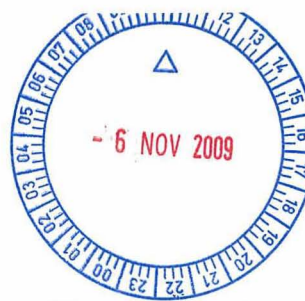


PUBLIC



Outdoors WA

SUBMISSION:

Standing Committee on Public Administration
- *Recreational Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas*

November 2010

Outdoors WA is the Peak Industry Body for Outdoor Adventure Activities in Western Australia, representing outdoor recreation and Outdoor Education in the commercial and not for profit sectors.

One of the critical industry issues is that of *access* to appropriate areas for the pursuit of activities including paddling, bushwalking, mountain biking and the like. As Perth's population grows the housing sprawl extends into landscapes that were previously natural and available for such participation.

It is a social imperative that people have natural environments to recreate in as individuals, as families and as groups including school based Outdoor Education groups where many young people learn to interact with the environment for the first time. This is especially true given the onset of "*outdoor deficit disorder*"; the term for a modern day trend describing the generations of people who have not engaged the outdoors and have missed vital aspects of their development.

Participation in the outdoors is quintessentially AUSTRALIAN; to deny the opportunity of Perth's people to interact with and to be physically active within our natural environments is to ignore the positive outcomes that outdoor participation can influence, including physical and mental health and community wellness.

Outdoors WA has developed an Industry Quality Framework for the safe and environmentally sustainable conduct of outdoor adventure activities for groups including clubs, commercial providers, schools and community based groups. The Framework includes the key components of

1. Organisational Accreditation
2. Adventure Activity Standards
3. Outdoor Leader Registration

The Framework has in built environmental components based upon the Leave No Trace principles. The Framework is currently being considered / positioned at policy level by DEC, DET, DSR and other agencies as a key strategy to increase the safety of participants and to reduce the footprint that unmanaged participation may have on the natural environment.

Central to the rationale behind the Framework is that, for people to appreciate, value and respect the natural environment, they must first learn to co exist with it and to appreciate

it. This is best achieved by experiencing it. The Framework provides a scaffold for such participation.

Further, Outdoors WA contends that, whilst the Framework can positively influence the conduct of groups participating in recreation activities in the natural environment, it is the less organized participation by individuals and private groups that create the most negative footprints. Outdoors WA contends that there is thus an argument for the formal adoption of the Industry Quality Framework as the criteria to allow responsible participation within water catchments and that the authoritative resource be directed at managing the informal participation elements widely regarded as *“being 99% of the problem”*. Our contention is that a *“one rule fits all”* policy re access to natural environments for the purposes of recreational activity is too narrow a position to take, and that the Industry Quality Framework has the potential to greatly assist the Standing Committee in the development of its Policy on Recreational Activities within Public Drinking Water Source Areas; that such Policy ought to be coordinated and implemented across both Government and industry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ralph Gurr', with a horizontal line underneath.

Ralph Gurr
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