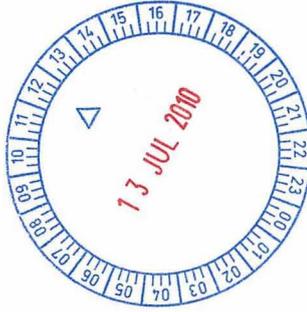


**PUBLIC**

Mr & Mrs R. S. Bender



July 9, 2010.

The Hon. Brian Ellis MLC

Chairman

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Parliament House

Perth WA 6000

The Chairman

### **Inquiry into Shack Site in Western Australia**

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

I am a current shack owner at Wedge Island (W2) and have been spending a great deal of my recreational time at Wedge Island over the past 45 years.

My Uncle owned a shack at Wedge Island when I was just a boy, and he introduced me to this wonderful place of crystal clear water, huge sand dunes, great fishing and surfing. As a young lad this was my utopia.

As I got older I was able to introduce Wedge to many of my friends who also fell in love with the place. We built shacks and shared many a holiday and long weekend enjoying this beautiful environment.

I got married and we were blessed with a daughter. She first dipped her toes in the water at Wedge when she was only 4 months old, and has never stopped doing it since.

Wedge Island has been a great place of learning for her. Learning to swim, surf, fish and even drive a vehicle. However it has also taught her about the fragile environment, how we need to manage this area and the things we as a community can do to preserve this pristine environment.

Through the management of the previous Wedge Island Progress Association to the now Wedge Island Protection Association a lot has been achieved in maintaining this coastal environment. Dune restoration and preservation, rubbish management, helpful track signage, support for the first aid post that many people have accessed over the years. Organisation of many local community activities to engage members, friends and family of this shack community. This has brought people of all walks of life together and in this day and age says something!

I accept progress and realise with the construction of this new access road a considerable amount of pressure will be brought to bare on the shack community of Wedge Island. However I believe the "shackies" and new visitors can co exist and both enjoy the wonders Wedge has to offer. There will need to be areas set aside for camping, caravanning etc. Our shacks can be upgraded to a better level of acceptance by building and environmental standards.

More services could be provided than are current by various departments and shire. Most shack owners value the area where their shack resides, by reducing the risk of erosion in the planting of trees and shrubs, some even use solar and wind generation to reduce their carbon footprint, I myself use solar power to run my re Fridgeration.

Services that would help improve this area with the influx of more visitors would be public toilet facilities, designated parking areas, improved signage, allocated camping and caravan areas.

To retain the heritage of Wedge Island and keep a great community spirit I believe a longer lease extension would be ideal. If the shacks were to be demolished this would place a great deal of pressure on other existing areas at holiday time.

In summary I believe "shackies" can co exist with the influx of new visitors, yes there will need to be inevitable changes across the board, however progress is all about moving forward and benefiting the wider community, hopefully this will be achieved.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Bender', written over a horizontal line.

Ross Bender

July 9, 2010