

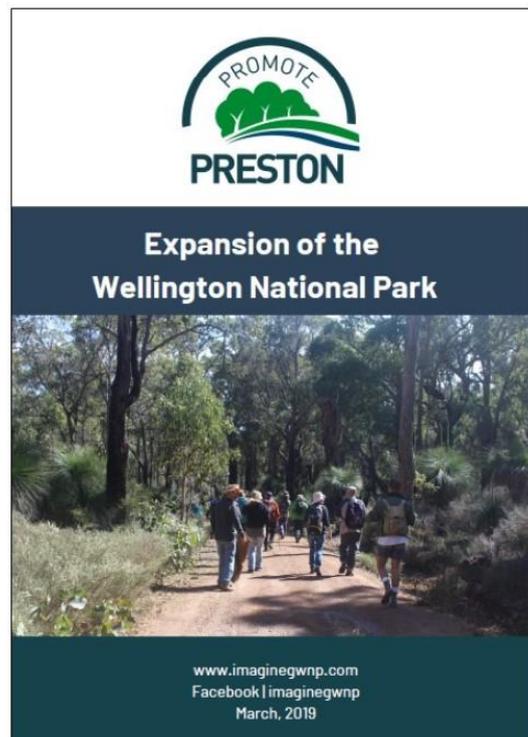


Promote Preston News | April 2019

Our feedback on the proposed expansion

Submissions on the proposed expansion closed on March 14. We did a lot of work on this and had great community input.

[Read our submission](#)



Here is our executive summary...

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 Mungilup 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'.

After the submission process closed the Minister for the Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson sent out the following media release.

Thursday, 21 March 2019

- Proposed expansion will include an additional 7,360 hectares
- Wellington National Park is located 150 kilometres south of Perth
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The McGowan Government has welcomed a positive response to the proposed expansion of Wellington National Park, with the public consultation period now closed.

The consultation response, released today on International Day of Forests, is a positive step towards the delivery of this election commitment for the people of the Collie-Preston electorate.

The proposed expansion along the southern boundary to the Preston River will provide a focus for tourism along major access routes and enhance opportunities for recreation, while also providing greater protection for flora and fauna.

A total of 46 submissions were received, with the vast majority expressing their support for the expansion.

Reasons for supporting the proposal included an increased level of protection for the natural environment, and opportunities for developing the local economy through increased tourism and recreational activities. The majority of those opposed to the proposal cited concerns of the impact the expansion would have on timber harvesting, firewood collection and other extractive uses.

Comments attributed to Environment Minister Stephen Dawson:

"The McGowan Government is committed to the expansion of Wellington National Park and will ensure Western Australia's unique natural environment is protected for generations to come.

"I am pleased with the support we have received for the proposal. All submissions are now being reviewed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, with consideration given to all comments and how they may be addressed."

Comments attributed to Collie-Preston MLA Mick Murray:

"I am delighted to be working with the community to improve and expand tourism and recreation opportunities within Wellington National Park and the surrounding area.

"At the 2017 election, I committed to expand Wellington National Park to help capitalise on all the opportunities for sustainable, nature-based tourism in the region. I'm delighted the public consultation process has proven the popularity of our plan with locals."

Next Steps...

1. We will be checking in on existing walk trails and mapping a new one over the winter months.
2. Our plan is to keep building our knowledge of what is available locally for tourists with the view of developing a brochure for our local area.
3. We are keeping our eyes peeled for funding for some street art.
4. And we have put in a submission for funding for a Community Long Table event "Celebrating People, Place and Produce".

If you have any ideas or opportunities email us at promotepreston@gmail.com



Upcoming events

We are working with the community development team at the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire on offering "Wild Experiences" for kids as part of their school holiday program. In the Autumn program we will enjoy a nature walk and play with natural dyes to create a nature book. Tree planting will be on offer for the Winter program.