



**PRESTON**

# STRATEGIC PLAN

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**OCTOBER 2017**

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## 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.**



# BACKGROUND

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.

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**“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.

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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 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

## **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

## Associated Opportunities

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

## 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

# ECOTOURISM

## Importance of ecotourism to our regions

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- 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)

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

**Tom Perrigo**

CEO - National Trusts of Australia

## Importance of ecotourism to Australia

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- 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)

### 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	
Phase 1 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions</li> <li>• Department of Sport and Recreation</li> <li>• Bunbury-Geographe Tourism Group</li> <li>• Australia's South West</li> <li>• Ferguson Valley Marketing Group</li> <li>• Noongar community of the Collie, Donnybrook, Roelands Village, Bunbury Geographe regions</li> <li>• Volunteers</li> <li>• Kings Park and Botanic Garden</li> <li>• Noongar Community</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>		



Disability Tourism



Celebrating Noongar Culture



Adventure Tourism



Nature Play



Research



Education



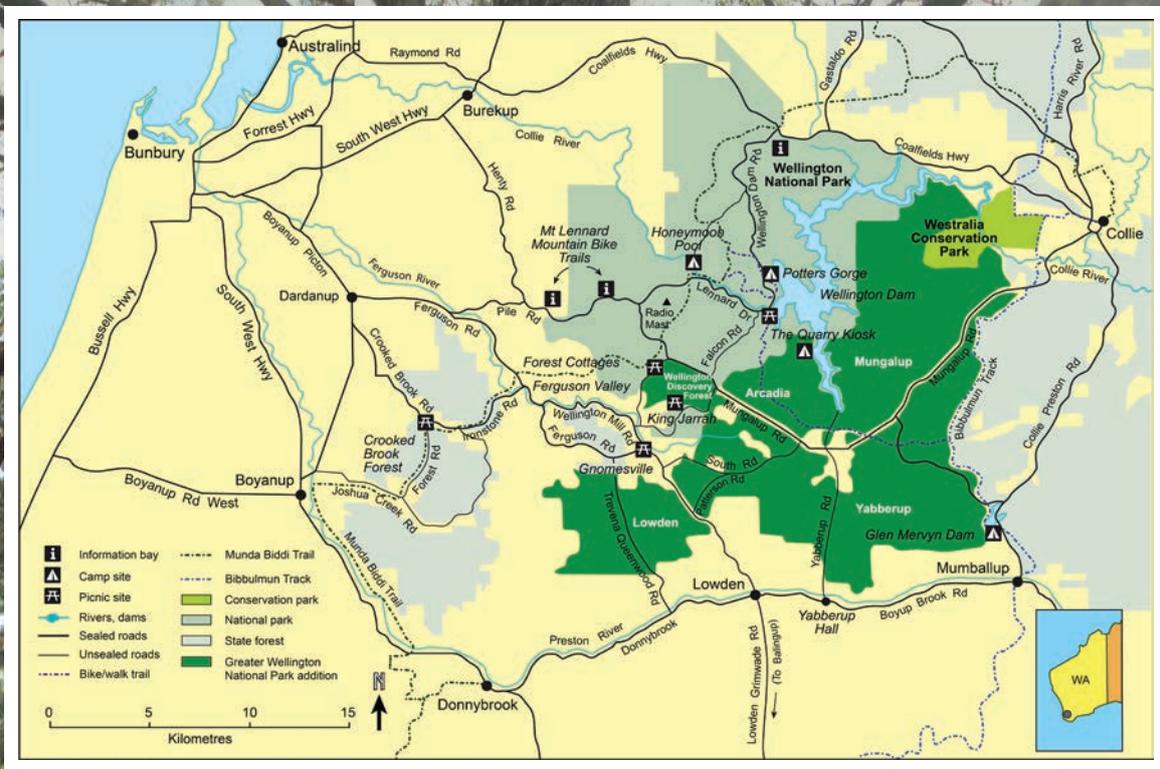
Volunteer Tourism



Conservation & Species Recovery



Regeneration



Ceremonies



Micro Businesses



Bird Watching



Camping



Scenic Tours



Bushwalking



Cycling



Natural Burial



Rail Trail

Key Partners		
<b>Phase2</b> within 3-5 years	<b>Infrastructure nodes</b>	
		<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>

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



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