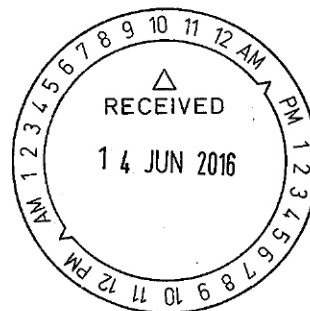




The Hon Tony Simpson MLA
Minister for Local Government; Community Services;
Seniors and Volunteering; Youth

Our Ref: 49-11377

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
GPO Box A11
PERTH WA 6837



Dear Mr O'Brien *Simon*

PETITION NO 116 – POINT MOORE, GERALDTON LEASES

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 May 2016 seeking comment on the abovenamed petition regarding the leasing arrangements at Point Moore in the City of Greater Geraldton.

An officer of my Department of Local Government and Communities contacted the City of Greater Geraldton for more information on the leasing arrangements at Point Moore, specifically the differing lease periods between the beach cottages, with expiry dates of 2025 and 2028, and the Belair Caravan Park, with a lease expiry of 2042. I am advised that there are approximately 176 beach cottages, with roughly half the leases expiring in 2025 and the other half in 2028. I understand that the differing lease dates for the beach cottages may have come about as a result of a shorter than usual renewal of half of the leases in or around 2014.

The City has advised that the beach cottages and caravan park, although both on Crown reserves vested in the City, are the subject of different management orders from the Department of Lands. The terms of the management order for the beach cottages only allow leases of up to 21 years at a time, while the caravan park management order allows leases of up to 42 years at a time. This would seem to explain why the leases do not have a common expiry date. The City advised that the 42 year lease for the caravan park is between itself and the park operator, while the lifestyle villages and cabins within the caravan park are leased individually to the tenants by the park operator. It is therefore likely that there are a range of expiry dates for the leases of individual properties within the caravan park.

I am advised that no decision has yet been made regarding a further extension of the leases for the beach cottages due to studies currently being done regarding coastal erosion, tidal inundation and septic systems. Under the terms of its management order, the City has a responsibility to protect and preserve the land.

I understand that studies have determined that Point Moore is at risk of coastal inundation and erosion and there is a concern that, as the coastline erodes, sewage from the septic system is going into the water table. This is clearly an important matter with potential impacts on both environmental and public health, and it is only right that the City commissions studies to fully understand the situation. Once those studies have been completed, the Council of the City of Greater Geraldton will review the findings and determine whether the leases will be renewed, with appropriate disclaimers in place. The City has assured my Department that the Point Moore residents have been, and will continue to be, kept fully informed of developments regarding their leases.

I note Hon Paul Brown's concerns for the residents of Point Moore and recognise that the beach cottages are an important source of affordable housing for many people, particularly seniors. The State Government's vision is for all Western Australians to age well and in place in communities where they matter, belong and contribute. The Age-Friendly WA Seniors Strategic Planning Framework encourages and supports local governments to plan and develop communities where seniors can age in place, and the provision of flexible and affordable housing options is critical to achieving this. I would encourage the City to actively engage with the residents of Point Moore to address their housing concerns and develop a solution that meets their current and future needs.

I trust that the above is useful to the Committee and thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the issues raised.

Yours sincerely



HON TONY SIMPSON MLA
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT; COMMUNITY SERVICES;
SENIORS AND VOLUNTEERING; YOUTH**

- 9 JUN 2016