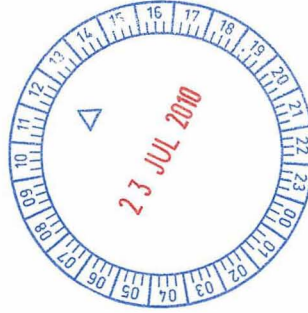


PUBLIC



MS Linda Omar  
Committee Clerk  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

**Submission: Inquiry into Shack Sites in Western Australia**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs advertised recently in the West Australian newspaper.

I am a supporter of the current Shack Site Communities Petitions that were lodged to convince the Government to review policy on shack communities in W.A. and to highlight public support for these sites.

My husband and I share shack ownership with two adult siblings and our parents at Wedge Island, I am a member of the Wedge Island Protection Association (WIPA) and active in their activities and programmes within the Wedge shack community.

WIPA is preparing a comprehensive submission to the Inquiry, and I fully endorse the views, assessments and recommendation contained within that submission.

However, I would like to focus on the things that are important to me as a mother of two young children and the recreational opportunities for us as a family.

My sister and I lived in Kalgoorlie before we started school and I can still remember the weekend visits to the bush for group BBQs and the fun of exploring with my friends. My parents started a tradition of taking school holidays at a coastal location and we spent different years at Kalbarri, Carnarvon, Exmouth and other places in-between.

Christmas Day was always at my grandparents' place where we spent the day with our many cousins. What I can still remember of those days is my city-based cousins were quick to become bored when the batteries in their new toys ran flat and wanted Nan to turn on the TV, but my sister and I were quite happy playing in Grandpa's extensive vege patch. I put this down to our early exposure to the Aussie bush and having to develop our own imaginations.

The holidays I most enjoyed were the isolated camping trips where we would spend up to two weeks based in a Jayco campervan at places like Ningaloo Station and Warra Station. Some of these camp sites accommodated many families and we kid would spend most of each day playing in the 'wilderness' and the protected waters. We were free to roam within given limits, given a list of do's and don'ts and were required to report back at regular times. We developed a sense of responsibility and enjoyed the freedom.

Dad took over an abandoned shack at Wedge in 1997. By this time I had finished Uni, was working fulltime, taking overseas holidays and starting to settle down with my eventual husband. My mum, dad and younger brother spent many weekends upgrading the shack and boasting of their handiwork. I

joined them on regular occasions and reflected on the fun of the rugged trip to get to Wedge and the social interaction of family and fellow shackies. It reminded me of the times I had spent as a kid on the camping trips to the NW.

We now use the shack regularly; my kids have been going to Wedge since they were both about 12 weeks old. My six year old daughter, Millie, tells news at school on numerous occasions of her Wedge adventures and draws many pictures. Prior to taking my son Ethan to Wedge for his first trip, she was overheard telling him of the shack rules, that he had to listen to Poppy and not to run off into the bush. Millie has probably developed a better appreciation of water conservation, environmental management and sustainable power basics than the average suburban first year science student at Uni. Ethan, now almost three, being a typical boy, likes to get his hands dirty and wants to help with all things using tools. He has plenty of opportunity at Wedge and time is taken to allow him to do so. They both love the beach and the opportunity to spend a lot of time there (sun smart of course) and because you can drive onto the beach all the gear you need to take is readily available.

We have taken the kids overseas once and been to Rottneest with them last year. The reality is we would not be able to afford regular visits to Rotto even if you could rely on getting a unit and travelling in planes to SE Asia with kids can be a nightmare.

Wedge gives us the opportunity, not only as a family unit, but as an extended family, to have affordable regular breaks with the convenience of most your gear being able to remain on site so packing isn't an issue either. Contrary to the line quoted by bureaucrats, the shacks and the site are not exclusive to the owners. We have numerous trips sharing with other families and all the kids playing together. That's what the place is about.

I would like my kids to have the opportunity to be exposed to the things that I thought were important for me to experience during the formative years.

I would like my kids to enjoy their grandparents company in this relaxed environment and build their cherished memories for reflection later in life.

If the Wedge shack life disappeared, then more than the corrugated structures would be lost forever.

I am sure the government can find a way to enable long term tenure for these shack sites if it wants to. **The issue is does it believe there is a social need that should be met and does it have the will to make it happen.**

I hope your wisdom prevails and common sense can be accommodated.

Yours faithfully,



Rachel Coleman

16<sup>th</sup> July 2010