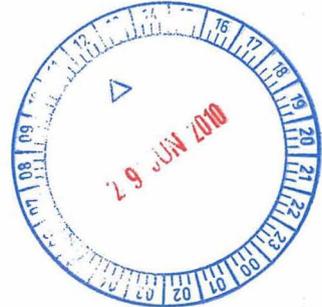


Our Ref: 10.4.1/ICR20440

Committee Clerk
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Sir/Madam,

INQUIRY INTO SHACK SITES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Northampton Shire Council takes this opportunity to lodge a submission for the inquiry into Shack Sites on public lands in Western Australia.

Our submission is based on previous and current experiences within the Shire of Northampton.

In recent times we have had four known shacks appear on unallocated crown land, two of those within the last twelve months. A large shed and a caravan/shack have been constructed on unallocated crown land at the location known as Lucky Bay. The shed is reported to be owned by a motor cycle club the other caravan/shack owner is unknown. These two structures have been on the unallocated land for over 10 years. They have previously been reported to the Department of Lands however no action has been taken to remove them.

Near these shacks sites is a crown reserve that has a Management Order drawn in favour of the Northampton Shire Council for cottages and camping. There are 33 legitimate shacks on the reserve, the above two are outside the reserve and when this was brought to the attention of the Department of Lands their recommended resolution was to simply relocate the reserve boundary. This has not happened and is considered to be another example of cost and responsibility shifting from the State Government to the Council.

The most recent shacks have occurred on unallocated crown land north of the Kalbarri townsite in an area known as Paradise Flats. The two shacks/camps have been set up by local indigenous families. Again these camps have been reported to the Department of Lands and no action to date has been taken by that Department to have them removed.

If action is not taken to remove shacks on unallocated land it can, and has proven in the past in other areas of the state, lead to a community being developed. Once that community has been developed services from the local government is then demanded, such as refuse removal, road access etc. Such services will no doubt be a large cost to the Shires rate payers with no income coming from the communities themselves. It is further noted, that the settlements resulting from these informal shack developments are not reflected in the Shire's planning strategies. This can lead to significant land use conflicts, again having to be managed by the local government.

With the Kalbarri situation, the particular area of land is zoned "Parks and Recreation" under *Town Planning Scheme No. 9* and the use of the land for shack development does not align with the purpose of the zoning. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a local matter in terms of breaching a local Town Planning Scheme it does not help the situation when the Department will not act by requiring these informal settlements to be removed.

It is further noted that the development of the above two shacks has also angered other local indigenous families who claim to also have a right to be on this area of land. This no doubt will result in additional shacks being erected.

The State government needs to lead the way and apply a firm hand in having such shacks removed as soon as they appear or are reported to them. To simply allow any persons to continue using them is unacceptable and if remain unchecked it creates concerns and animosity within the local communities, who have to pay their way to receive services.

A further issue is that any development within the Shire in townsites etc must process through the correct planning and building control processes and laws.

If the development of shacks continues to be unchecked we have no doubt that many small communities will develop in many areas creating satellite towns which is not the in the best interest of good planning and governance to the Shire.

Council also nominates to be present at a future hearing to allow us to express our concerns on this issue.

Should you wish to further discuss the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



GARRY L KEEFFE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

17/06/2010