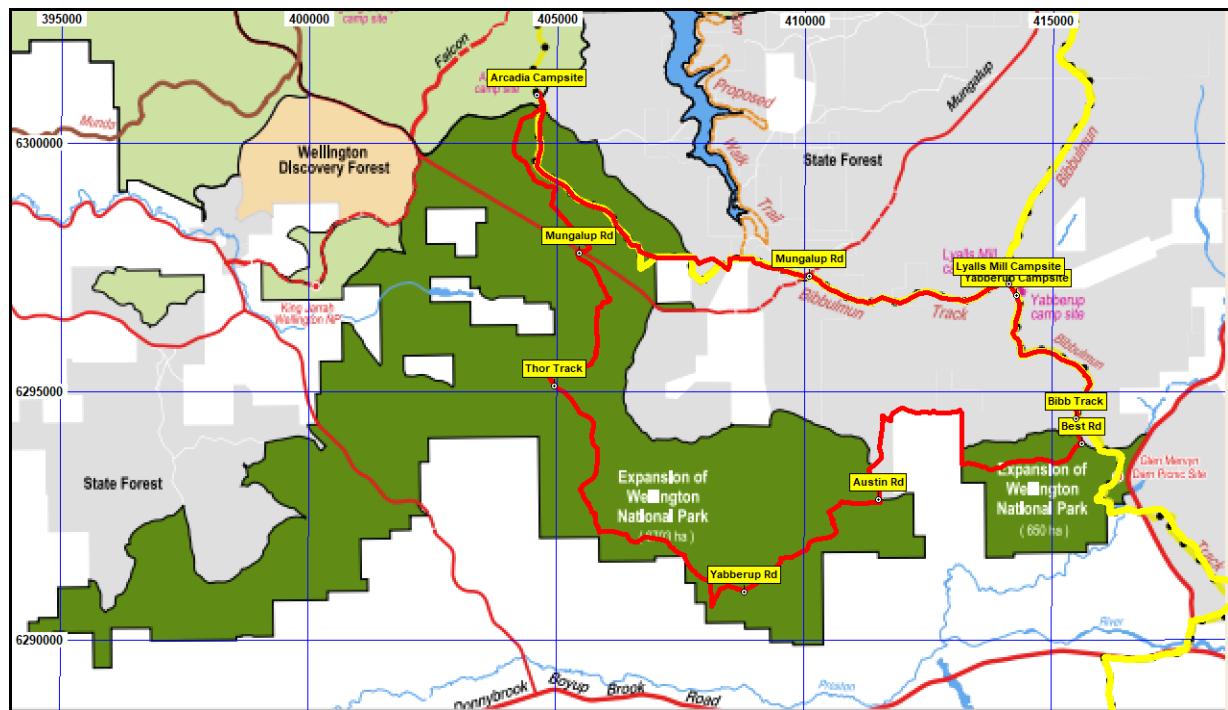
Example of Nature Play taken from Kings Park nature play area. This could be a sponsored activity as it is for Kings Park.

#### **Priority 4: Trails**

1. Thor multiple use trail (cycling, walking).



2. Circular walking trek from the existing Wellington National Park through Arcadia (Thor track) to Yabberup then east to Glen Mervyn dam to the Bibbulmun trek in partnership with [Bushwalking WA](#).



3. Circular walking trek from Lovers Tree campground up to Lowden ridge and back again.
4. Noongar story line from Lovers Tree to Honeymoon pool (with the potential to extend to Burekup).
5. Drive trail connecting Bunbury, Donnybrook, Mumballup, Collie and Ferguson Valley.

Concurrent partnership priorities:

1. Seek opportunities to partner with Ferguson River Valley and Collie River Valley tourism bodies. This could be an iconic event (eg 'Greater Welly Games') and/or link with existing trails (eg hiking and cycling, scenic tours, food etc).
2. Link with the [Bun-Geo Tourism strategy](#) and [Dolphin Discovery Centre](#) in particular (eg iconic beach-bush series).

## 5.2 Education

Wellington Discovery Forest is currently an education - research zone. The infrastructure in this area is not currently being fully utilised. It presents the best opportunity to develop a Noongar cultural centre and to conduct nature based 'wild' experiences and other education.

**Priority 1:** Noongar name for Wellington National Park (eg Wilman National Park)

**Priority 2:** Noongar education program utilising the Wellington Discovery Forest focusing on the Noongar seasons. Self guided and interactive activities could easily be incorporated into a smart phone App people can download.

**Priority 3:** Seek opportunities to partner with students studying *Environmental Management and Conservation Biology* at *Edith Cowan University*, Bunbury campus.

**Priority 4:** Establishment of education program about the jarrah/marri biodiversity ecosystem and nature based activities (eg wild movement (see picture on right) and bush crafts). A face-to-face program could operate from the Wellington Discovery Forest. Online program could also be developed. A key focus would be on community participation. Our best opportunity is to focus on habitats for endangered species (link to citizen science program below).



Wild Movement at the Wellington Discovery Forest - Spring program, 2017

## 5.3 Research

Research is vital in understanding more about biodiversity and how our landscapes are being impacted upon by climate change and human impacts. We will be seeking to actively support people to be part of research programs. This is both cost effective but also means people have a ‘lived’ experience with our Jarrah/Marri bush environments.



### Priority 1: Citizen Science program

Expand camera monitoring into additional areas. This would involve further developing relationships with South West Catchment Council, DBCA and Landcare to support flora and fauna citizen science programs. There would be the potential to link to the camera monitoring program for threatened and endangered species mentioned previously.

The citizen science programs conducted by Promote Preston as part of our Spring program (see picture above) has identified over 150 flora species in the southern forest areas of Arcadia and Yabberup which are currently not officially registered with DBCA and their [NatureMap](#) records. Promote Preston is keen to keep mapping local flora and add to NatureMap.

**Priority 2: Predator free enclosure for threatened and endangered species.** An ideal focus could be the endangered species listed above with the opportunity to focus on mainland quokka's. This provides an added opportunity to gain leverage from tourism interest in quokkas associated with Rottnest Island.

**Priority 3: Mapping country project** to better understand Noongar custodianship of the Wellington district. This would help inform cultural education programs.

## 5.4 Community

Preston River Valley has a strong and resilient community who has a positive ‘can do’ approach.

This community has formed Promote Preston to ensure a vibrant and prosperous future for ourselves and our children. The ‘*Imagine Greater Wellington National Park*’ campaign has galvanised many in our community who wish to support an interactive bio-social zone where we ‘Care for Country’ and would like to actively support the park moving forward.

**Priority 1: Promote Preston to join ‘friends of Wellington National Park’**

**Priority 2:** Invite property owners in area to join [Land for Wildlife program](#), in particular the landowners of properties adjoining the national park.



Image sourced from internet

**Priority 3:** Support local people to monitor and report illegal activities (eg pig hunting, dumping of rubbish).

**Priority 4:** Establish a natural burial and ceremony site incorporating an ephemeral art trail. Potential locations include Yabberup or Lowden.

## 5.5 Conservation

The proposed expansion will connect two important water sources (ie Wellington Dam and Glen Mervyn Dam) and create a protected corridor for the movement of fauna especially threatened species. It will greatly enhance the health of the Preston River Valley as the expansion areas are key catchment areas.

*It is recognised that there are some sensitive areas and important habitat areas for threatened species where human interaction should be restricted. These will need to be identified in consultation with DBCA. It is from these area(s) the predator free sanctuary would be selected.*

**Priority 1:** Addition of all Balingup (BL), Grimwade (GR) and Catterick 1 (CC1) vegetation complex groups which are currently underrepresented in IUCN I-IV and are vital habitat zones for threatened and endangered species plus areas outlined in section 2.1.

This expansion as outlined previously seeks to increase connectivity and reduce edge to area ratio to support wildlife movement and biodiversity resilience in response to climate change.

**Priority 2:** Predator free enclosure for threatened and endangered species as outlined previously.

### Priority 3: Rehabilitation projects

Initial focus on entry points, primary travel corridors and camping spots in expanded areas (eg Yabberup Rd, Feruson Rd, Queenwood-Travena Rd, Best Rd, Mungalup Rd), unused roads and landings. In time this program could potentially extend to denuded land adjacent to the national park.



Promote Preston Spring Program, 2018

## Appendix 1

Promote Preston Strategic Plan (2017)



**This strategic plan looks ahead 10 years and seeks to create a sustainable ecotourism industry in the Preston River Valley.**

It is based on 18 months of community and key stakeholder consultations and has been prepared by Promote Preston with assistance from David Kerr - Business Management & Training Services P/L. Graphic design was provided by Scott West.

**We acknowledge and respect the Noongar community as the traditional custodians of the Preston River Valley region.**



Promote Preston is a subcommittee of the Yabberup Community Association and was formed for the purpose of creating a viable economic and social future for the Preston River Valley. We recognise that we need to diversify our local economy in the face of a decline in traditional job opportunities and an aging local population. Our natural resources are what draw people to live in this valley and have been recognised as our most valuable asset for creating a platform for future jobs and social diversity.

The current Wellington National Park was established in 2004. Visitation continues to grow and this park is currently operating at capacity during peak times. Ferguson Valley has demonstrated the economic benefit of being a host community to a national park.

Establishing Yabberup as the southern and eastern gateway to an expanded national park will provide the confidence and security of tenure needed for investment by micro businesses. Extensive community and stakeholder consultations conducted to date have identified a number of viable opportunities. The announcement by the WA Government to support an expanded Wellington National Park for tourism and recreation opportunities has been enthusiastically received. It creates a tenable future for our valley. Promote Preston has undertaken two rounds of engagement with key local, state and industry stakeholders.

---

**"The WA government has commissioned the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to expand the Wellington National Park with the view of enhancing tourism and recreation options in the area."**

2017-2018 WA State Budget, Vol 1, p 198.

---

This document builds on our proposal for a Greater Wellington National Park (December, 2016) which can be accessed from [www.imaginegwnp.com/plan](http://www.imaginegwnp.com/plan). This document sets out the strategic intent for Promote Preston in general and the Greater Wellington Park in particular. It will be enhanced by an implementation plan which will be enacted once a Greater Wellington National Park has been legislated.

# VISION

**To establish a Greater Wellington National Park as a place where people can actively engage with nature.**



## Mission

- To lobby for the establishment of a Greater Wellington National Park (GWNP) including the forest areas of Arcadia, Mungallup, Yabberup, Lowden and the Wellington Discovery Forest.
- To promote ecotourism concepts in the region.
- To identify and encourage sustainable small and micro business opportunities consistent with the purpose and intent of the GWNP.
- Develop a platform for local job opportunities.
- To provide a mechanism for community input and engagement in the future of the region and in particular the natural assets of the region.
- To educate the community in relation to the history, features and value of the GWNP.
- To engage with the government sector, other stakeholders and the community regarding the future of the GWNP.
- To facilitate the creation of other tourism/recreation infrastructure in the Preston River Valley (eg Donnybrook to Boyup Brook Rail Trail).

## Values

### Our core values relate to:

- Respect for traditional and contemporary Noongar concepts of 'Caring for Country'
- Equitable access for all
- Economic viability for the Preston River Valley
- Diversification and sustainability
- Conservation and biodiversity preservation
- Community engagement
- Ecotourism
- Partnerships
- Capacity building
- Ethical behaviour

**A range of factors are working to enable a Greater Wellington National Park and subsequent sustainable job creation.**

**A number of barriers and challenges have also been identified.**

## Enablers

- New job opportunities
- Most of Acadia forest not logged since the 1930's
- Critical mass of proposed park as a viable conservation zone
- Biodiversity hotspot – focus and uniqueness
- Bibbulmun and Munda Biddi tracks
- Biodiversity of region
- Current and potential camping options
- Contiguous forest
- Improving water quality
- Wildlife corridors
- Cultural heritage
- Ferguson Valley Art Trail, Gnomesville and existing Wellington National Park as tourism assets and launching points
- Road access
- Emerging micro businesses flagged by community consultation pending a GWNP
- Emerging wine and food tourism in the region
- Bunbury Geographe brand
- Existing Education Centre – Wellington Discovery Forest
- Locally based resources – Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- Positive relationships established with community and tourism networks
- Government support
- Current pressures on existing Wellington National Park
- New tourism product for international tourists
- Reimagine Collie underway
- Children's play infrastructure at Gnomesville and Donnybrook
- Success of Promote Preston events
- Scenic drives
- Transport links and proximity to Perth
- Enthusiasm for accessibility based nature programs (eg hand cycling)
- Regeneration and landcare programs
- Voluntourism as a new product
- Cultural tourism
- Growth in the Eco Tourism industry
- State focus on nature based tourism
- Optimising the use of a valuable natural resource
- Cooperative marketing
- Forest carbon capture recognition
- Converting lower quality natural assets (damaged areas) into higher yielding tourism assets (camping grounds, etc.)
- Partnerships (eg Dolphin Discovery Centre in Bunbury and Kings Park in Perth)
- Showcase Aboriginal (Noongar) culture
- Well situated - close to Bunbury (day visitors) and Perth (overnight visitors)
- Potential joint management between community, Noongar community and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- Community interest in creating a Foundation to support fundraising and volunteer programs
- Wellington Management Plan is due to be revised
- WA Government Aboriginal ranger program
- Diverse and sustainable work opportunities
- Bunbury population is projected to be 300,000 by 2050
- Tourist corridors
- Focus on new tourism markets – international tourists, disability tourism
- Economic sustainability for Preston River Valley
- Proximity to cruise ship terminal in Bunbury

## Barriers

- Scheduled logging of key resource areas
- Perceived value of natural resources
- Public health impact of unofficial camping (eg Glen Mervyn Dam)
- Infrastructure improvements required
- Road quality in some areas
- Random entry and damage to sensitive areas
- Poor signage
- Forest industry access to area over past 100+ years
- Competing use issues
- Lock it up mentality
- Fire
- Extractive industries
- Potential conflicting resource agendas
- Apathy



## Key attractors

- Jarrah/marri forest flora and fauna
- Noongar culture
- Potential for disability friendly engagement with nature
- Close to Bunbury and Perth

# GOALS



- Promote tourism and ecotourism in particular as an enabler for regional community sustainability.
- Act as a catalyst for emerging and sustainable tourism product.
- Promote cultural tourism, disability tourism and adventure tourism as key opportunities.
- Liaise with agencies to embed tourism opportunities and input in planning process for a Greater Wellington National Park.
- Consult and engage with tourism operators in preparing their business concepts to encourage the adoption of ecotourism principles.
- Identify the implications of proposed development in the region on the GWNP.
- Educate children and people of all ages on the value of national parks and the indigenous and settler history and unique qualities of the GWNP in particular.
- Actively engage with educational institutions across the region, state and nation.
- Liaise with stakeholders on the future operations education centre at the Wellington Discovery Forest. Upgrade the education and interpretative opportunities provided to incorporate an expanded GWNP.
- Develop online education opportunities related to the GWNP.
- Undertake research programs within the Greater Wellington National Park.
- Establish research partnerships with key agencies including Kings Park, Perth Zoo, University sector and private businesses.
- Encourage Citizen Science projects relating to the GWNP.
- Develop a predator free enclosure for threatened and critically endangered species.



- Establish a national park that actively encourages people to engage with nature.
- Foster capacity / resilience building within our community.
- Create a vibrant community where it is possible for people to work, play and stay locally.
- Encourage all commercial development within the GWNP area to meet national minimum standards to preserve the values of the Park. All developments should follow *"Best Practice Guidelines for Eco-Opportunities in Protected and Natural Areas"* TRC (2012)
- Provide a local community reference group for government consultation regarding development and protection of the natural assets of the region.
- Provide options to encourage engagement of people of all ages.
- Champion accessibility.
- Acknowledge and respect the Noongar history and custodianship of this area.
- Advocate for Aboriginal renaming of the (Greater) Wellington National Park and for a Noongar name.
- Promote conservation as a worthwhile investment in the community.
- Encourage governments to recognise and invest wisely and sustainably to protect and enhance a Greater Wellington National Park for its value and potential to the Bunbury Geographe region.
- Support an IUCN Category II National Park which is managed for ecosystem conservation and recreation.
- Increase the size of the WNP to include Arcadia, Mungallup, Yabberup, Lowden forest areas and the Wellington Discovery Forest.
- Provide a sustainable biodiversity zone for the south west Jarrah and Marri forest to allow for a national park that provides appropriate protection of key zones, disperses and controls load impacts and preserves the conservation values of the area.
- Revegetation of damaged areas which are not responding naturally

# MARKETING MESSAGES

**Your Nature Playground – South West**

*Inspired by nature*

Preston River Valley  
So much to love and do

*Accessibility for everyone*

**CHOICE OF ENGAGEMENT LEVELS**  
**(EASY - ACTIVE - WILD)**

World class eco-tourism destination

*Nature based and adventure tourism hub*

**LIVING NOONGAR CULTURAL CENTRE FOR THE SOUTH WEST**

Iconic south west bush experience

Rediscover, reconnect, rewild, remember, renew



## Activities

### ACTIVITIES ALREADY TRIALLED AND SHOWN TO BE SUCCESSFUL

- Wildflower walks
- Nature Play & Wild Movement
- Twitchers...bird watching
- Bush tucker tours
- Cultural tours
- Cockatoo kite flying and picnics
- Mountain bike riding
- Learn about forest based natural dyes
- Music concerts
- Hiking

### Currently planned...

- Walk and write – nature writing
- Night fauna tours
- Ferguson Valley Art Trail extension into Yabberup including 'pop up' cafe
- Night sky – look and learn
- Food and wine trails

### Next...

- Pop up camping (including disability friendly)
- Greater Welly Games Festival
- Tour de Valleys (in partnership with our sister valley - Ferguson Valley)

## Business Opportunities

- Accommodation
- Native seedling nursery
- Nature stays
- Forest tours
- Recreational experiences
- Health and nature nexus
- Attraction management (eg campsites, adventure forest, nature play zone)
- Event management
- Natural burial site
- Cycle touring and mountain bike guiding
- Agricultural tourism

## Job Opportunities

- Hospitality
- Roads and park maintenance
- Voluntourism
- Tour guides
- Education
- Research
- Health and nature consultants
- Marketing
- Recreation
- Attraction management (eg campsites, adventure forest, nature play zone)
- Natural resource managers (horticulture, ecologist, pest control)
- Supply and service industries (eg drivers, service station, construction, administrative)
- Community engagement
- Disability access services

## Associated Opportunities

- Art and craft
- Orchard / farm / wineries / gate to plate, farm tours, farm stays

Page 9

# ECOTOURISM

## **Importance of ecotourism to our regions**

- Ecotourism is a major economic generator to rural and remote communities, generating greater community benefit and resilience.
- Ecotourism provides sustainable employment opportunities that can replace declining labour markets in agriculture and the resource sectors.
- Many ecotourism businesses are small to medium sized enterprises supporting regional economies and providing strong social outcomes through developing local pride, supporting festivals and events.
- Ecotourism businesses actively work toward conservation of the natural areas central to their operations.

Ecotourism Australia (draft, 2017)

## **Importance of ecotourism to Australia**

- Tourism contributes over \$100 billion to the Australian economy and is expected to grow by 1.6% annually for the next ten years.
- Growth in international visitation is the key driver for Australia's tourism industry's growth.
- Australia's natural environment is the most important attraction for international visitors in all our major source markets.
- Recent research clearly shows that Australia's natural advantage is, and will increasingly be, the major attractant for International visitors.
- Visitor and market interest in indigenous culture provides a significant opportunity for employment and business development for indigenous Australians.
- Protecting Australia's environmental and cultural assets is vital to underpin the diversity and quality of visitor experiences that Australia is well known for.
- Ecotourism is a large, and growing, sector of the broader tourism experience.
- Geotourism is a well established tourism form globally, and particularly in China.

Ecotourism Australia (draft, 2017)

**“ National Parks provide economic, social and environmental dividends to generations forever.”**

**Tom Perrigo**  
CEO - National Trusts of Australia

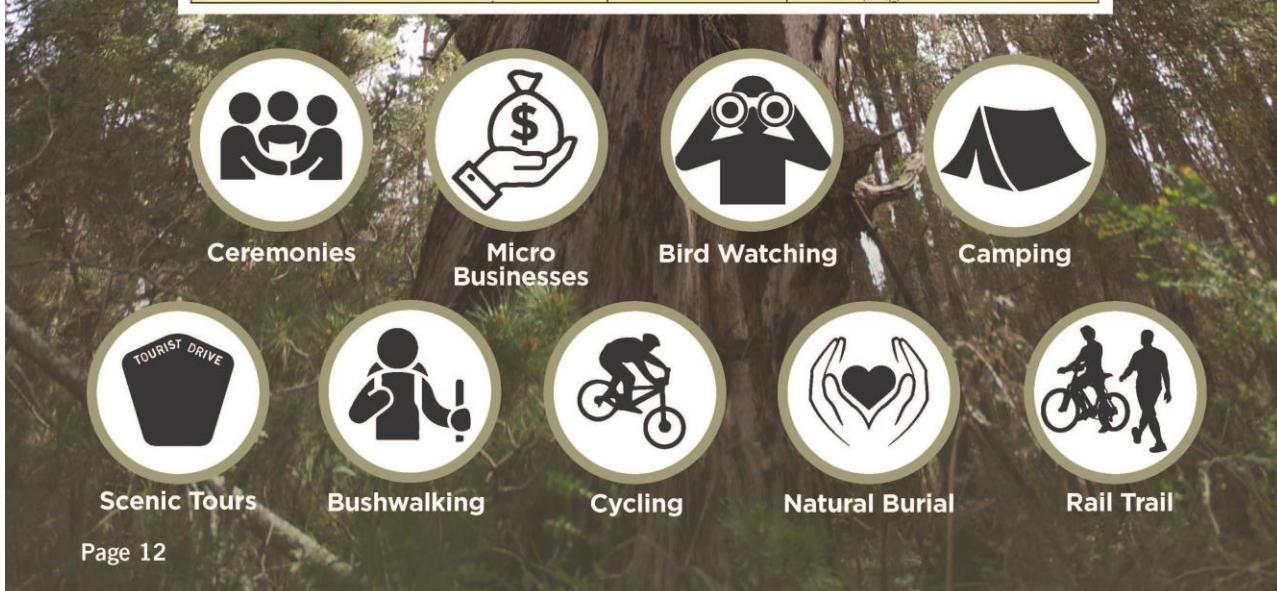
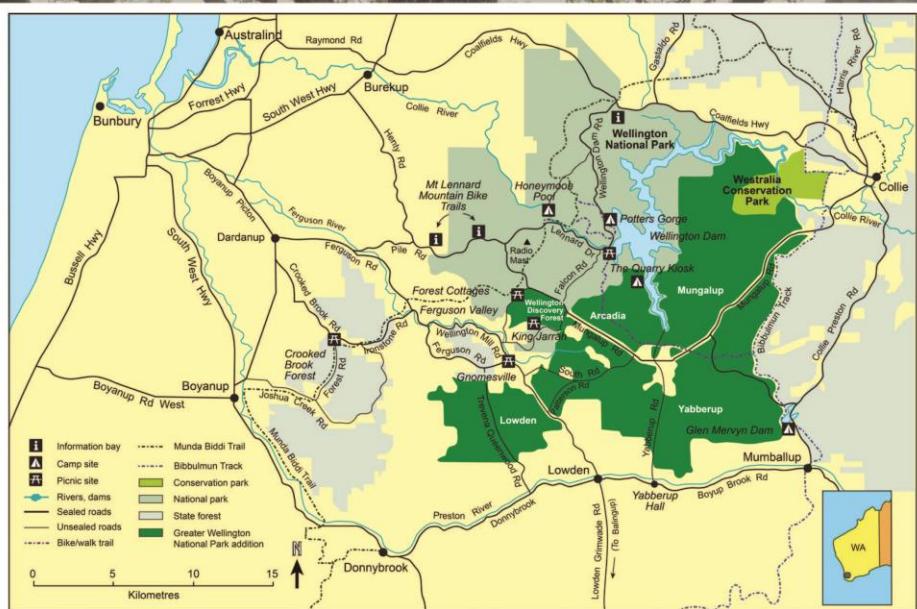
### **Referencing**

TRC (2012) Best Practice Guidelines for Eco-Opportunities in Protected and Natural Areas\*. Prepared for Tourism and Protected Areas Forum  
Ecotourism Australia (draft, 2017) Nature Based Tourism in Australia Manifesto

# MAKING IT HAPPEN THE NEXT 10 YEARS

The passing of legislation for an expanded GWNP by the WA parliament would trigger the following key actions:

		Key Partners
<b>Phase 1</b> within 18 months	<b>Infrastructure nodes</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancement of interpretive signage at Wellington Discovery Forest</li> <li>Promote Thor Track bush walk</li> <li>Promote scenic tourism loop drive</li> <li>Twice yearly grading of Yabberup Rd</li> <li>Identify and offer lease for an 'Adventure Forest' business</li> <li>Tourism signage at Lowden, Yabberup and Mungalup</li> <li>Pop up camping trial(s)</li> </ul>
	<b>Research and Education</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand education opportunities offered at the Wellington Discovery Forest (eg Aboriginal cultural program)</li> <li>Form partnership with Kings Park (eg education program, botanic garden, volunteer programs)</li> </ul>
	<b>Events</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring, Summer and Winter events calendar including Greater Welly Games, Noongar seasons program with Dolphin Discovery Centre</li> </ul>
	<b>Management and funding</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in (Greater) Wellington National Park Management Plan</li> <li>Establish GWNP Foundation. Use this to establish volunteer program and to apply for grants</li> <li>Access Aboriginal ranger program</li> </ul>
	<b>Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a plan for Stella Brook conservation zone (feral free area)</li> </ul>



		<b>Key Partners</b>
		<b>Infrastructure nodes</b>
<b>Phase2</b>	within 3-5 years	
		 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camp ground and ablutions at Glen Mervyn Dam</li> <li>• New campsite on Patterson Rd which is disability friendly</li> <li>• Nature Play site and pop up cafe</li> <li>• 3 'pop up' camp sites</li> <li>• 3 new bike tracks including one for hand cycling</li> <li>• Rehabilitation commenced</li> <li>• Nature art trail</li> <li>• Wheelchair friendly walk trail</li> <li>• Quokka Sanctuary</li> </ul>

		<b>Key Partners</b>
		<b>Infrastructure nodes</b>
<b>Phase3</b>	within 5-10 years	
		 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ceremony area</li> <li>• Natural burial site</li> <li>• Rehabilitation completed</li> </ul>