

Abernethie, Loraine

From: Grant Trew [Grant.Trew@dsr.wa.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 21 May 2009 9:21 AM
To: Abernethie, Loraine
Cc: Steve Bennett
Subject: Inquiry into the Provision, Use and Regulation of Caravan Parks (and Camping Grounds) in Western Australia
Attachments: 20090521092013323.pdf

Dr Loraine Abernethie,

Please find attached an electronic copy of the submission I am posting today. Thank you again for the extension of the close date.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.

Regards,

Grant Trew
Team Leader - Recreation

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Sport and Recreation**

DSR file 2009/170/35
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Dr Loraine Abernethie
Principal Research Officer
Legislative Assembly Committee Office
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Dr Abernethie

INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION, USE AND REGULATION OF CARAVAN PARKS (AND CAMPING GROUNDS) IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to the above inquiry.

The Department of Sport and Recreation is the lead agency responsible for the implementation of government policy and initiatives in sport and recreation. A key role of the department is to contribute to the healthy lifestyle of Western Australians by increasing physical activity in the community through sport and active recreation.

Active recreation can be defined as those non-competitive physical activities that take place for leisure purposes in our community. It can be categorised into areas such as aquatics, outdoor recreation and adventure, fitness, tracks and trails, and community recreation. Recreation plays a vital role in our wellbeing and brings people together to create stronger communities.

A quality and accessible recreation service provides maximum opportunities for the entire community, including people with disabilities, youth, the elderly and the disadvantaged, to participate in activities. The department's "Community Perceptions Research"¹ has found 20 ways in which sport and recreation benefit people; these benefits can be further categorised into the following six areas:

1. Physical wellbeing
2. Emotional wellbeing
3. Social and friendships
4. Life skills
5. Being part of the community
6. Improving the community

¹ "Community Perceptions Research", Department of Sport and Recreation, May 2008



Building stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities

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Caravanning and camping are significant and affordable recreational activities for a wide range of Western Australians and provide an initial and vital link to further recreational pursuits, e.g. bush walking, fishing, surfing, hiking. These activities also provide significant access to experiential learning opportunities.

This opportunity is being curtailed in several ways, including:

1. In the northwest, many caravan parks have been taken over and permanently booked by mining companies seeking accommodation for their workers. This has two adverse impacts:
 - i. Caravanners and campers are unable to make bookings or find alternative locations and are therefore reducing the length of their stays (and reducing the amount of tourist dollars spent); and
 - ii. Illegal camping is increasing which ultimately causes further problems such as spot fires, dumping of rubbish and liquid waste and the consequent pollution of water ways and roadsides.

2. Throughout the caravan industry, caravan parks are being converted into de facto retirement homes. On site 'vans', which are in fact prefabricated villas of substance, have become a very popular choice of permanent accommodation for retirees.

The protection of free or low cost camping or camping provided through the national parks systems by the Department of Environment and Conservation and other land managers are valuable resources which provide an experiential opportunity for all Western Australians and visitors. It is important that access to these low key affordable camping grounds and natural sites is protected as an important asset that contributes to the Western Australian outdoor lifestyle.

Please do not hesitate to contact Grant Trew on ☎ 9492 9753 or email grant.trew@dsr.wa.gov.au should you require further clarification or contribution.

Yours sincerely



Jennifer Riatti
Director, Programs and Services

20 May 2009