

Jarrah forest destruction is ignored

In his article on the proposed iron ore mine in the Helena Aurora Range (*West Business*, 20/11) Ben Harvey suggests that there might be more opposition to the mine if it was "in the karri forests near Pemberton".

He is probably right, although not if you take the example of the existing bauxite mining operations in the jarrah forests near Perth.

Thousands of hectares of irreplaceable native forest, most of it also water catchment, has already been destroyed. The destruction is proceeding at a rate of up to 1000ha every year.

What is worse, the environmental watchdogs at the EPA have recently turned a blind eye to a significant expansion of this forest destruction, with Alcoa now exporting raw bauxite, in addition to refined alumina.

I will be sorry to see an iron ore mine in the Helena Aurora Range, an area of great beauty and biological interest.

However, what really saddens me is that such a fuss is being made about this relatively low-impact mining proposal while, at the same time, the year-by-year destruction of the jarrah forest goes on without a whimper of interest from government or the public.

Roger Underwood, Palmyra

Save banded iron range

Ben Harvey considers that the argument to allow Mineral

Hard call to save range or save jobs

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Harvey's article on Monday.

Resources to mine the Helena Aurora Range is economically compelling (*WestBusiness*, 20/11).

I don't agree.

On the day the EPA report was released recommending against these mines, MRL shareholders "celebrated" this rather bad news by pushing up the share price by 1.5 per cent.

By the end of that week it had increased 17.7 per cent.

Today the share price has close to doubled.

It appears that MRL's shareholders have correctly concluded this project is largely immaterial to shareholder value.

They rather like the company's more profitable activities, such as the Mt Marion lithium mine.

This is not surprising given that only in the past few weeks the president of Cliffs Natural Resources, which operates the neighbouring Koolyanobbing mines, said it was struggling to break even with its similarly

low-grade iron ore. MRL managing director Chris Ellison has also recently noted that heavy price discounting is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, and hence they may suspend operations until they have developed an innovative bulk ore transport system.

However, this is designed as a fully automated system. So that is goodbye to many of those claimed jobs that will be created.

These proposed mines are of minimal benefit to company shareholders and will do next to nothing to reduce the State debt.

MRL should stop wasting time and effort and instead concentrate on its other much more profitable activities.

The landscape of the Helena and Aurora Range has no rival for many hundreds of kilometres in any direction and the range is an unsurpassed biodiversity hotspot.

It is this concentration of ecological values that makes the range unique, despite what the mining lobbyists try to argue.

The Environmental Protection Authority and the many other scientists who are calling for a national park recognise this.

I respectfully ask that the Government heeds their advice, support the science, and protect the biggest and best of these banded ironstone ranges.

Carl Erbrich, Salter Point

Bring back aero display

I want to wholeheartedly agree with Michael Macaulay's letter about the ban on flying displays at future Australia Day celebrations (*Letters*, 20/11).

The displays have been an amazing and major part of the celebrations for so many people for so many years.

I cannot believe that a decision was made to stop the event. It is madness.

Get a grip, and bring back the planes now.

Christine Clark-Downs, Perth

Plane nonsense

The City of Perth's knee jerk reaction of deleting the flying display from the entertainment on Australia Day, and the reasons for doing so — respect for the families of the deceased — shows how political correctness is running rampant in local government.

The unfortunate incident did not encroach on public safety.

If the entire community is to be penalised for the action of one person, will our beloved civic leaders next ban public assembly on the foreshore?

Why?

Out of respect for the family of the man murdered while later leaving the fireworks display.

Daryl Binning, Winthrop

Citizenship crisis

When is the Governor-General going to step in and call a double dissolution election so we can throw the whole lot out and start again?

There are grounds.
Maggie Winterson, Rivervale