

GREATER Wellington National Park

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Vision

For the Preston Valley to be the southern gateway of an expanded Wellington National Park (WNP) and for the Greater Wellington National Park (GWNP) to become a world class eco-tourism destination. A GWNP would help provide an economically sustainable future for our valley with the creation of new business and employment opportunities. Our community is ideally placed to become a vital part of the South West tourism cluster.

A world class **eco-tourism** industry, located within a Greater Wellington National Park, would provide myriad opportunities to further encourage, diversify and expand on that growth by:

- providing a **nature playground** for the health and wellbeing of adults and children alike, especially relevant given the proximity to Bunbury, WA second biggest city
- creating a sustainable cluster of **outdoor adventure** activities including additional bike-riding and bushwalking trails, adventure forest, nature play, ceremony site and cultural exchanges for **people of all ages**
- creating **diverse work opportunities** for the local community
- providing an exciting environment for **micro businesses** to flourish
- increasing **visitor numbers**; helping to boost **tourism dollars** for the Preston Valley and the towns of Collie, Donnybrook, Dardanup, Bunbury and Boyup Brook
- providing a market for **existing food producers** in the Preston Valley to value add to their product and assisting **new growers** to be successful
- creating a **vibrant** and eco-sustainable future for Preston Valley – making it a desirable place to live, work and visit
- fostering **Aboriginal cultural activities** and **employment**
- improving **water and soil quality** in the Wellington Dam and, Collie and Preston Rivers
- ensuring an important part of the **Jarrah/Marri** forest ecosystem is protected
- securing important habitat for **threatened bird and mammal species**, such as Carnabys and Baudins Black Cockatoo, Forest Red-tail Black Cockatoo, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Chuditch and the rare mainland Quokka
- supporting **eco system health, vitality and biodiversity**. Biodiversity is greater in protected areas and contributes to the stabilization or recovery of threatened species.¹
- providing connectivity for **species migration and movement**
- pioneering innovative **forest** and **river rehabilitation and research** initiatives
- storing millions of **tonnes of carbon dioxide** in the soil and native vegetation and earning **carbon credits**

The details of our vision is based on consultations with the local community, government agencies and industry organisations and is outlined in the insert.

“Conservation and ecotourism is an important investment for Royalties for Regions as it attracts investment and creates business and job opportunities for regional communities.”

~ Regional Development Minister, Terry Redman, May 21, 2016

Background

Issues

Economic

- No obvious employment opportunities locally.
- Decline in coal, orchard and timber industries. The building industry has transitioned to using plantation timber.
- Local house and land values suffering. Many properties have little market value.

Social

- Ageing demographic.
- Residents need to commute for work.
- Few opportunities for social interaction (especially for the young) without having to travel significant distances.
- Overall decline in volunteer numbers together with an ageing volunteer base is problematic for organisations such as bushfire brigades.
- Wellington National Park is at capacity. Exponential growth in visitations (280,000 visitations in 2014-2015 up from 191,000 in 2013-2014 (DPAW, August 2016)). Camping areas at capacity during holiday periods overflowing into areas with no infrastructure.

Environmental

- No infrastructure at Glenn Mervyn Dam.
- Vacant farm land creating serious weed and fire risk.
- Salinity: Mungalup, Yabberup and Arcadia forests flow into the Wellington dam. Yabberup and Arcadia flow into the Preston River.
- Reduction in habitat for endangered species.

Health

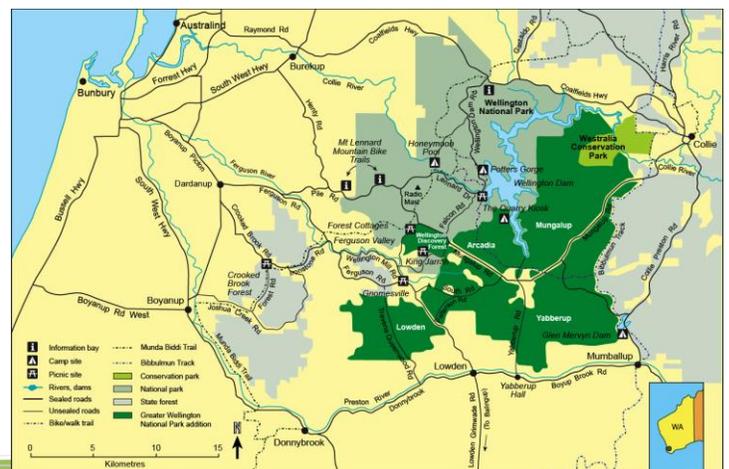
- Climate change is a significant public health issue for current and future generations and the South West of Western Australia is at the forefront of climate change. (WA Chief Scientist, 2016)
- Nature Deficit: Lack of contact with nature is having an impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of people of all ages.⁵

Tourism is a sector that can contribute to the economic growth of a region. Moreover, tourism produces social benefits to the region (small and medium-sized enterprises' development, creation of new jobs and improvement of infrastructure). Our vision is for the Preston Valley to be an eco-friendly place to live, work and visit.

Proposal

Increase Wellington National Park from 13000 hectares to approximately 33000 hectares by including Yabberup, Mungalup, Arcadia, Lowden forests and the Wellington Discovery Forest.

As an IUCN Category II national park a GWNP would actively support environmentally, culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreation engagement opportunities.⁶



Investing in national parks supports regional tourism economies as well as the environment. ~ *Tourism Council, WA*

Investment required

The park will need funding to establish and maintain walking tracks, huts, camp sites, upgrading Yabberup Rd (among others) and for the uptake of the other initiatives outlined in the insert. The benefits of such investment has been demonstrated by the Royalties for Region grants and documented by those researching eco-tourism.⁷

Community and industry support

We have met with all levels of government and industry bodies in the past six months. The community has been overwhelmingly supportive and excited by the idea of an expanded Wellington National Park. 1200 signatures of support were collected in just 8 weeks from people who live in the Donnybrook/Preston Valley/Collie region and visitors to the area. The local tourism and recreation sectors are very keen to partner with us on this initiative. Promote Preston will be continuing these conversations in the upcoming months.

Why a national park?

A national park provides security of purpose and tenure for businesses.

“Investing in the creation of parks ensures ecotourism can be developed and marketed with certainty.” ~ Premier Colin Barnett, May 21, 2016

A national Park is a prestigious destination in the mind of visitors. Increase in visitor numbers across WA show people love national parks. It flags on the map that this is a ‘special place’ and will offer a unique experience.

“National Parks are our state’s tourism calling card”. Tourism Council, WA

Preston Valley is evidence that without a national park status tourism based opportunities do not eventuate. Ferguson Valley which is on the western boundary of the Wellington National Park has benefited from this relationship over the past 20 years with 34 businesses registered with the Ferguson Valley Marketing Group.⁹

There are 78 licenses and leases in Wellington National Park, Westralia and Wellington Discovery Forest – which are all protected areas.¹⁰

While in the last few years eco-tourism activities have been initiated in state parks (eg Logue Brook Dam) there is little evidence of the development of a cluster of eco-tourism activities that are of sufficient size and diversity to create a sustainable tourism sector for a region. Glen Mervyn dam which attracts over 1000 people over summer holidays doesn’t even have toilet facilities.

A GWNP has the potential to become a premier destination that is a vital link in the South West tourism sector. **This proposal meets six of the 12 key actions for Bunbury, Wellington and Boyup Brook Regional Tourism Development Strategy (2016).**

Extractive industries

Approximately 3000 hectares from the current 2016-2019 indicative logging plan will need to be offset by the creation of a GWNP.¹² 300 hectares (10% sawn timber) would need to be offset by other state forest areas. 90% can be offset by plantations (ie sawmill residue used for chiplogs/firewood/charcoal (based on FPC 2013-2014 usage figures).¹³

8000 hectares (40%) of the proposed area has been logged in the past 16 years and not available for logging for another 30-60 years based on current 50 - 80 year rotations.

Loss of natural assets leads to loss of potential eco-tourism dollars into host community.¹²

The native timber industry is in major decline and no longer a major local industry.^{13, 14}

The percentage drawn from plantations increases annually. Yields are decreasing. Currently 17% of all timber supplied by the Forest Products Commission (FPC) is from native forests. The building industry has transitioned to plantations. The native timber industry is operating at a financial loss.¹³ FPC, 2016.

Native forestry employs relatively few people in WA, estimated to be between 170 and 330 people.¹³ In 2017 there are planned closures of sawmills.¹⁶ There are no saw mills in the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire.¹⁷ There is one small timber mill in Collie. Information was not available as to how much they rely on native versus plantation timber.

There are currently two approved and two pending mining licenses covering this area.

Economic benefits of an eco-tourism industry

Tourism spending in regional WA is \$2.5 billion¹⁸. Visitor spend is growing by 22% per annum¹⁹. The following is a conservative estimate of economic potential of an expanded Wellington National Park.

Target for Preston Valley *in the first year*

Intrastate 50 people x 4 nights per week @ \$157 per night = \$1.6 million
Interstate 20 people x 2 nights per week @ \$161 per night = \$335,000
International tourists one night x 10 per week @ \$67 per night = \$35,000
Intrastate day trips x 70 people per week @ \$118 per night = \$430,000

Total of \$2.4 million.²⁰

For every tourist dollar spent, 87 cents is generated in other parts of the economy.²¹

Thus there would be a flow on effect of 2 million dollars.



The insert highlights a range of opportunities for small businesses to flourish.

National Parks generate opportunities for host communities.

Ferguson Valley now has 34 businesses registered with the Ferguson Valley Marketing Group.⁹

Economic case study | Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is projected to inject \$4 million a year into the Collie economy and 25.5 FTE equivalent jobs (SW Development Commission, Tourism WA, Common Ground Trails, 2016). If only 10% of the above mountain bike trails expenditure occurs in the Greater Wellington National Park it **would generate \$449,700 of direct income and \$467,500 of flow on benefits.**

Logging is no longer the optimal use of public native forests economically, environmentally or socially. A commitment to stimulate regional industries, including the profitable plantation industry, adventure tourism and recreation and forest management for biodiversity, water and carbon outcomes offer better opportunities for regional businesses, jobs and revenue.¹²

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

~ Tom Perrigo

PROMOTE PRESTON is a subcommittee of the Yabberup Community Association

Scott Bartholomew | M EnvSc, Eco-logical Landscapes

Dave Doggett | Retired business owner

Julieanne Hilbers | Phd, BSc (Hons) Grad Dip (Ed) Psych (Reg), Celebrant

Stephen Newbey | farmer

Rob and Fiona Richardson | ex sheep/grain grower and nurse respectively. Owners of building business.

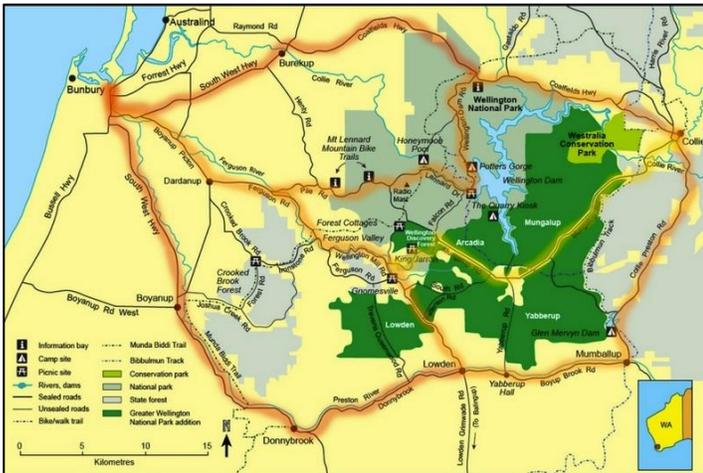
Sherry and Barrie Thomas | Cycletrek bike shop & mountain bike park; cabin accommodation

Hilary Tripp | Podiatrist (retired)

David Tripp | B.Ed. PhD. Adjunct Associate Professor, Murdoch University

Christine Wessling | Accounts Manager, Australian Forestry Services (WA)

GREATER Wellington National Park | Opportunities

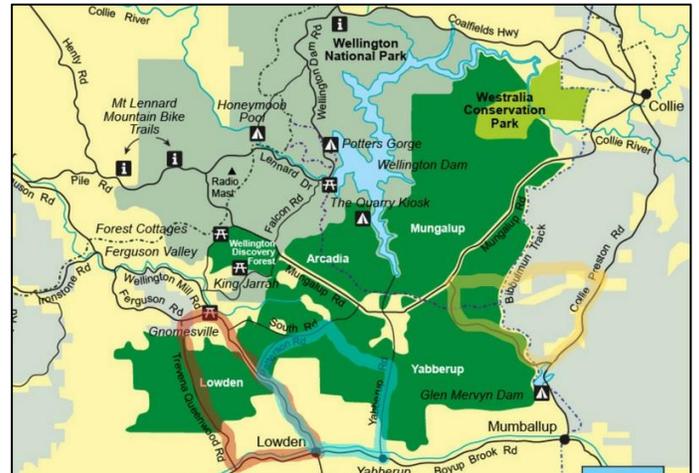


Scenic drives

- Tourism loop connecting Bunbury, Donnybrook and Collie
- Key link to Boyup Brook
- Key destination for South West forests tour

JOBS

- Tour guides
- Catering
- Bus driving
- Service station staff

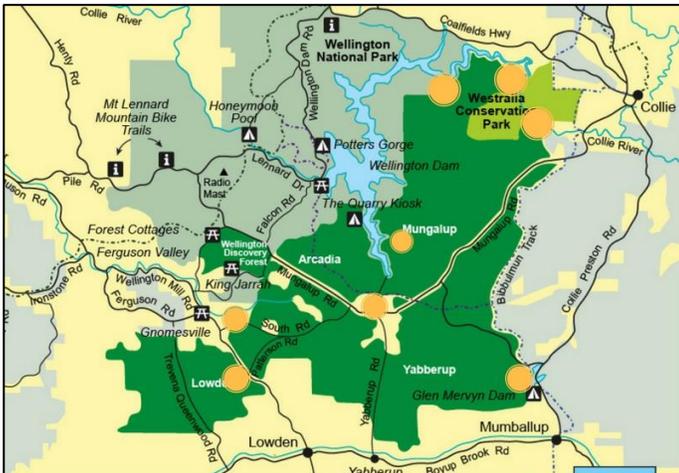


Scenic drives

- A scenic drive Yabberup through Arcadia to South Rd
- B scenic drive Mungalup to Collie-Preston Rd
- C scenic drive Trevena Queenwood Rd

JOBS

- Construction & maintenance



Camping & bushwalking

- 4 day loop from Collie with 3 overnight camp spots
- Car camping and day hikes at old farm in Lowden
- Dongara ridge camping
- Bussell Brook camping
- Thor track bushwalking with scenic lookout
- Camping infrastructure at Glen Mervyn Dam (swimming, maroning, canoeing, bushwalking, dog exercise area)

JOBS

- Construction
- Maintenance & fee collection
- Park rangers (3)



Mountain bike zones

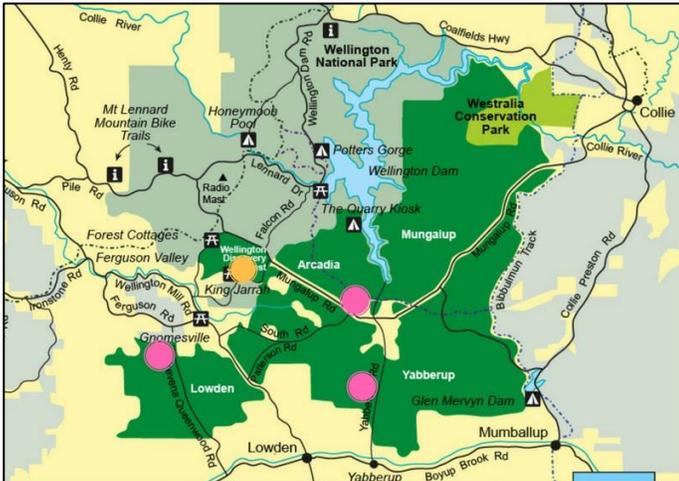
- Mountain bike trails

Complementary

- Charity bike ride
- Rail trail
- Volunteer trail maintenance

JOBS

- Construction
- Adventure guides
- Bike shop

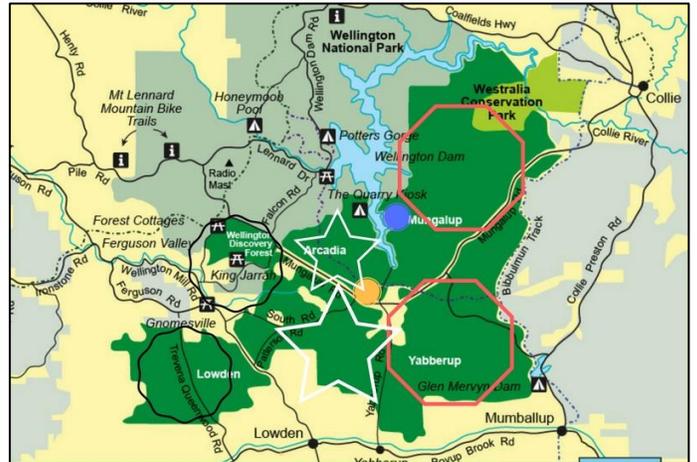


Education and adventure zone

- Adventure forest
- Volunteer tourism (regeneration, citizen science)
- Spotlighting tours

JOBS

- Private business (2-3)
- Tour operator
- Accommodation
- Education centre (cultural precinct)

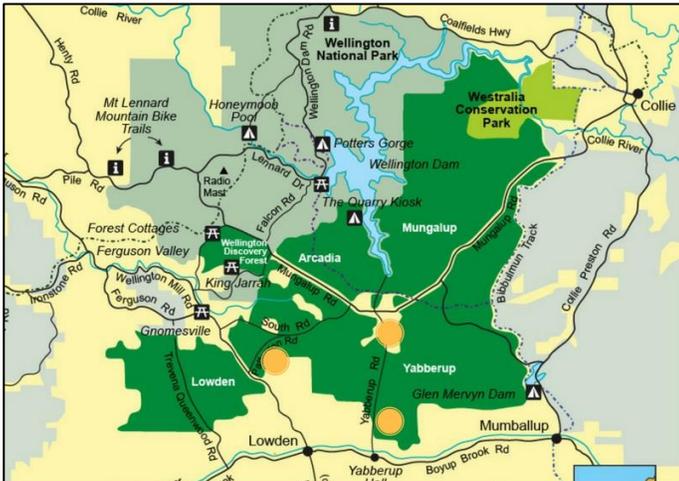


Conservation, Citizen Science & Species recovery

- Bird hide for bird watching
- Fauna precinct and quokka species recovery / sanctuary
- Volunteer tourism (regeneration, citizen science)
- Rehabilitation zones

JOBS

- Ecologist
- Construction
- Green army
- Research coordinator
- Volunteer coordinator
- Tour guide

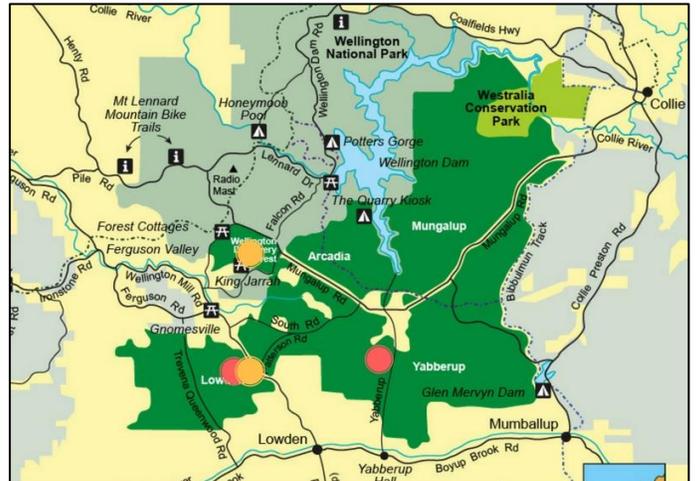


Ceremony and land art trail

- Ceremonies (pop-up weddings, funerals, namings, meditations)
- Land art trail & ceremony area
- Birthing forest (plant a tree for newborns)
- Natural burials and tree plantings (ashes, including pets)
- Support local nursery and community program

JOBS

- Construction
- Celebrant/event management
- Pop up cafe
- Artists

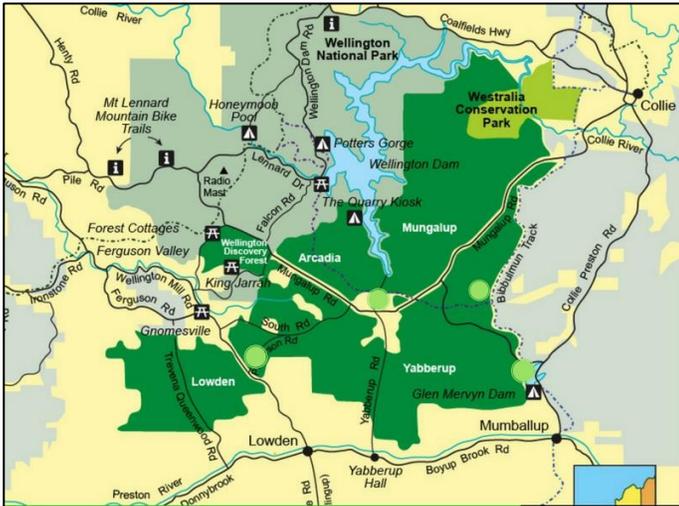


Cultural and heritage

- Aboriginal cultural centre
- Aboriginal cultural tours
- Activities linked to six Noongar recognised seasons
- Heritage cultural tours (early settler heritage) (To be identified)

JOBS

- Customer service
- Tour guides
- Bus driver
- Researcher
- Community cultural development

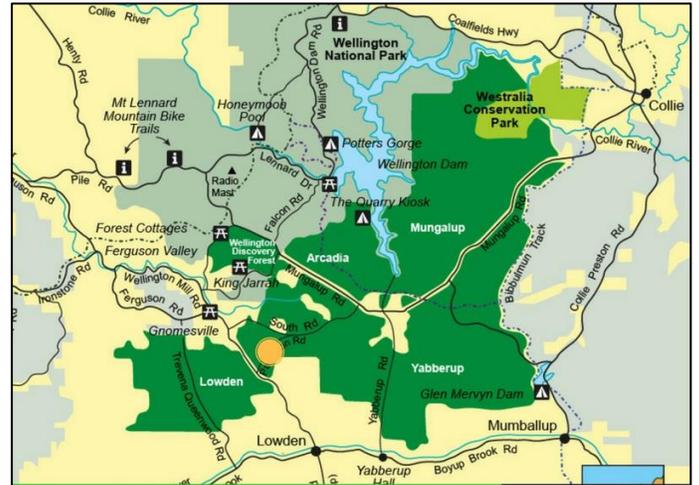


Picnic

- Bussell Brook
- Nature play zone
- Scenic Drive B
- Glen Mervyn

JOBS

- Construction
- Maintenance
- Park rangers (3)

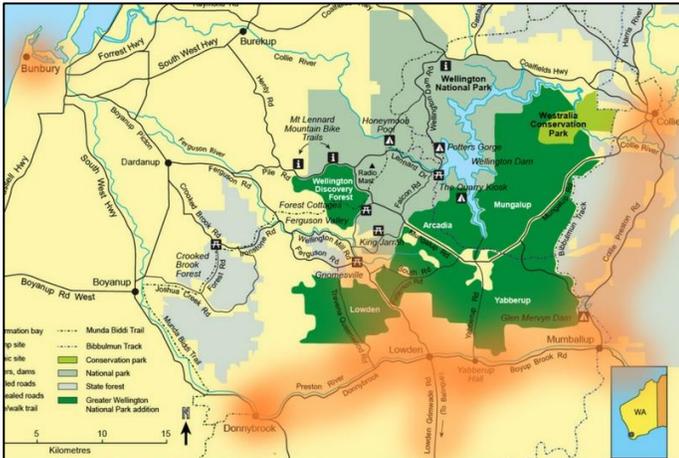


Nature play

- Nature playground for children under 12 years
- Easy bush walk
- Disability access
- Link to Gnomesville and Donnybrook playground
- Picnic area and pop up cafe
- Kids scenic - route

JOBS

- Construction
- Maintenance
- Tour operators
- Cafe
- Community engagement

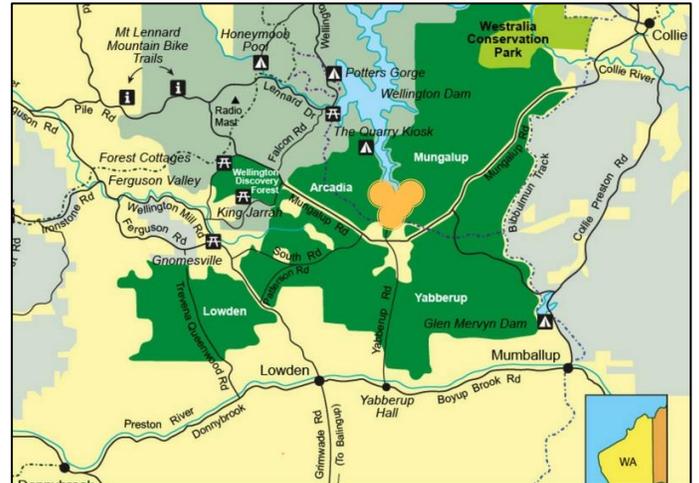


Micro businesses

- Accommodation (chalets, glamping, nature camping, backpackers)
- Food (restaurant)
- Events - plate to gate, festivals
- Retreats (nature based, art and nature, recharge & renew)

JOBS

- Cleaning
- Administrative
- Chef/wait staff
- Promotion
- Event management
- Facilitators
- Artists



Complementary

- 4wd's and trail bikes amongst the pines
- Rail trail Donnybrook to Boyup Brook
- Equestrian Hub potential

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