



WA FOREST ALLIANCE



MEDIA RELEASE

Rally and Petition Handover to Stop Alcoa's Mining Expansion in the Jarrah Forests

Event details: Tues 10th Nov 2020, 3pm | Parliament House, Perth

Alcoa's plans for expanded bauxite mining in the Jarrah forests around Dwellingup, Jarrahdale and Serpentine will be emphatically rejected at a large gathering at Parliament House in Perth today.

Since the 1960s, 23 000 hectares of Jarrah forests along the Darling Scarp have been cleared for bauxite mining and alumina production.

Alcoa is now proposing to expand its mining operations and clear a further 8700 ha – an area more than 20 times the size of Perth's Kings Park – in some of the most ecologically significant Jarrah forests in the Dwellingup, Jarrahdale and Serpentine areas.

Local communities, supported by the WA Forest Alliance and The Wilderness Society, will come together at Parliament House today to strongly reject the proposal and call for the remaining Jarrah forests to be securely protected.

"This is the best opportunity Western Australians have had in a generation to deal with the juggernaut that is bauxite mining in our precious jarrah forests," said Jess Beckerling, convener of the WA Forest Alliance.

"In the 1960s, the WA State Government signed a special State Agreement Act with Alcoa, promising them ongoing access to publicly-owned jarrah forests for bauxite mining. This has served as a major impediment to communities trying to protect jarrah forests as the bauxite mining cancer has spread down the Darling Scarp.

"Alcoa's massive proposed expansion is before the EPA and will be subject to a full public environmental review, so the spotlight is shining brightly on the issue now and the community is rising up in opposition," said Ms Beckerling.

Patrick Gardner, State Campaign Manager of the Wilderness Society, notes the Northern Jarrah Forests face considerable impacts from climate change over the coming decades and centuries.

"As we know, protecting forests is climate action", Patrick Gardner said.

“It defies logic that we would not only drag our feet on climate action, but also allow another 8,700 hectares to be knocked flat.

“This is 8,700 hectares of forest that currently acts as a bulwark against climate change and a safe harbour for threatened species and our dwindling biodiversity.

The Wilderness Society also called into question the continued relevance of the State Agreements that provided access to bauxite reserves.

“The State Agreement that sanctions this brazen desecration was initially developed when we were sending people to the moon,” Patrick Gardner said.

“Since that time, the 'cauliflower' of scarred landscapes in the Jarrah forests south east of Perth has grown and mutated like a tumour.

“This appalling loss of jarrah forest is happening on the doorstep of metropolitan Perth,” said Mr Gardner.

“Forests need to be protected for climate and for life,” said Ms Beckerling. “We need the McGowan Government to listen to the science and act in the community’s best interests as he did on COVID by protecting native forests.”

