

Initial public comment submission re expansion of Alcoa operations _June 2020

We request that any expansion of Alcoa's mining operation is made in consideration of the impact of the operation on the Bibbulmun Track (the Track) and other trails in the area.

The Bibbulmun Track is WA's premier long-distance walking trail stretching 1000kms from Kalamunda to Albany. The Track has gained a reputation as a world class trail attracting thousands of West Australians and visitors to the south west each year.

A 2015 survey showed that over 300,000 days are spent on the Track each year generating around \$13million in economic benefit – much of that in regional areas. In addition to individuals, families and tourists, the Track is used by schools and youth groups for outdoor recreation.

It is essential for future generations that the integrity of the Bibbulmun Track is maintained as:

- a continuous long-distance trail
- a quality 'wilderness' experience

In WA, the outdoor sector makes a significant contribution to the WA community. Research has identified that it contributes over \$1.1 Billion annually to the WA economy and provides many benefits to public health and well-being. It accounts for over \$208 million in avoided healthcare costs each year.

Although WA is a big place, the area of it particularly suited to bush walking and other outdoor recreational pursuits is not vast when you take account of WA's population centres. The bulk of WA's population live on the coastal plain between Perth and Bunbury. For most of them the Darling Range is the closest large area most suited to bushwalking.

Apart from recreation, the main uses of this area are forest, mining and water catchment. The areas required for these uses overlap but they together occupy a large proportion of the Range's area.

We appreciate that Alcoa has undergone considerable community consultation and have noted the consideration of trails in their communication. However, we believe a public environmental review is essential.