



Partnerships that celebrate the diversity of local life in
Dwellingup

C/O Post Office Dwellingup WA 6213

Dwellingup Community Compact and Alcoa

As Chair of the Dwellingup Community Compact, I am writing to clearly state the DCC's position on several matters and correct some erroneous allegations. The DCC seeks to represent the views of Dwellingup residents, give them a forum to contribute to matters that affect them and be a conduit for input to the Shire of Murray and grants from government and commercial organisations for community projects. Whilst people can hold a wide range of opinions, the DCC seeks to take as balanced a view as is possible on all occasions.

The DCC and I are neither pro nor anti Alcoa. We acknowledge that Alcoa has legal leases to mine in certain areas and that they need to comply with all the regulations that apply to those mining leases. Nevertheless, both the DCC and I strongly support the concept of a mining exclusion zone around Dwellingup which the DCC has been carefully and scientifically researched and delineated as an area referred to as the Dwellingup Discovery Forest. We understand that this requires a variation by the WA Govt to the existing Alcoa Leases, and the DCC has been working with the Shire of Murray and others to achieve this.

There are various formal and informal groups and individuals who are opposed to aspects of Alcoa's operations. The DCC wish to be clear that they are not aligned with these groups and are solely focused on the establishment of a Dwellingup Discovery Forest and its associated mining exclusion zone, through the Dwellingup Protection Group led by Chris Portlock, and sub committee of the DCC.

Over the last week, various accusations have been levelled at the DCC, Office Bearers and me in that we are anti Alcoa, directly responsible for any plant reductions at the Alcoa Kwinana and Pinjarra Refineries, and hypocritical in rejecting an Alcoa Grant for the proposed Nature Play Area but accepting of a Alcoa Grant for Defibrillators. These comments are uninformed, incorrect, derogatory, and not helpful in achieving benefits to Dwellingup.

Uninformed critical comments were made at the DCC meeting on 26 Feb 2023 and reference made to the rejection of Alcoa funding for the proposed Nature Play Area. This needs to be responded to. At a DCC meeting on 12 Oct 2021, Colleen Sing raised the idea of a Nature Play Area between the Trails and Visitor Centre and the Pump Track. This would be a community-based approach like the Nature Play Area constructed at the Primary School.

The DCC applied to Alcoa for a \$25,000 Grant in late 2021 for the Nature Play Area project and Alcoa approved a grant of \$20,000 and forwarded a Grant Agreement to the DCC for Peter White to sign as Chair of the DCC. Peter had been personally involved in the execution of most recent DCC projects such as the Street Banners and Bike Stands, and he was aware of the amount of volunteer work required. At this stage, there was no design for the Nature Play Area, no materials secured, and no volunteers arranged. It's true that the school project successfully evolved as a design and execution, but it was on school grounds, tapped into the school parents as volunteers, and did not need the permissions and permits required from the Shire of Murray as DCC did.

After some reflection, Peter decided that he could not in good conscience sign the Grant Agreement as he had suffered considerable personal loss that year and was not confident he would be able to undertake the project effectively. Reasonably, Alcoa have strict requirements for DCC to comply with the details of the project outlined in the Application, and an Acquittal to be submitted after completion of the project. Peter told the DCC Committee that he could not sign the Grant Agreement and if they wanted to proceed, he would resign as Chair, and they could appoint a new Chair. Some of the DCC Committee wanted to proceed with the Grant but all of the Committee agreed to support Peter and have him to continue as the Chair.

In the DCC communication to Alcoa declining the Grant, DCC made it clear to Alcoa that they appreciated the previous grants and assistance that they had received from Alcoa, but on this occasion, they were not able to accept this particular Grant. DCC also said that this decision did not preclude them from being open to working with Alcoa on projects in the future. In part due to the pressures of being on the Committee of the DCC, 3 members of the Committee at this time including Peter, did not seek re election at the DCC AGM several months later on 8 Feb 2022.

The decision to not proceed with the Alcoa Grant for the Nature Play Area was justified at the time and has not limited the DCC in receiving Alcoa grants since, as evidenced by the recent grant for Defibrillators, First Aid Kits, and Training.

The DCC currently has several projects including the Nature Play Area, Skills Park, Coffee Table Book and Teenz which require someone to drive them forward. They all require a lot of work to complete, but it is extremely difficult to get someone in the community to step forward and take on these types of projects. The DCC projects (big and small) completed over the last 10 years have tended to be undertaken by the same small group of people.

In the time that I have been involved with the DCC, the Committee has contributed an enormous amount of time and energy in securing funding for and undertaking community projects in Dwellingup. They have encouraged input from the community and sort to include a diverse range of opinion. Some of the comment and accusations made at the DCC meeting on 26 Feb were unfounded and not made in the spirit of a community group seeking to work together for a common goal. Neither did they reflect any appreciation of the considerable work undertaken in good faith by a small group of volunteers.

John Cusack
Chair
Dwellingup Community Compact Inc
28 Feb 2023