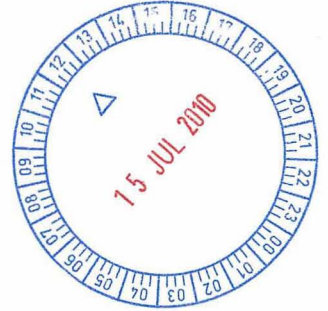


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PUBLIC



Submission on Inquiry into Shack Sites in WA
to
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council
Parliament of Western Australia
July 2010
From
Denise Murton

To the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide information to you and raise certain issues to help inform government in the development of policy relating to shack sites in Western Australia.

My partner & I have had a shack at Grey for slightly more than fifteen years (January 1995); this shack was constructed another eighteen years before we began using it.

We have spent every school holiday and long weekend at Grey since then along with our children and their friends, our parents, siblings, friends and numerous others.

Every year for several years, Grey Conservation & Community Association (both my partner and I have stood on the Committee for more than ten years in various positions – I am currently the Secretary/Treasurer) have invited the CanTeen Organisation to visit with us and my partner & I were deeply involved in the organisation and catering of these weekends. We would billet the children out over several shacks and we would arrange and fund the catering. We arranged tours and entertainments for them and it was truly rewarding for all of us.

The area of Grey has been classified as worthy of heritage classification – if it is worth saving on paper it is worth saving in fact.

Grey has been in existence for approximately sixty (60) years, this is about 1/3 of Western Australia's history as a whole.

It is a snap shot of Western Australian life from many years ago. Items now extinct or only found in museums are in use every day at Grey for example "Metters" wood stoves, kerosene refridgerators, wood chip water heaters, kerosene "tilly" lamps. Alternators made from 44 gallon drums cut in half & mounted on a wind driven platform; corrugated tin sheds and out-houses; water tanks and verandahs hung with fishing tackle and thongs. It is full of examples of how the community has used their ingenuity to make/invent items "necessity being the mother of invention". This is how Australians came by their ability to survive and thrive in harsh and inhospitable surroundings both in Australia and during the wars. This attitude and self-sufficiency is in little evidence now!

Grey has been an in forefront of recycling and conservation for many years. We use and re-use materials constantly, we must conserve water (no mains supply) and power (no mains electricity), we have received grants for the rehabilitation of sand dunes. We use solar and wind power, natural ventilation and low environmental impact ideals.

We need to save this experience for the future generations and those of us here now. Children need to experience first-hand the Australian bush mentality and sense of community and place very sadly missing in today's world. They need to experience a day let loose on the beach, examine lizards and snakes, insects and birds, kangaroos and emus in the wild. Australian shrubs, trees and grasses first hand.

The tourism in Western Australia would value greatly from the experience provided by this community. In years gone by the 4WD tourist buses would detour though these communities especially so international visitors could see the shack sites. There is a huge market for tourism managed wisely in this area.

Grey is and will remain a small community with no shops or other services which could vie for commercial competition with the surrounding townships (eg Cervantes, Jurien and Lancelin). In fact, Grey has invested in these existing townships by buying supplies, fuel and materials thereby increasing revenue to these areas for many years. If Grey is to be eradicated who will replace this lost revenue?

We believe that in concert with current government policy (albeit now outdated and unsuitable) we can work together to achieve and contemporise the aims and objectives of the government overarching vision whilst still retaining the shack site at Grey.

The example set by the other states in Australia –

SOUTH AUSTRALIA – eg Pondalowie Bay & Inneston, Milang

TASMANIA- eg Sandy Cape, Sundowner Point, Strahan, etc

NEW SOUTH WALES – Era, Little Garie, Burning Palms, Bonnie Vale, etc

- all of whom had similar policies to Western Australia before realising the worth in community continuity, irreplaceable and unique heritage and the commercial value in tourism, is worthy of examination and consideration by Western Australian policy makers.

We have tried for several years to open a dialogue with Dandaragan Shire Council but have been rudely rebuffed over the years, it would have been helpful to all to have a relationship with the local shire but they were uncommunicative and negative in the extreme (and this is from personal experience).

Grey has survived many years with no services or external support and we expect no less now. However, we do wish to continue as a robust and living presence in Western Australian history and, being adaptable, we believe we can work in harmony with government plans to ensure our continued existence, to retain our cultural identity and sense of place and community.

Should you wish further information or references please do not hesitate to contact me.



DENISE J MURTON

13/7/2010