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The Shire President  
Mr Brian Piesse  
Donnybrook-Balingup Shire  
Bentley Street  
Donnybrook WA 6239

*Our ref: OC0241*

5<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Dear Brian

**RE: Submission opposing the proposal for the expansion of Wellington National Park**

**Introduction**

Established in the 1970's, Dawson Contracting is a family owned and operated business based in Donnybrook Western Australia. Dawson Contracting employs nineteen permanent staff, with seven residing in the Dwellingup area and twelve residing in Donnybrook and surrounding communities. Dawson Contracting is committed to sustainable forest management and undertakes all harvesting activities within key guiding principles. The business demonstrates a strong community focus through the sponsorship of multiple local clubs and organisations that promote youth activities and community participation.

**Proposal Opposition & Supporting Reasons**

Dawson Contracting is **opposing** the proposal for the expansion of Wellington National Park for the reasons following.

**1. Impact on approved native forest harvesting plan**

The proposal to include an additional 7360 hectares to the national park equates to 7360 hectares less forest available for harvesting contractors such as Dawson Contracting. Without the availability of existing reserves as replacement harvesting blocks, Dawson Contracting's harvest schedules will be reduced, resulting in a significant reduction in income from an industry which is already offering minimal profit margins.

**2. Precedent for further expansion of National Parks**

Dawson Contracting is concerned that if approved, this expansion will set a precedent for expansion of all forested National Parks which will subsequently further impact all areas of concern noted within this submission. Areas such as these are better utilised as State Forests.

### 3. Additional Employee travel

Dawson Contracting's head quarters are based in Donnybrook however, removing forest blocks within accessible proximity of Donnybrook will put added pressure on employee travel times. This has significant impact on both the employee's fatigue management and the production levels achievable for the business with a reduction in productive hours within a working day. Dawson Contracting may have to review where the company is based in the future if harvesting coupes are not close by so that competitive rates can be tendered for any future work.

### 4. Undermined industry confidence & viability of native timber harvesting

The timber industry will be significantly impacted by this proposal, which will lead to further lack of confidence in the industry. Dawson Contracting would be forced to reassess decisions currently being made to invest in further plant, equipment and personnel.

### 5. Financial viability and the subsequent impact on local families

The loss of forest resources such as those included within this proposal may directly affect Dawson Contracting's financial viability within the industry. The potential loss of contractors such as Dawson Contracting (with nearly fifty years' experience in the industry) will impact the industry, our employees and their families. Many of our employees have spent their careers in the native forestry industry, and without other local contractors to find employment with – they may be forced to relocate.

### 6. Community support

Dawson Contracting is proud of its involvement and sponsorship of many local community groups. Changes to our profit margin will directly impact our ability to support these local groups. Examples of the groups that have been historically and continue to be supported by Dawson Contracting are:

- Donnybrook Football Club (annually)
- Donnybrook Junior Basketball Association
- Donnybrook District High School (annually)
- St Marys Primary School Donnybrook
- Donnybrook Community Radio
- Tuia Lodge Donnybrook
- Treehouse Child Care Centre Donnybrook
- Donnybrook Country Club (annually)
- Donnybrook Bowling Club (establishment of new greens)
- Anglican Church Donnybrook
- Anglican Church Balingup
- Donnybrook Cricket Association (annually)
- Donnybrook Food & Wine Festival (annually)
- Collie to Donnybrook Cycling Classic (annually)
- Donnybrook Tennis Club
- St Mary's P&C Association Donnybrook
- Donnybrook District High School P&C Association

- Capel Pony Club
- Men's Shed Donnybrook
- Donnybrook Apple Festival (annually)
- Balingup Primary School P&C Association
- RSL Donnybrook
- Donnybrook-Balingup Shire

Furthermore, Dawson Contracting has recently invested approximately \$700,000 on new and refurbishment of existing buildings in Donnybrooks main street and their property located at 18392 (Lot 174) South Western Highway. Further expenditure is pending at 18392 however, this expenditure may have to be reviewed if Dawson Contracting are to relocate due to economic reasons as stated previously.

### **Submission Summary**

As highlighted above, Dawson Contracting and its employees will be directly impacted by the proposed expansion of the Wellington National Park. Should this proposal be approved, existing industry concerns will be further exacerbated resulting in diminished confidence throughout the entire industry. Subsequently, the financial impact will result in potential job losses and an outreaching impact on other communities such as Collie, Bridgetown and Nannup, these communities all process and value add to native timber products.

Prior to the most recent State election, I was involved in discussions with Hon Mick Murray MLA. Mr Murray assured me that the proposal would have minimal impact on the current harvesting plan and timber production in the region.

Further to the assurances of Mr Murray, in August 2017 I received a letter from the Minister for Forestry the Hon Dave Kelly MLA whose letter stated 'This government has a strong focus on job creation and supports the forest and wood products industry as a sustainable industry and strong employer. It values the contributions that the industry, including Dawson Contracting, provides to our communities in the South West'. Again, this proposal directly contravenes these statements, and further diminishes the confidence that I hold with the State Government and its representatives. Having said that, I draw on the support from Donnybrook-Balingup Shire and its Councillors to **not** support this Greater Wellington proposal therefore showing support for a legitimate small business, its employees and their families who reside in the community.

If the Greater Wellington proposal is to be supported, I implore Council to only support the proposal if an offset area of reserved native forest that has been set aside from timber harvesting be exchanged like for like (comparable resource value, area and proximities) with that of the Greater Wellington proposal, doing this will limit the impact on the timber industry. However, this is the responsibility of the current State Government and it would be prudent if the Council firstly requested that the offset be attained before any endorsement is given by Council to the proposed Greater Wellington.

Yours sincerely

Bernie Dawson

CC: Ben Rose, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup