

## A Bibbulmun Track Foundation Position Statement May 2025

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

- **A continuous long-distance trail**
- **A quality 'wilderness' experience**

Although Western Australia is a big place, the area particularly suited to bushwalking is not vast when you take account 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 mining and water catchments. The areas required for these uses overlap, but they together occupy a large proportion of the Range's area.

While income generated by the Track does not equate to that generated by mining activity, the Track is a significant generator of tourism and recreation related income for communities in and around the northern jarrah forest especially with respect to walker and support purchasing/victualling, and accommodation.

The Track provides a focus for recreational users and passes through a narrow green corridor between the mining operations of Worsley, Newmont Boddington Gold, South 32 and Alcoa, with others now joining the approvals process.

Mining adjacent to or intersecting the Track is not acceptable, and while track realignments have accommodated mining activities in the past, opportunities to realign the Track in the remaining northern jarrah forests are diminishing.

It is also important that we retain the quality of the experience for Bibbulmun Track walkers.

The Foundation's primary concerns include:

- **Connectivity:** To ensure a north-south passage of the Track through the Northern Jarrah forests and a continual path to Albany.
- **Visual Impact:** Retain the scenic and visual landscape values of the Track including a 200m buffer on either side of the Track and visual continuity from lookout points.
- **Noise Impact:** Potential blasting and the operation of trucks and other equipment close to the Track will be audible. This is particularly unacceptable in the vicinity of campsites.
- **Air Emissions:** Consideration to be given to the impacts of air emissions, in particular dust.
- **Reduction of wildlife/loss of wilderness experience:** Many Track users associate their activity with wildlife observations and encounters. More mining means less habitat. Even if mine sites are eventually rehabilitated and can provide habitat in years to come, there are less refugia available for wildlife in the meantime.

There is little remaining forest, already a remnant of what were once great forests, and only a fraction Northern Jarrah Forests remain and much of that is in degraded condition.

Our climate is changing, and we are told that trees and forests are important for our wellbeing and the future habitability of our landscapes.

We ask that you reconsider the need to mine in the vicinity of the Track and in the remaining fragments of remnant forest from our once great forest landscapes, as these areas support an economy that creates sustainable wealth for Western Australia.