

CCI sub 51

**Beckingham, Vanessa**

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**From:** Murray Knowles [knowles7@bigpond.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 April 2009 10:54 PM  
**To:** Committee, Economics & Industry Standing  
**Subject:** Submission  
**Attachments:** EISCsubmission.doc

Attn Principal Research Officer

Attached is a submission from the Wedge Island Protection Association.  
A signed hard copy will be provided

Regards  
Murray Knowles  
for WIPA

## Wedge Island Protection Association Inc

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The Principal Research Officer  
Economics and Industry Standing Committee  
Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Re: Inquiry into the Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and  
Camping Grounds) in Western Australia

The Wedge Island Protection Association (WIPA) has represented the recreational shack users at Wedge Island since 1968. The 350 shack owners have been leaseholders at the site since 1995 with DEC (previously CALM) being the land manager.

WIPA wishes to comment on the servicing of recreational users in isolated areas with no infrastructure and in the context of this inquiry, specifically the demand for long and short-stay sites.

The Wedge leases expire in June 2011 and the future facilities at the Reserve are problematic. The 10,000 individuals who use the shacks are unlikely to have their recreational needs met by traditional alternatives.

What is needed is some creative thinking and perhaps this inquiry provides an opportunity.

Under existing Caravan Park/Camping Ground regulations, the water supply stipulations are a costly exercise, especially where no other infrastructure exists. A commercial developer is unlikely to commit to the scale required to service the need. Hence the availability of legitimate sites (either caravan, chalet or camping) will be limited and the demand will exceed supply. The existing recreational users are quite prepared for limited facilities and are self-sustaining but this model does not fit with existing regulations.

It would appear affordable self-contained family facilities are not keeping up with demand. At Rottnest, for example, cottages are booked out a year in advance during the peak periods and if you are not in the on-site booking loop, your chances of having a family holiday the following year are almost non-existent. Caravan parks throughout the State are either being redeveloped for upmarket tourist facilities or sites are on a first come first served basis, especially in the north. DEC controlled sites in national parks can be occupied for 28 continuous days. Parents with school-aged kids can only visit during term breaks and for

equity of access should be balloted as with Rottnest. The bottom line however is that demand exceeds supply and WA families will holiday in SE Asia due to affordability and availability.

So what is a viable alternative?

The development of suitable sites for the self-contained family budget market is either not economic for commercial operators or is beyond the capacity of government agencies to meet demand.

Utilisation of community resources should be facilitated through the private investment base. Models need to be developed to allow this to happen. By creating a critical mass and applying the economy of scale, infrastructure can be established to which other commercial interests can be attracted to cater for the full range of visitor needs.

At Wedge Island for example, apart from the community skills inventory, an investment pool of at least \$10M would be available to direct to cottage facilities and the economic benefits to the State would be enormous. In exchange for long-term tenure of an unvested Crown reserve, which would otherwise become a car park, the recreational needs of an existing market would be met and an opportunity for formal caravanning and camping sites created.

For your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Peter Marr  
President  
WIPA  
30<sup>th</sup> April 2009