

**Dwellingup Community**  
**DRAFT Position Statement**  
**Bauxite Mining In and Around a**  
**Dwellingup Discovery Forest Area**  
**Executive Summary and Local Action Plan**

## **Executive Summary**

This position statement has been prepared following preliminary desk top information gathering, investigation, community consultation and peer review. It has been important to look from a historical and legislative perspective, to determine the best way to protect Dwellingup from the detrimental impacts of bauxite mining. Detrimental impacts include particularly, loss of native forest multiple use values, landscape amenity loss and the loss of Dwellingup's capacity to attract visitors.

As much as there is appreciation and understanding of bauxite mining benefits financially and with jobs to the local and wider community, without retention of its native forest values and landscape amenity, funds will not be able to continue to be attracted to develop Dwellingup to its full potential as a bustling tourist town with enduring tourist related jobs forecast at 80 plus and all the associated economic vitality which comes with this. Dwellingup can develop to become a world class trails/adventure town destination but not without retention of its native forest values and landscape amenity.

The northern jarrah forest is a vulnerable, sensitive and unique ecosystem which requires, according to an Australian panel of scientific experts, a "mosaic of management techniques to ensure its survival". The Dwellingup surrounding forest has become, and can continue to become, a well monitored, diverse and established historic research and scientific study centre.

Dwellingup has become a valuable Discovery Forest, with education centres including secondary educational institutions set up in strategic locations for outdoor environmental education programs on private and public properties.

A 'Dwellingup protection zone' was given to Dwellingup by the State government in the 1980s at Marrinup and again later in 2006 in the /Murray Valley area. It is intended to increase this protection zone to include the Discovery Forest area and to pursue, through State government lobbying, a more permanent longer-term forest values and landscape protection solution.

Dwellingup has always been widely recognised in Western Australia and internationally for its ecosystem tourism, agricultural tourism, nature based tourism, scientific study and educational values. Specific sites have now been mapped as valuable assets for interpretive tourism.

It is proposed to have these values acknowledged and contained within the Dwellingup Discovery Forest. This will help to consolidate what is left of the Lane Poole Reserve Proposed Reserve Proposed Additions area and avoid further continued fragmentation of the important reserve complex.

A Discovery Forest would be managed as part of the Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan area, with a range of multiple use forest values captured. It will connect and consolidate the surrounding two-proposed national park areas southwest and southeast of Dwellingup, the Murray Valley redevelopment area, the Icy Creek Environmental Education Facility south and two proposed conservation park areas in the northwest.

Recreation areas within the existing Lane Poole Reserve are critical to the Dwellingup townsite as connected destination sites serviced by the Dwellingup Townsite. The recreation areas south of Dwellingup are currently being affected by bauxite mining, with noise increasing each year. The reserve areas left are quickly losing their value for tranquillity and biodiversity corridor connectivity.

Discovery Forests are not new to Western Australia. They have been operating for years in Mundaring and in the Wellington Forest. The Wellington Discovery Forest is managed under the umbrella of the Wellington Forest National Park, Westralia Conservation Park and Wellington Discovery Forest Management Plan.

There is more than adequate justification to include Dwellingup Discovery Forest with its multiple use values which have been identified in this position statement. This includes the Forest Discovery Centre, operating already as a centre for the Dwellingup Discovery Forest.

Forest management understanding is becoming more and more important, and can be combined with education programs and ecosystem monitoring through student and other citizen science programs. Research and monitoring is becoming more and more critical with climate change and our associated drying warming climate and extreme fire and flood events. Maintaining a mosaic of management techniques such as that contained within the Dwellingup Discovery Forest area is critical for the future survival of the northern jarrah forest.

The Dwellingup community and wider associated stakeholder groups are aware of a dozen or so new national parks created under the Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement and are expecting that the Lane Poole Reserve eventually becomes a more secure reserve system with some national park status. It won't be long before Dwellingup is surrounded from the north, south and east by bauxite mining and associated rehabilitation areas making consolidation of this island of naturally occurring forest (acting as a scientific study control area) more and more important.

**Consolidation of values is still possible within and around Dwellingup to compliment surrounding proposed reserve changes.**

The Dwellingup Forest area includes some of the tallest straightest jarrah trees in the State, and the forest surrounding Dwellingup has the greatest potential for

providing the mosaic of management techniques needed for monitoring. Clearing for bauxite mining will result in the creation of start over rehabilitation areas with 100 to 300-year lag periods before fully functional ecosystems can once again be realised. Bauxite mining within the Dwellingup Discovery Forest area will have permanent as well as long term social, environmental and economic impacts for Dwellingup reducing if not eliminating its future potential as a national and international trails hub. All the variety of trails leading to and from interpretive sites and tourist destinations are critical to keep free of unsightly degraded start over bauxite mining rehabilitation areas. Tourism development in natural settings can only be sustainable if the land resources are not degraded.

The Dwellingup Discovery Forest area includes important recreational areas and facilities as far south as Icy Creek Outdoor Educational Facility. Most of the other educational facilities are also in the south owned by private schools. These are often shared through arrangement with other private schools from the Perth Metropolitan area. The public schools using Nanga Bush Camp similarly are in the south. All recreators and students attending these facilities are being impacted by noise from the current mining operations at the Orion Mine Site.

The Dwellingup Community in collaboration with the Shire of Murray are pursuing a relatively small mining exclusion area compared to Alcoa's entire lease area.

**Dwellingup is now very economically dependent on tourism. It is envisioned that Dwellingup will become another Rottneest or Kings Park as a WA tourist destination with similar high-profile nature-based tourism, scientific study and educational opportunities.**

The Dwellingup Community's position, shared with the Shire of Murray, is therefore that social, economic and environmental goals are best served with a Discovery Forest (bauxite mining exclusion zone). There is greater value to the State of Western Australia in continuing to develop nature based tourism, scientific study and education values of the native jarrah forest, than to allow bauxite mined rehabilitated areas to extend in and around Dwellingup.

According to a team of 26 leading ecologists from the Innovative Research Universities, due to climate change, our grandchildren may never get to see the northern jarrah forest, which runs from the Perth Hills to Collie. "Drought death of vegetation with mass collapse of forest areas and the loss of stream flow in the northern jarrah forest is a sharp reminder of the vulnerability of this unique Mediterranean ecosystem."

The current mosaic of management ecosystems within Dwellingup is critical for the long-term security of this valuable and vulnerable forest.

The site-specific values identified in the position statement act as tourism interpretation assets along with longer term monitoring sites. There are over fifty of these potential that have been identified. There is cost effectiveness for monitoring, with the private as well as public school students active in the Dwellingup area willing and able to assist. There are also research plots going back to the early 1900s which are critical for inclusion in longer term monitoring program. Dwellingup is clearly focused on education, research and nature-based tourism. Adventure trails, excursions, guided tours and events are all growing as part of Dwellingup's longer-term self-sufficiency and sustainability.

### **Local Action Plan: Implementation driven by the Dwellingup Community**

1. Collate and bring on board all input, including peer review on the Draft Position Statement, along with conducting a Residents' Community Meeting to gain support for the Position Statement incorporating a Dwellingup Discovery Forest (Mining Exclusion Zone).
2. Require that the Premier, and relevant Minister or Ministers, extend the existing "indefinitely deferred zone" and amend or replace Ministerial Statement 728 as an interim measure to protect the proposed Discovery Forest area from the impacts of bauxite mining until a new amendment to the State Agreement Act can be put in place.
3. Require that the State's Conservation and Parks Commission reactivate the Lane Poole Reserves Advisory Committee and through Amendment to the Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserves Additions Management Plan acknowledge a Dwellingup Discovery Forest.

Currently portions of State Forest 14 and 23 provide for exploitation of natural resources allowing for some non-sustainable uses. It is more appropriate that these areas of State Forest are managed for a variety of higher purposes to include scientific study, education, recreation and conservation (Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan).

4. Refer this Position Statement for assessment by the State's Conservation and Parks Commission and the Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement Review Panel.

5. Establish an alliance with all primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions who are stakeholders within the proposed Dwellingup Discovery Forest area.
6. In collaboration with others increase the number of and length of formalised and registered track and trail loops within the Dwellingup Discovery Forest area toward National and International Trails Town/Adventure status.
7. In collaboration with others continue to design and put in place bold trail and track interpretive site-specific signage on trail and track loop extensions and the Mundi Bididi and Bib trails which meet in Dwellingup, adding to connectivity between the town's Green Precinct and the wider Discovery Forest area.
8. Provide interpretive tour guide training for young and old through the Forest Heritage Centre with its Dwellingup Discovery Forest trading name.
9. Assist and support design, construction and putting in place historic town site signs and historic school site signs and other historic or ecosystem tourism site specific interpretation.
10. Characterise in collaboration with others, landscape unit and the forest structure and density within the Dwellingup Discovery Forest area to continue to develop a site specific mosaic of management techniques for scientific study, education and ecosystem tourism purposes in and around the Dwellingup Forest.
11. Extend the community participation submission consultation process to include the scientific study, education and nature based tourism communities to add value to the Draft Position Statement: Bauxite Mining In and Around a Dwellingup Discovery Forest area.
12. Encourage more interactive and cooperative consultation between Alcoa and the community, taking on the community's aspirations for the Dwellingup Discovery Forest area development and its associated exclusion of bauxite mining.
13. Continue to work closely with Local, State, Regional and Federal governments and associated elected members to roll out the mutually supportive and interconnected Green Precinct and Dwellingup Discovery Forest projects.
14. Facilitate, in collaboration with Alcoa, possible future or collaborative Dwellingup community use of the Old Marrinup Nursery Facility, the establishment of a Nature-based Tourism Research Centre in Dwellingup and

further activate the Alcoa Discovery Centre in Pinjarra and the Forest Discovery Centre in Dwellingup to promote the Dwellingup Discovery Forest.

15. Subject to funding and collaborative efforts, establish research programs, including citizen science programs for more intensive monitoring of tree decline, monitoring of mainland quokka populations and the development of other programs to protect and enhance the diverse range of management techniques established within the Dwellingup Discovery Demonstration Forest area.
16. Request that the State's Conservation and Parks Commission provide advice to the Minister for Environment that further exploration and development not be supported, as they "may potentially cause significant environmental impact" particularly with relation to Dwellingup fulfilling its potential as an International Trails and Adventure Town with its nature-based tourism, scientific study, education and pristine visual landscape values (Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan, p. 93).
17. Defer mining at the Orion Mine Site to the south and relocate mining in the east to allow for the redevelopment of "high use Lane Poole Reserve Recreational Areas and their view sheds" (Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan, pp. 94–95).
18. Subject to partnerships and collaborative funding efforts, provide "opportunities for active and passive recreation and tourism that will meet public demand" in Dwellingup, so that significant "regional socio-economic benefits" can be more fully realised (State Forest Management Plan, pp. 140–141).
19. Require that the Icy Creek Environmental Educational Facility be reopened, to resume student environmental outdoor education programs and to once again allow local businesses to benefit from visiting groups to this facility. (Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan, p. 77).
20. Acknowledge, recognise and value the Dwellingup Discovery Forest area as a proposed addition to the Lane Poole Reserve management plan because of its:
  - diverse array of natural environments providing numerous research opportunities to increase knowledge associated with ecological, biological and physical processes, native flora, fauna and their habitats, and to attract and encourage greater international visitor numbers.

- diverse range of nature-based recreational tourism opportunities, including recreational driving, tree adventures, bushwalking, mountain biking, bush area day use and camping, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, swimming, fishing, horse riding, horse-and-carriage driving, historic steam train rides and various high-profile visitor attracting events.
- extensive range of community, tourist, educational, research and interpretive location opportunities to describe local indigenous Aboriginal and European history and the native flora and fauna through interpretive signage or mobile device smart phone or I Pad linkage.
- extensive number of nature-based tourism, scientific study and educational group visits and their associated financial benefits to the local economy, particularly international visitors attracted by the wide range of natural, cultural and recreational interpretation.
- multiplicity of ways to enrich visitor experience, through nurturing the lifelong connections between the community and the natural areas allowing scenic quality, amenity and sense of place to continue to provide opportunities to learn, explore and interact with the natural and cultural environment (State Forest Management Plan, pp. 140–141).