

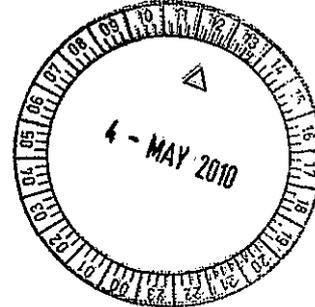


HON KEN BASTON MLC
Member for Mining & Pastoral Region
Government Whip

PUBLIC

23 April 2010

Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House



Dear Mr Chairman

PETITION NO 62 – BROOME BOATING FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

I refer to the above petition and your letter received by this office on April 9th 2010, and advise that I am pleased to make a submission in support of the Petition. In doing so I further inform you that this matter is not seen to be relevant for referral to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations and an approach has not been made to that office.

Current facilities

Boat launching

There are two concrete boat ramps at Entrance Point used solely by recreational users. The ramps have no protection, are not accessible at all tides and both are exposed to wind and waves and become dangerous to use in moderate easterly winds.

The ramp leading from the current gravel hard standing into Roebuck Bay is fully exposed to an easterly wind and needs a full tide to be usable. This ramp is used to some degree by recreational fishers but more usually by larger vessels that have been hauled out for minor maintenance. There is also a small ramp at 'Town Beach' that can only be used at high tide. This requires high maintenance because of sand drift and is frequently unusable.

Moorings

There are some 180 moorings located in Roebuck Bay and at Gantheaume Point. The moorings are used year round by a mix of pearling, fishing, charter and commercial vessels and in the dry season (May - September) by local and visiting recreational boats.

It should be noted that the Roebuck Bay moorings are all some distance from shore (500 metres plus) and open to strong easterly winds throughout the period May – September. During this period smaller vessels move to the Gantheaume area which provides some shelter from these winds.

There is no small boat ramp at Gantheaume Point and access to moored vessels is by launch and retrieval through a surf break by dinghy. The wind from October – April is from the north-west which blows directly onto the moorings and makes them untenable. At this stage in the year all boats move to the Roebuck mooring area which provides some shelter from the prevailing north westerlies.

Repairs and Hard standing

There is a small hard stand area at the port. This provides a very basic facility, is of gravel construction and has no power or water and no safe tie down facilities for cyclonic conditions.

The hard standing is suitable only for minor repairs and emergencies, is used by local yacht and catamaran owners for storage and for haul outs of smaller pearling support boats over the cyclone season.

Inadequacies of facilities

Boat launching for recreational fishers is inadequate and dangerous. There are no finger jetties or breakwaters and this lack of any protection from wave and wind action has caused injury to persons and damage to boats. The tide range in Broome is such that the ramps are not accessible from mid tide and lower. One consequence of this is that there is a temptation to launch off the beach and this has led to vehicles being bogged and their subsequent loss.

The mooring areas in Gantheaume and Roebuck Bay are unsheltered and exposed to wind and wave from the open ocean. Wind gusts in the dry season consistently exceeded 30km/hr and up to a maximum of 50km/hr during 2009. There is a greater potential danger during the wet and cyclone season and again, using figures from 2009, the maximum wind gust during this time was 80km/hr.

The port jetty is designed for use by larger ocean going vessels (rig supply, live cattle, coastal shipping) and presents difficulties in refuelling and offloading by fishing vessels. It is reported that it is safer, faster and cheaper for a fishing vessel to haul out of the water, offload, refuel and reprovision in the hard stand area than to use the jetty.

There is no land backed provision for the embarking of passengers on to charter boats and smaller luxury cruise vessels. Passengers on these boats have to be taken on board either by dinghy from the beach or a hazardous trip down steps at the Broome Jetty.

The lack of an adequate hard stand and boat lifter has economic and safety consequences for fishing, pearling and recreational port users. The closest ports where major maintenance and emergency repairs to fishing and pearling boats can be undertaken are Geraldton and Darwin. There are significant operational and transport losses when boats have to be taken to either of these ports.

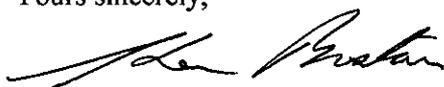
The ramp to the hard stand is part concrete and gravel and in poor condition, haul in and haul out is by tractor and a five metre plus tide is needed for even this basic facility to be usable. The process involves sailing the boat in and out of a jinker. The jinkers have to be put in position at low tide which leaves boats vulnerable to changing weather conditions for up to three hours.

It is now ten years since Cyclone Rosita came within 30 kms of Broome and on that occasion vessels to the value of \$6 million were lost, boats dragged their moorings and damage to other boats from collisions was significant. There have been similar occurrences during wet season storms since that time.

Should a comparable weather event threaten Broome in the future now, as then, as now, the only protection for boats would be to hope for a high tide so they could be taken up Dampier Creek, trust to the moorings or if there was time and space to be hauled out by tractor on to an inadequate hard standing.

It is timely, given that it is estimated that since Cyclone Rosita there has been a doubling of the number of boats at moorings for a safe allweather small boat shelter be built in Broome.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Ken Baston MLC