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Sheet**

RE: Inquiry into Shack Sites in WA

DATE: 2 July 2010

Linda

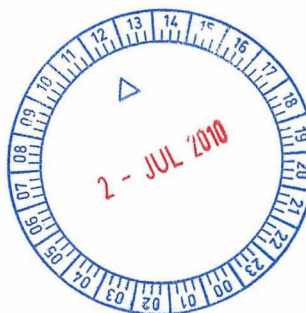
Please find attached a submission from the Heritage Council of WA regarding the Inquiry into Shack Sites in Western Australia.

If you would like an electronic copy of our submission please telephone me on 9220 4122 or email Vicky.rapley@hc.wa.gov.au

Kind Regards

Vicky Rapley

A/Executive Support Officer





HERITAGE
COUNCIL
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2 July 2010

Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment
and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

PUBLIC

Dear Chairman

Inquiry into Shack Sites in Western Australia

Thank you for your invitation to the Office of Heritage to provide a written submission on the issue of Shack Sites in Western Australia. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this matter.

The Heritage Council of Western Australia is charged with the compilation of the State's Register of Heritage Places under the terms of the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*. This Register is the authoritative list of places throughout the State that have a high level of cultural heritage significance. Cultural significance is determined by evaluating a place against a comprehensive set of evaluative criteria.

There are currently 1,300 places and precincts on the Register. Approximately another 550 have been identified as warranting assessment, but have yet to be scheduled.

The Heritage Council has been aware for some time about community concerns regarding the conservation and management of shacks and shack settlements in Western Australia. The Council's decisions to date are outlined in the attached document, together with a brief overview of the history and development of shacks from a cultural heritage perspective.

Yours sincerely


Graeme Gammie
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Enc.

**Office of Heritage Submission on the Standing Committee on
Environment and Public Affairs Enquiry into Shack Sites in Western
Australia**

Australia has a long history of informal/illegal occupation of vacant Crown land, or squatting. Pastoral squatting was widespread during the early colonial period in the eastern states, and became so widespread that this form of occupation was eventually formalised through lease agreements. Squatters often were, or became, very wealthy as a result of their pastoral activities, and the term 'squatter' came to be associated with the upper classes and social prestige.

Squatting in Western Australia, is more associated with the establishment of informal settlements, although the origins of many of these also lie in the pastoral industry. The drivers for the establishment of these settlements varies from region to region, and over time.

In June 1994 there were in excess of 1,200 squatter shacks along Central coastline of Western Australia alone. It is not known how many are located along the south coastline, but there are many examples. A list of shacks and shack settlements recorded in the Heritage Council's database is provided at Attachment 1.

Historically the materials used to construct shacks were usually light weight, as they had to be carted long distances on sandy tracks. Second hand materials and off cuts from the saw mills were common, as was corrugated iron. Furniture too was usually second hand.

From a cultural heritage perspective, coastal shack settlements represent a distinctive Australian out-door way of life characterised by simple, low scale informal development, where the design and construction of the shacks demonstrate the resourcefulness, versatility and creativity of builders and their occupants. In many cases, they have their origins in the development of the pastoral and fishing industries. In other cases, they originate from a time when there were few formal recreational opportunities on Western Australia's coastline outside of the larger cities and towns.

South West Shacks

In the early settlement phase of the South West and Great Southern regions (1827-1860), farmers often had to drive their cattle long distances to find sufficient feed. They also had to move them from coastal areas to inland areas to ensure they had a varied diet. This was because coastal soils had mineral deficiencies that resulted in debilitating weakness and death if animals were grazed here too long. Coastal scrub was therefore often fired to stimulate new growth and the cattle driven in between Christmas and New Year to graze for about 4-5 months. Some of the older huts in D'Entrecasteaux National Park date from this time and were built to shelter drovers and their families.

After 1860s, the Government sought to regulate this 'free use' of coastal land and issued leases to graziers who continued to move their herds into the area each year. Many of the huts in D'Entrecasteaux National Park are named after the families who leased the land and built the huts, but as none of the leases were fenced, people mustering the animals ranged across the landscape, and sheltered at whatever hut was available.

Summer grazing continued in the Denmark area until the 1930s and 40s. Peaceful Bay was a popular destination, and some people returned each year to camp over the summer. Other people began to join the drovers for recreational activities, most importantly fishing, and an informal settlement began to form, despite the remoteness and inaccessibility.

As leisure time increased in the early 20th century, other settlements were established that were associated with other activities, particularly fishing and camping. Windy Harbour, for example, was identified as a superior sheltered fishing spot in the 1920s, and rough huts had begun to be established by the 1930s. The increased use of cars in the 1950s led to more huts being established and to concerns about unregulated development. At Windy Harbour, this was addressed by the formation of a Progress Association that resulted in the land being surveyed and building controls being introduced. Approximately 220 cottages have been developed at Windy Harbour on individual leases.

By the 1940s, Peaceful Bay had attracted professional salmon fishermen who permanently camped at the settlement. As camping in the area became more popular, a reserve for this purpose was established, which again aimed to regulate development. Small blocks were then subdivided and leased for the erection of 'holiday cottages and beach huts'. There are now more than 250 holiday homes in the area and the area is a reserve managed by the Shire of Denmark.

In D'Entrecasteaux National Park, summer droving continued into the 1980s, with the last drive occurring in 1989. By this time, fishing had become an important activity, with huts being built to shelter both recreational and commercial fishermen and their families.

There are numerous other informal shacks and settlements along the south-west coast. Some, such as Camfield within D'Entrecasteaux National Park, have had a reserve created which has been vested in the local government. The history and details of these smaller settlements has not been well documented.

Shacks in the North West

In the north west, shack settlements developed primarily as holiday destinations, rather than in relation to the pastoral or fishing industries.

From the early 20th century onwards, farming families from inland towns such as Three Springs, Perenjori and Carnamah, travelled to the coast to camp following the end of harvest or during the school holidays. As this practice continued year after year, they began to construct shacks to use as accommodation. The practice is known to have occurred at many points along the coast as far as Northampton.

The development of the rock lobster industry in the 1940s resulted in a new form of shack dweller at settlements along the coast. Living close to the fishing grounds was important as it reduced transportation and other costs. Crayfishermen were responsible for the construction of many shacks in the Shires of Carnamah and Irwin, with the men mostly based in Geraldton and Dongara, but occasionally also Perth and Fremantle. The shacks were only occupied during the season. 'Ownership' of shacks changed regularly as people swapped locations or retired from the industry. They were often also relocated to new areas, while some were simply abandoned.

Shack settlements were also established closer to Perth. Wedge Island Shack Settlement in the Shire of Dandaragan was established in the 1950s and includes 320 shacks. There are believed to be nearly 150 shacks at Grey.

Cultural Heritage and Squatter Shacks

The 1999 *State Government Squatter Policy: 12.5 Removal of Unauthorised Structures* has caused community concern. The policy has resulted in the Heritage Council being asked to consider several nominations of shack settlements. The policy has made it difficult to conserve examples of this distinctive aspect of Western Australia's history, as registration would be contrary to a government policy in relation to illegal occupation of coastal crown land.

In 1999 in response to the policy, the Heritage Council requested information from the Shires of Carnamah, Irwin and Dandaragan on squatter shacks in their areas, to assist in identifying a representative group for possible inclusion in the Register. After extensive negotiations, it was agreed the Shire of Dandaragan would conserve three representative shacks for interpretive purposes at Sandy Cape, and the remainder would be demolished. The representative huts were inadequately secured and in 2002 they had to be demolished after they were severely damaged by fire.

In 2001 the shack settlement at Wedge Island was nominated for consideration for the Register, which precipitated discussion of the similar settlement at Grey. In light of the Government policy, DEC (then CALM) was advised that these settlements would not be assessed for the Register on the understanding that redevelopment was to be undertaken in close consultation with the Heritage Council.

In 2005, the Heritage Council reviewed a study of squatter shacks in the D'Entrecasteaux National Park and identified key examples that warranted assessment for the Register. In contrast to the squatter huts in the north, DEC has management strategies for these huts to maintain them as shelter and accommodation for park visitors, but hut 'owners' are also acknowledged and allowed to use the huts and secure personal items on site.

In 2006, a detailed nomination was submitted for the Donnelly River Mouth Hut Precinct and in this instance the Register Committee determined that the place should be assessed prior to any development, but also reiterated its previous request that DEC work closely with the Office of Heritage.

Peaceful Bay (P14343) has also been identified as warranting assessment for the State Register. A conservation plan for the heritage precinct was compiled in 2003 to guide development and change.

If the State Government Policy on illegal settlement of Crown Land was to change, it is possible that the Heritage Council could review its position on Wedge and Grey and determine that these settlements should be assessed for the Register.

The heritage assessment of Donnelly River Mouth Hut Precinct has yet to be undertaken.

National and International Context

South Australia

Port Augusta – 300 beach shacks

Innes National Park – 1970s+, Registered in the Register of the National Estate, mostly constructed from CGI and second hand materials.

Port Milang – 80 shacks, 1950+, provisional state heritage listing

There are also numerous shacks along the Coorong and along the Glenelg River that are leased to occupiers.

New South Wales

Era Beach Settlement, Royal National Park, Sydney - 1920s, 94 shacks, registered in the Register of the National Estate and by the National Trust, has historic associations with a community of bushwalkers from Sydney from the 1930s; people residing at place during depression; and people involved with arts, photography and literature in post WW2. The place has pastoral associations from 1831. Includes a range of structures from simple gable roofed CGI cottages. The shacks are unique and personal examples of design and innovation. Some cabins are good examples of vernacular architecture and are remarkable intact.

Little Garie Cabin Community – 1920s+, Registered in the Register of the National Estate, associated with Depression, coal miner's, pioneer graziers/settlers; twenty cabins and a community hall on coast; constructed from recycled material but also raw materials form the natural environment.

Tasmania

At least 22 places near coast and lakes in Central Highlands region, 1335 recognised shacks, 1944 +, constructed for recreational use.

Many of the above shack settlements were given freehold, life tenure or long term leases in recent years

New Zealand

Squatter shacks, or bachs, are considered an iconic part of New Zealand history and culture. This was particularly the case during from the middle of the 20th century onwards as they symbolised the beach holiday lifestyle that was becoming more accessible to the middle class. They were typically constructed like Australian shacks of a variety of recycled materials, although many have now been upgraded to be more substantial holiday homes.

SQUATTER SHACKS RECORDED IN THE HERITAGE COUNCIL DATABASE

Region	LGA	Place N°	Place Name	Consolidated Address	To Be Assessed	Listing Type
Wheatbelt	Dandaragan	4251	Squatter Shack Settlement	Wedge Island	No	Classified by the National Trust
Wheatbelt	Dandaragan	5818	Wilson's Hut	Koonah Road Dandaragan	N/A	Municipal Inventory
Midwest	Carnamah	6955	Squatter Shack 103	Dunes - high Coolimba	N/A	Squatter Shack Survey
Wheatbelt	Dandaragan	10521	Grey Shack Settlement	Located between Lancelin and Cervantes	No	
Goldfields	Ravensthorpe	10654	Point Anne Hut	Fitzgerald River National Park	N/A	
South West	Manjimup	11391	Banksia Camp Hut	Walpole	No	
Great Southern	Jerramungup	11697	Bark Hut	The Esplanade Bremer Bay	N/A	Municipal Inventory
Great Southern	Denmark	14426	Shingle Hut - Baines Property	723 South Coast Hwy Bow Bridge	N/A	Municipal Inventory
Great Southern	Denmark	14426	Shingle Hut - Baines Property	723 South Coast Hwy Bow Bridge	N/A	Town Planning Scheme
Great Southern	Albany	15576	Fisherman's Shack (fmr)	Two Peoples Bay Albany	N/A	Municipal Inventory
Wheatbelt	Dandaragan	15824	Sandy Cape Beach Shacks	Sandy Cape Beach Dandaragan	N/A	
South West	Manjimup	15960	Bolghinup Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program
South West	Manjimup	15961	Crystal Springs Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	Municipal Inventory
South West	Manjimup	15994	Voutier Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program
South West	Manjimup	16154	East Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program

SQUATTER SHACKS RECORDED IN THE HERITAGE COUNCIL DATABASE

South West	Manjimup	16158	Mottram Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16159	Coodamurrup Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program
South West	Manjimup	16172	Tuckett Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16177	Huts	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program
South West	Manjimup	16262	Fisherman Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16271	Kanny Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16278	Westie Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16279	Cranker Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program
South West	Manjimup	16281	Rooney Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16282	Brennan Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16283	Scanlon Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16284	Wauchope Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16285	May Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Manjimup	16286	North Hut	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	No	
South West	Nannup	17517	Donnelly River Mouth - Hut Precinct	D'Entrecasteaux National Park	Yes	HCWA Assesst Program