

Submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs.

PetitionNo. 50

Promoter Mr Ray Hill

PUBLIC



This issue has not been presented to the Parliamentary Onbusman

This petition has been initiated because a written political promise made by the Liberal Party prior to the last election to reconvene the Wedge and Grey Taskforce is apparently not going to be honoured.

The taskforce was a mechanism to review how other states have incorporated the retention of their shack communities and determine a way forward for Wedge and Grey.

In Western Australia, the current removal policy was determined by the Burke Labour Government in 1989 and all shack settlements between Cervantes and Kalbarri have subsequently been demolished by the Shires.

At the time, Wedge and Grey were placed under the control of DEC and the shacks leased back to their owners for a period of six years.

Many shacks were legally constructed under the auspices of Fisheries and several remain as fisherman's shacks to this day. Many were sold by the fishermen to non-fishermen.

Leases have been extended twice, current leases expires in 2011. We have been advised that they will not be renewed.

The government has however agreed to allow the retention of the professional fisherman occupied shacks. This is discriminatory.

The shacks fill a roll that no other current forms of accommodation can fulfil. They are unique in their own way and each community has its own sense of place and cultural significance. This has now been recognised by the National Trust.

My family's shack was originally built on Garden Island.

When the Garden Island Shacks were forced to leave, the then owners moved it to its current location at Grey.

I am advised that this was suggested to them as an alternative by the authorities concerned with their removal from Garden Island.

The WA Government has a rare opportunity to follow the example of other Australian states and recognise the value of these two settlements.

With guidance, these settlements, which contain some 500 dwellings between them, can become both a tourist attraction and an example of what can be achieved in the way of environment retention and self sufficiency for electricity and water in a community.

Grey has some 130 dwellings, most of which utilise solar and/or wind power.

Buildings are mainly constructed of recycled materials with rain water their main source of water.

On average it is believed some 10000 visitors are welcomed by the owners as visitors each year and most areas around the shacks is natural bush. There is no bitumen and very few fences.

Please insist the Request of the Petition is met by the Government so that these settlements can be improved and kept for future generations.

A fair and equitable outcome is all we ask.

We will not be eradicated without a fight!