

LAZY DAYS CARAVAN PARK,
452 BUSSELL HIGHWAY,
BUSSELTON 6280
27TH APRIL 2009



THE PRINCIPAL RESEARCH OFFICER,
ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE,
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
PERTH. W.A. 6000.

Dear Dr Abernethie,

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views in regard to the inquiry into the Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and Camping Grounds) in Western Australia.

When we purchased Lazy Days in 1999, of the 126 sites on the Park, 64 were occupied by semi-permanents, 29 by permanent residents, 8 workers in their own vans on a verbal agreement that they could have the same status as permanent residents and 7 standard cabins. This left 18 sites for passing through tourists.

While this mix looked good on paper and provided a good income, most of the semi's and permanents were newly located onto the Park just prior to its sale. Many of the vans had illegal structures built around them, many of the residents were not compatible with each other especially when owners encroached their area a bit further at every opportunity. Most were hostile toward tourists and management for booking tourists into the park.

Coming from a friendly, pro-active farming community, we found the angst and continual complaints from residents and tourists alike more than we could handle so we informed all those with permanently set up structures that there would be no more permanents on the park. When they wanted to leave they were to take their units with them or sell them for removal. While this did not make us popular, it had the effect of changing the demography of the Park. We have purchased a lot of the legally set up units as people have left and replaced old vans with cabins for tourists.

After 10 years, we now have 2 permanent residents, 5 semi-permanents; 11 standard cabins, 20 on-site vans, 8 ensuited cabins and 11 park homes and 46 van and tent sites. We have found the tourist demand for on-site accommodation far outweighs that for sites.

If we were to be zoned Caravan and Camping, we would not be economically viable. On a rule of thumb basis, each site on the Park must make at least \$1897.00 annually for us to break even. This just does not happen. If we depended on our site occupancy we would not even be able to pay our Shire rates and land tax, let alone all the other costs involved. During the period 19/12/08 to 27/4/09 (130 nights) there was the possibility of 5980 site nights. In reality, only 810 were occupied site nights. This breaks down to 464 nights at peak price with an income of \$13950.00 and the remainder at off-peak and seniors' special rates bringing an income of \$6920.00, an overall income from sites of \$20870.00 for 130 nights. This shows an income of \$160 per day, over 46 sites (almost \$3.50 per day per site.) This was over our busiest time. From now on until October we will probably average about 1 caravan a week staying about 2/3 nights if not just passing through over night. If it were not for our cabins we would be unable to continue in business.

We depend on our cabin income during the summer/ autumn period to tide use over the following 8/9 months of limited income.

We currently offer single workers a 28 day contract in our vans at a reasonable rate while they look for more permanent accommodation. Under the new zoning we would have to cease this practice creating economic hardship for us as well as problems for the workers. It is the profit made from the cabins and the workers vans that makes up for the loss on the sites.

We do not have any staff and we do not draw wages from the park. All profit is currently put back into the park in the form of upgrading cabins, power lines etc. We have been living on our invested money from the sale of our farm, but with the economic downturn, our future is uncertain- as is that of many others.

If we are rezoned to Caravan and Camping, we will have to close the gates on the business. If we are rezoned to Special Purpose Zone as per the LTPS for the Busselton Shire our park will lose its re-sale value and, at our age, that is a major concern to us. While we have no intention of selling the park, nor do we wish to apply to turn it into a modern resort, the time will come in the not too distant future when we will have to retire, or find something less demanding than what we are doing. We had depended on at least realizing the cost of all the cabins and up-grades to cover our old age. No purchaser is going to spend a lot of money for land that is limited in its potential by a lot of red tape and the necessity for expensive applications for re-zoning to change the park to a more viable business. No one will ever recoup \$4m from just caravan and tent sites.

It seems that no matter what business we are in, interference from a government level has created problems for us. Prior to buying Lazy Days we were dairy farmers. We were told by parliamentarians at the time that the dairy industry needed to be de-regulated to free up the industry. We got out of farming because de-regulation was going to ruin the industry, (and that has been proven) now it seems as if too much regulation is going to ruin our lifestyle choice once more.

One thing that does irk, is the situation where private householders all along the W.A. coast can, and do, advertise their homes for summer holidays and make a huge profit without the need to pay Shire Licences or land taxes. They can also have pools without needing to have certificates of pool management, first aid or lifesaving. In fact they are not even on site while their paying guests are installed to take responsibility for pool users' safety. There are no annual audits of their property or monthly inspections of their pools. These people are taking trade away from the caravan parks owners, who need the cabin occupancy to survive, with no cost or comeback on them at all. We are getting rid of our pool because we cannot afford the new regulations.

In summing up, we are providing a middle of the line service to the public who cannot afford, or have no wish to holiday at the resorts. We pride ourselves on our clean facilities and the peace and tranquility where guests can sit in the shade and listen to the many birds that congregate in the park. To our minds the zoning 'Tourism' allows us to continue to do so, with the flexibility to add more cabins if the demand is there (or if we can afford to). More importantly it provides us with the security we need in regard to our own future when, and if, we need to sell.

JOHN AND MARGRET TEALE
MALLOAD PTY LTD trading as
LAZY DAYS CARAVAN AND HOLIDAY PARK.

Re Margret Teale.