

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC

Chairman

Dear Sir & Committee Members

Re: Petition No. 024 – Oppose Logging in Barrabup 03, Nannup.

We, Martin and Ellie Mckie on behalf of 'Barrabup Conservation Group' of Nannup, represent the 3,084 residents and concerned citizens who have already signed the petition and those who did not get the chance. We are opposing the logging of the Barrabup 03 forest in Nannup. We ask that measures be taken to declare it a formal conservation reserve.

The Barrabup forest is less than 5km from the Nannup townsite and is on the main gateway to our tourism town. Due to the close proximity to town, the Barrabup forest is frequently enjoyed by the local community and some of the 60,000 visitors to Nannup. The majority of this forest has minimal logging history which makes it a high conservation value forest. The expansion of the Busselton-Margaret River Airport to international status will see a massive boost in tourism numbers to Nannup, opening up new opportunities to showcase our amazing town and its natural beauty. To have a National Park with such high conservation value right at the main gateway would be a natural asset that Nannup would be proud of. It would contribute economically and also to the health and well-being of the community for years to come.

The Barrabup forest holds significant aboriginal heritage. As Nannup was known as the place of good camping and a place to stop and rest for South West Aboriginal groups, there are numerous sites of significance in the forest which have been identified by local Aboriginal Elders from the Wardandi people. There are scarred trees which were used by Noongar people to show the trail leading from inland to Wonnerup on the coast.

The majority of the Barrabup forest is made up of ancient Jarrah and Marri trees. Due to the age of these old trees this forest has become a safe haven, a feeding ground and a breeding area for many of our native fauna species, some of which are on the endangered list. The Chuditch, Phascogale, Quokka, Pygmy Possum, Woylie, Forest Red-Tail, Baudin and Carnaby Black Cockatoos are some of those known about. These native species are fast diminishing due to habitat loss caused by logging, wildfires, prescribed burning, clearing and climate change. The Barrabup forest forms part of the South-West Australia

Biodiversity Hotspot which is globally significant due to its diversity of plants, animals and habitat types. The forest contains declared rare and priority flora and threatened fauna. There are large sections of die back free areas in the Barrabup forest which should be protected as it is well known that dieback causes loss of biodiversity, extinctions of threatened plant and animal species that rely on susceptible plants for food and habitat. Future generations should have the opportunity to experience and enjoy what this rare and unique forest offers.

Tourism is a major industry in the Nannup Shire and the environmental experiences which would take place in Barrabup as a National Park would have a huge beneficial impact on the area. The old golf course is adjoining the Barrabup 03 forest on the eastern side and it is in the current local planning document as a potential tourism/recreation area, this would mean that no clearing of forest would be needed to provide parking, information boards and signage etc. The nearest National Park to Nannup is over 26km from town, the Shire is 305,393.6ha of which 86,552ha is protected, this is equal to only 28.3% of the total shire area currently in reserves.

The close proximity to Nannup would mean that Barrabup forest as a National Park would be easily accessible to locals and visitors. The Munda Biddi off road cycle track runs from town alongside and through the Barrabup forest. This trail is the world's 5<sup>th</sup> best, longest, continuous off-road cycle trail with over 20,000 people using it annually. Nannup Shire is actively striving to become a trails hub with bike riders coming from all over the state to experience what Nannup has to offer.

The Barrabup forest could offer picturesque walk and cycle trails through an ancient Jarrah and Marri forest, displaying amazing wildflowers in the spring, keeping an eye out for native animals and the three species of Black Cockatoos which inhabit the forest and incorporate cultural and heritage trails. This would create employment opportunities for local tour operators and Aboriginal tour guides to educate school children and visitors to the region.

The Barrabup Conservation Group would like to mention that the Nannup Timber Processing Mill has been going to close for many years and has had numerous partial closures in the past. Our campaign has nothing to do with their struggling business and throughout this process of saving Barrabup, there has been no mention of wanting the mill closed. The estimated 13,000 tonnes that NTP may have been getting from the Barrabup forest would have only kept it going for 6 months while creating trails and setting it up for tourism would provide jobs for tour operators for years to come. The timber industry and tourism can work side by side, but NTP's current reason for suspending works at the green mill highlights the fact that there are very few large treed forests left around Nannup as

they have all been severely logged. Barrabup 03 state forest is the last one standing this large and this old this close to town. It will benefit Nannup and the state much more in the long term.

Thankyou for your time and interest in this matter. We have sent out invites to the Committee to come to Nannup and visit the Barrabup 03 with our group to see this rare and high conservation forest and understand its importance to Nannup.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin and Ellie Mckie'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martin and Ellie Mckie