

POLICY STATEMENT No. 18

RECREATION, TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES

INTERPRETATION

In this Policy (and associated Policy Guidelines), unless the contrary intention appears:

“Recreation” means:

leisure time activities or experiences participated in through choice, which bring enjoyment or satisfaction to the participants.

“Tourism” means:

recreational activity undertaken by people who have travelled more than 40 kilometres and/or are staying one night or more away from their usual place of residence.

“Nature based tourism” means:

tourism that is dependent upon the resources of the natural environment and incorporates a range of tourism experiences including adventure tourism, ecotourism, and aspects of cultural and rural tourism (e.g. farm-stays). Aboriginal culture is also included under the definition of nature-based tourism because of its inextricable link with the natural environment.

“Ecotourism”:

is a distinct subset of nature based tourism and relates to experiences in remote or natural areas that foster an understanding and appreciation of the need to conserve the natural environment in a way that sustains the resources and economy of the local community.

“CEO” means:

the Chief Executive Officer of the Department (i.e. the Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation).

“DEC” means:

the Department of Environment and Conservation.

“CALM Act” means:

the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

1. OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Parks and Visitor Services (PVS) Service of DEC is:

To provide world-class recreation and tourism opportunities, services and facilities for visitors to the public conservation estate while maintaining in perpetuity Western Australia’s natural and cultural heritage.

Further details about strategic directions and objectives, particularly in relation to ‘Creating sustainable community benefits’ and ‘Maintaining community involvement and support’, which are key objectives of DEC, can be found in the Department’s Corporate Plan (under review), DEC’s *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 – 2011* (see Appendix 1 in the Policy Guidelines associated with this Policy), as well as the Business and Strategic Plans for the PVS Service.

2. BACKGROUND

DEC’s mission is:

Working with the community, we will ensure that Western Australia’s environment is valued, protected and conserved, for its intrinsic value, and for the benefit of present and future generations.

In so doing, DEC recognises that Western Australia has a beautiful and diverse natural environment that provides recreational, aesthetic and spiritual as well as material benefits for both residents and visitors alike.

National parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forests, timber reserves and other reserves are vested in the Conservation Commission of Western Australia. Marine parks, marine nature reserves and marine management areas are vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority. DEC manages the lands and waters vested in these two bodies in accordance with the CALM Act.

It is recognised that the lands and waters managed by DEC have the capacity to satisfy an important portion of the public demand for outdoor recreation and nature based tourism, and in so doing contribute significantly to the social, psychological, physical and economic well-being of the community.

In terms of the economic benefits of natural environments, it has been estimated that almost \$62 million per annum of direct tourist expenditure is attributable to the national parks and forests within DEC’s Warren Region, and \$127 million per annum of direct tourist expenditure in the Gascoyne coast region is attributable to the national and marine parks in that area¹.

In recognition of the health benefits of parks, DEC has introduced the ‘Healthy Parks, Healthy People’ concept, which is based on programs applied in various ways around the world and in recent years in Victoria and other Australian States. The ‘Healthy Parks, Healthy People’ program recognises that the environmental health of parks results in a healthy community, and that spending active recreation time in natural environment settings leads to greater health of individuals, the community and parks. The program is aimed at helping the community appreciate how parks and other natural areas contribute to the health of individuals, families and the community, and likewise how they can be involved in contributing to the health of those areas.

This Policy, and its associated Policy Guidelines, spell out the underlying principles, administrative controls and, where appropriate, operational guidelines and procedures relating to DEC’s PVS Service. When read in conjunction with the CALM Act, the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, associated regulations including the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* and other related policies, this statement provides the basis for planning and management for recreation, tourism and associated visitor activities on lands and waters managed by DEC. It should be read in conjunction with DEC’s *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 - 2011* (Appendix 1) and *Keeping it Real – A Nature Based Tourism Strategy for Western Australia*, December 2004 (Tourism WA).

Society’s demand for recreation and tourism opportunities in natural areas is reflected in DEC’s enabling legislation and the Department’s Corporate Plan (under review). It is also demonstrated by the continued strong growth in visitor numbers to the lands and waters managed by DEC, with more than 11 million recorded visits in 2005/2006. The importance of recreation and tourism is also recognised in the

¹ Carlsen J and Wood D (2004) ‘Assessment of the economic value of recreation and tourism in Western Australia’s national parks, marine parks and forests’, Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and Tourism WA, which recognises the importance of appropriate and sustainable tourism development and management in Western Australia.

This policy will apply to all lands and waters managed by DEC. Included are the pastoral leases purchased by DEC to become conservation and recreation reserves (such as conservation parks), which have been surrendered and are currently unallocated Crown land. These areas are subject to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DEC and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure for their management. The surrendered pastoral leases are included in this policy as if they are already reserved, but the appropriate Regional and District Managers may exercise discretion as to the application of this policy to these areas.

The Policy is based on knowledge and experience at this time and may change as further knowledge and experience is accumulated.

3. LEGISLATIVE BASE

The legislation administered by DEC applicable to this policy is the CALM Act, the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the *Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004*.

This policy refers to the management role of DEC as if it were a reference to the functions of the CEO under the CALM Act.

4. POLICY

Conservation of Estate Values

- 4.1 The natural and cultural values of the estate as a whole should be managed on an ecologically sustainable basis.
- 4.2 The natural systems (including land and seascapes, particular sites, biota) should be able to sustain the form of recreation, or ancillary activity, which is occurring or proposed.
- 4.3 Consistent with conservation of estate values, facilities associated with recreation should be carefully controlled. Also consistent with conservation of estate values, the CALM Act (section 33) limits the ability of DEC to carry out other than 'necessary or compatible operations' on certain land categories unless there is an approved management plan in place.
- 4.4 The intensity of recreation and tourism activity should be controlled as necessary to ensure that it does not destroy the value and nature of the activity and the resource on which it is based.

Consistency of Recreation and Tourism with Purpose of the Estate

- 4.5 Recreation and tourism activity should be compatible with the vesting purpose of the land and water or the established land/water use priority. This includes national parks, nature reserves, conservation parks, State forest, CALM Act section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves, marine parks, marine nature reserves, marine management areas and areas managed as regional parks (which may involve a range of tenures).
- 4.6 The provision and management of nature based recreation and tourism opportunities on lands and waters managed by DEC should comply with other relevant Acts and regulations.

Equity

- 4.7 Generally the widest range of activities consistent with the reserve purpose should be allowed. Uses that impair other forms of use to an unreasonable extent or place the safety of other users in jeopardy should be controlled or eliminated.
- 4.8 The requirements of different cultural and ethnic groups will be considered in planning, management and facility design.
- 4.9 Recreation opportunities for people of all levels of physical ability will be considered in planning, management and facility design.
- 4.10 In certain instances, priority use may be allocated to specialised recreation activities at sites that are uniquely suited to those activities or for safety reasons.

Management

- 4.11 DEC will endeavour to provide an appropriate level of supervision of activities on the lands and waters it manages. This is particularly important where natural and cultural values may be impaired. If this cannot be done, consideration may be given to restricting, relocating or eliminating the activity where practicable.
- 4.12 DEC will develop and implement recreation and tourism programs, services and facilities that minimise the risk of accidents and injury to people enjoying themselves on lands and waters managed by DEC, consistent with the Department's Policy Statement No. 53 – Visitor Risk Management.
- 4.13 Visitor activities, facilities and services should be managed in a cost-effective manner.
- 4.14 DEC will provide and maintain nature-based recreation areas, facilities, programs and services to a consistently high standard.

Enriching visitor experience

- 4.15 DEC aims to enrich the experiences of visitors and develop their relationships with Western Australia's natural and cultural values through provision of interpretive material and activities in major recreation areas or where a demonstrated desire for such programs exist.
- 4.16 Appropriate opportunities will be made available through tour operator licences and leases for the provision of services and facilities to the public to enhance their visit to areas managed by DEC.
- 4.17 DEC staff and private sector guides and operators will be trained to communicate with visitors effectively and interpret parks and reserves, and provide scientific and other information that adds value to the visitor experience.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

This Policy will be implemented in accordance with the detailed Policy Guidelines attached. The Policy Guidelines have been developed in two broad categories: Section A, which addresses issues of a more general nature and which can be applied to a number of different activities; and Section B, which provides guidelines relevant to specific activities.

This policy does not restrict DEC from carrying out its statutory functions, e.g. staff using off-road access for management roles.

6. ASSOCIATED POLICIES/STRATEGIES

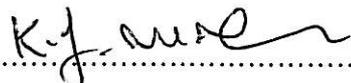
See the Department's Policy Statement No. 53 – Visitor Risk Management; Policy Statement No. 62 – Identification and Management of Wilderness and Surrounding Areas; DEC's *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 – 2011*; and *Keeping it Real – A Nature Based Tourism Strategy for Western Australia*, December 2004 (Tourism WA).

7. CUSTODIAN

Director of Parks and Visitor Services.

8. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL

Approved on 15 October 2006

by Keiran McNamara 

DIRECTOR GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

**POLICY STATEMENT No. 18
POLICY GUIDELINES**

RECREATION, TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT	4
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Section A Policy Guidelines applying to all activities

1.1 PROTECTION OF RECREATION SITE VALUES	5
1.2 ABORIGINAL SITES AND HERITAGE.....	5
1.3 RESEARCH AND MONITORING.....	8
1.4 MANAGEMENT OF WILDERNESS	9
1.5 PUBLIC ACCESS.....	9
1.6 VISITOR RISK MANAGEMENT	11
1.7 PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES	11
1.8 WASTE MANAGEMENT.....	12
1.9 ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH TOURS BY THE DEPARTMENT.....	13
1.10 VISITOR INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION	15
1.11 INTERACTION WITH VISITORS BY DEC STAFF AND DEC VOLUNTEERS.....	16
1.12 MANAGEMENT OF ORGANISED NON-COMMERCIAL EDUCATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES.....	17
1.13 DOMESTIC ANIMALS/PETS (INCLUDING DOGS).....	19
1.14 VISITOR FEES AND CHARGES	20
1.15 COMMERCIAL CONCESSIONS – LEASES AND LICENCES ON LANDS AND WATERS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT	22
1.16 LEASES FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS.....	31
1.17 CONSULTATION AND LIAISON WITH ORGANISED RECREATION GROUPS AND TOURISM AGENCIES	31

Section B Policy Guidelines applying to specific activities

2. ACTIVE LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES	33
2.1 BUSHWALKING	33
2.2 ORIENTEERING, ROGAINING, CROSS COUNTRY RUNNING AND GEOCACHING	39
2.3 ROCK CLIMBING AND ABSEILING	40
2.4 CAVING.....	43
2.5 CAVE DIVING	47
2.6 SAND BOARDING	47
2.7 HORSE RIDING	48
2.8 SHOOTING.....	50
2.9 HUNTING	51
2.10 FOSSICKING	51
2.11 CYCLING (INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKING)	52
2.12 COMPETITIVE ADVENTURE OR ‘EXTREME’ SPORTS.....	56
3. PASSIVE LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES.....	58
3.1 PICNICKING AND BARBECUING.....	58
3.2 OVERNIGHT STAYS (INCLUDING CAMPING).....	59
4. WILDLIFE INTERACTION	62
4.1 NATURE APPRECIATION.....	62
4.2 PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING FOR PRIVATE PURPOSES	62
4.3 WILDLIFE FEEDING	63
5. MOTORISED VEHICLE-BASED ACTIVITIES	65
5.1 SCENIC DRIVING	65
5.2 VEHICLE RALLYING (SOCIAL).....	66
5.3 COMPETITIVE CAR RALLIES AND OTHER MOTOR SPORTS	66
5.4 OFF-ROAD VEHICLES	70
5.5 LAND YACHTING	72
6. WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES	74
6.1 BOATING (INCLUDING CANOEING, KAYAKING, SAILING, WIND SURFING, KITE SURFING, SURF SKIING).....	74

6.2	HIGH SPEED AND FREESTYLE BOATING – INCLUDING PERSONAL WATER CRAFT (PWC), JET BOATS, WATER-SKIING, PARASAILING AND HOVERCRAFT	75
6.3	SURFING	77
6.4	SWIMMING.....	77
6.5	SNORKELING AND DIVING	78
6.6	RECREATIONAL FISHING AND COLLECTING OF MARINE LIFE	79
7.	FLIGHT-BASED ACTIVITIES	82
7.1	AIRCRAFT USE	82
7.2	HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING.....	83
7.3	MODEL AIRCRAFT AND ROCKET LAUNCHING	84

TABLES

TABLE 1	SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES FOR GRANTING LEASES UNDER SECTIONS 97 AND 100 OF.....	30
	THE CALM ACT	
TABLE 2	DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION – CLASSIFICATION OF WALKING TRACKS.....	37
TABLE 3	DEC CAVE MANAGEMENT CLASSIFICATION SYSSYTEM (2006).....	46
TABLE 4	MOUNTAIN BIKING STYLES.....	54
TABLE 5	MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING.....	55

APPENDICES

1. PARKS AND VISITOR SERVICES STRATEGY 2007 – 2011
2. APPLICATION FORM TO OBTAIN APPROVAL TO CONDUCT ORGANISED, NON-COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES ON LANDS AND WATERS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
3. DEVELOPMENT OF VISITOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES ON LAND MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION - FLOW CHARTS
4. A GUIDE TO THE PROVISION OF RECREATION ACTIVITIES ON LANDS AND WATERS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

RECREATION, TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES POLICY GUIDELINES

About This Document...

The policy guidelines that follow apply to all lands and waters managed by DEC. The policy guidelines are based on knowledge and experience at this time and may change as further knowledge and experience is accumulated.

The policy guidelines have been developed in two broad categories: Section A, which addresses issues of a more general nature applying to a number of different activities; and Section B, which provides guidelines relevant to specific activities.

SECTION A

POLICY GUIDELINES APPLYING TO ALL ACTIVITIES

1.1 PROTECTION OF RECREATION SITE VALUES

Introduction

Visitor use of lands and waters managed by DEC is often concentrated at specific recreation sites. These sites are developed according to various criteria including their aesthetic value, public demand and their ability to withstand appropriate levels of use without environmental degradation. The selection, presentation and maintenance of a recreation site play an important role in visitor enjoyment and satisfaction.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.1.1 Recreation sites will be selected and developed in accordance with approved management plans, interim management guidelines and/or necessary and compatible operations and subject to set criteria and procedures as specified in DEC manuals and guidelines and Australian or other appropriate standards.
- 1.1.2 Once selected, recreation sites will be developed in accordance with a site development plan that addresses site protection issues including rehabilitation of existing disturbance, loss of vegetation due to site development, appropriate level of facilities for expected use and visitor experience.
- 1.1.3 All recreation sites will be periodically monitored to assess usage that may result in deterioration, and existing or anticipated deterioration will be addressed. Where there is evidence of recreation site deterioration, a range of appropriate techniques will be employed to minimise this impact.
- 1.1.4 Wildfire risk to recreation sites and facilities will be assessed and managed to acceptable levels through the use of fuel reduced zones and other management techniques

1.2 ABORIGINAL SITES AND HERITAGE

Introduction

Cultural heritage comprises a mix of natural and social resources, historical features, artefacts, anthropological sites and contemporary cultural practices and features. It includes Aboriginal and other features, and is a key resource of Western Australia's nature based and cultural tourism industry.

DEC's *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 – 2011* (see Appendix 1) provides broad guidelines for the protection of heritage values. DEC has a social and legislative responsibility to endeavour to protect these values on the lands and waters that it manages. They provide a valuable insight into past land and resource use patterns of both Aboriginal and other people and, through interpretation, allow the public to gain an understanding and appreciation of past and present lifestyles.

This section provides the guidelines and processes by which cultural heritage values can be effectively protected.

Aboriginal Sites and Native Title Compliance

Aboriginal culture is integrally linked with the land. Many known Aboriginal cultural sites are located on areas managed by DEC, hence Aboriginal people have an ongoing interest in the management of these lands, waters and wildlife. DEC acknowledges the right of Aboriginal people to express and maintain their culture and will liaise with Aboriginal people to help maintain and enhance cultural values across the State.

The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) is the principal agency responsible for management of Aboriginal sites through the administration of the State's *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*. As a State agency, DEC must also abide by the provisions of the Act and must ensure known sites are not destroyed or unduly interfered with when undertaking management operations. The DIA maintains a register of Aboriginal sites, which can be accessed. However, documentation of sites is poor on many areas managed by DEC and liaison with the appropriate local Aboriginal people may be required to ensure sites are not unknowingly damaged.

The DIA has established formal committees of Aboriginal Elders across the State. These committees, or Commissions of Elders, have been established to provide advice on Aboriginal issues to DIA. The Elders have a large collective knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture, are representative of Aboriginal communities throughout their representative areas and may provide a forum for DEC to discuss broad ideas about reserve management and other issues of concern. At a more localised level, many DEC Districts have already developed forums for resolution of issues.

There are also requirements for formal notification under the Commonwealth's *Native Title Act 1993*. Under this Act, draft management plans and public works (i.e. buildings, structures which are a fixture, bridges, wells, bores and major earthworks) constructed on all reserved lands and waters managed by DEC (apart from freehold land) will need to be notified in writing. Parties that are required to be notified are:

- any representative Aboriginal bodies (e.g. Kimberley Land Council);
- registered native title bodies corporate and registered native title claimants for the areas managed by DEC on which the management plans and operations are to be carried out.

These parties must be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed public works and draft management plans.

All DEC staff who carry out work that has the potential to affect Aboriginal heritage should have a good understanding of DEC's legislative responsibility under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and the Commonwealth's *Native Title Act 1993*.

The Government of Western Australia's *Indigenous Ownership and Joint Management of Conservation Lands in Western Australia - Consultation Paper 2003* is relevant to these policy guidelines.

Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage Sites

There are a number of different agencies involved in non-indigenous cultural heritage management:

- The Australian Government is responsible for nominating places for entry onto the National Heritage List and the Register of the National Estate.

The Australian Heritage Council nominates places with outstanding natural, indigenous or historic values for inclusion on the National Heritage List. These places will be protected under the Australian Government's *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Register of the National Estate will be compiled and maintained by the Australian Heritage Council as a list of important natural, indigenous and historic places throughout Australia. The Register has been retained under the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003*. There are more than 13,000 places on the Register of the National Estate as compared with only thirty-three properties on the National Heritage List (as at September 2006). The Register will act as an information and education resource and will guide those making development and planning decisions that could impact on heritage values. The Register database may also allow the assessment of actions that may have a significant impact on the environment (including heritage) on Commonwealth land.

The Commonwealth Heritage List (which is separate to those lists mentioned above) covers places owned or controlled by the Australian Government and is not relevant to DEC's operations.

The Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage is responsible for Australia's natural and cultural heritage places.

- The Heritage Council of Western Australia is responsible for compiling and maintaining the State Register of Heritage Places. Places are assessed according to aesthetic, historic, scientific and social values, rarity and representativeness, and a statement of significance is issued. All structures more than 60 years old need to be assessed prior to disturbance. The Department of Housing and Works is responsible for arranging site assessments for State government agencies. If listing proceeds, agencies are required under the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990* to seek advice from the Heritage Council if they are considering development of a listed place. Work may not proceed until that advice has been received, and work must comply with the advice.
- The National Trust of Australia (WA) is an independent community based organisation that maintains a classification list, predominantly for buildings or property.
- Local governments, which are responsible for compiling an inventory of buildings under the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*. There are no statutory implications of listing other than a requirement for the inventory to be sent to the Heritage Council for public information. However the Heritage Council recommends any changes respect the significant details of the place and be sympathetic to its heritage values.
- The WA Museum administers the *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* which seeks to preserve shipwrecks and relics lost prior to 1900.

DEC is most likely to deal with places listed on the National Heritage List, the Register of the National Estate, the State Register of Heritage Places or local government inventories. Financial assistance for conservation works on listed sites is available from a variety of funding sources.

Policy Guidelines

Aboriginal Sites and Native Title Compliance

- 1.2.1 Where appropriate, provide opportunities for Aboriginal involvement in the management of the lands and waters managed by DEC (e.g. interpretation of cultural history, anthropological and archaeological survey, and site assessment, protection and preservation).
- 1.2.2 Where appropriate, liaise with the relevant Commissions of Elders and native title holders/claimants on site management and heritage protection procedures at a regional level.
- 1.2.3 Comply with the requirements of the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* and notify claimants and representative Aboriginal bodies before the construction of public works.
- 1.2.4 Comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* with regard to works that could impact on Aboriginal heritage sites. Liaison with Elders is encouraged to assist in the protection of such sites.
- 1.2.5 If no Aboriginal heritage sites are registered but there is a strong likelihood of sites being present, consult with DIA and local community Elders to enable any sites to be identified. In instances where it is uncertain who the appropriate local Elders are, DEC will approach DIA for advice.
- 1.2.6 Seek advice from relevant Elders for interpretation signage of Aboriginal sites.

Non-Indigenous Heritage

- 1.2.7 Sites on land managed by DEC that have potential heritage value will be recorded in the Cultural Heritage Database and registered on the Recreation and Tourism Information System (RATIS).

This database will also include a current listing of the status of heritage places/sites on lands and waters managed by DEC.

- 1.2.8 Where areas are listed in the National Heritage List, the Register of the National Estate, the Register of Heritage Places and local government inventories, management will seek to protect the heritage values of these places.
- 1.2.9 Where appropriate, seek funding for conservation of sites listed on the National Heritage List, the Register of the National Estate, the State's Register of Heritage Places and local government inventories.
- 1.2.10 Use interpretation to raise awareness of the cultural values of sites and their need for protection.

1.3 RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Introduction

Western Australia's *Nature Based Tourism Strategy*, which is currently under review, specifies that nature based tourism must be environmentally, culturally, socially and economically sustainable, and includes an objective for "... a monitoring program to assess the sustainability of nature based tourism opportunities". Similarly, DEC's *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 – 2011* (Appendix 1) articulates a number of key focuses and strategic actions that embody DEC's approach to managing nature based recreation and tourism opportunities, services and facilities. These focuses, and their accompanying strategic actions, will help to sustain natural resources, meet customer needs and expectations, and enhance visitor experiences. DEC has a responsibility to monitor its performance in meeting these strategic actions and community expectations.

DEC's Visitor Information and Statistics Program (VISTAT) collects information on the extent and location of visitor activity at sites managed by DEC throughout the State. However, it is acknowledged there is a need to broaden the recreation and tourism research (including social research) and monitoring program to:

- accurately gauge the needs and expectations of users and other stakeholders;
- evaluate the effectiveness of planning and management activities;
- evaluate the range of community benefits (e.g. health, wellbeing, education, cultural and economic) provided by the parks and their associated recreation facilities and programs;
- maximise marketing efficiency;
- monitor visitor impacts on the recreation and tourism environment, namely:
 - biophysical impacts, such as habitat degradation or disturbance to wildlife;
 - economic impacts, in particular at a local level (e.g. local communities benefiting from tourist spending);
 - socio-cultural impacts (e.g. whether residents feel they have an influence over tourism-related decisions or feel tourism infrastructure and services are at odds with local identity and culture);
 - the impacts of visitors' interactions with others (eg. to ensure that visitor experiences remain positive); and
 - quality of visitor experience with tour guides, operators and staff;
- research areas of social impact associated with recreation and tourism (this matter is also identified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and Tourism WA).

DEC is a member and active participant of the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC), which identifies research priorities and coordinates funds for projects of national significance in the areas of tourism enterprise, destinations and natural resources.

In recent years DEC has also developed a close working relationship with major tertiary institutions through the Nature Based Recreation and Tourism Research Reference Group referred to in 1.3.3 below, in relation to increasing research opportunities that may be carried out in conjunction with those institutions. A

collaborative, systematic research and monitoring program will increase DEC's understanding of the impacts of recreation and tourism, and enable it to monitor its performance in relation to the strategic actions in the *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 – 2011* (Appendix 1).

Policy Guidelines

- 1.3.1 Ensure that research and monitoring (including VISTAT), is directed towards improving DEC's management capabilities in providing quality visitor facilities and services and protecting natural and cultural values.
- 1.3.2 Maintain a standardised system of collecting, processing and utilising information collected by field staff on the levels, patterns and impacts of visitor use and public perceptions and preferences.
- 1.3.3 Maintain a Nature Based Recreation and Tourism Research Reference Group to (a) identify appropriate research and monitoring programs in conjunction with operational and Science Division staff; (b) compile a register of potential research projects and topics for distribution to major tertiary institutions in Western Australia; (c) assess findings and disseminate information to field staff, (d) review the priority of the register on a regular basis, and (e) assess areas of social impact.
- 1.3.4 Maintain a register of projects on RATIS to inform DEC staff of proposed and current projects.
- 1.3.5 Ensure DEC prepares and presents its PVS research priorities for consideration by the STCRC on an annual basis.

1.4 MANAGEMENT OF WILDERNESS

This matter is dealt with in the Department's Policy Statement No. 62 - Identification and Management of Wilderness and Surrounding Areas.

1.5 PUBLIC ACCESS

Introduction

Lands and waters managed by DEC are generally open to public use. However, public access to some areas is restricted for reasons of safety and resource protection.

Although widespread access may be generally available in principle, in reality the public uses only a very small proportion of available land for recreation. This is generally close to features of interest, e.g. water bodies and areas of high scenic quality. Access is generally determined by roads, waterways or pathways.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.5.1 Access for recreation to all areas of lands and waters managed by DEC will be open to public use, except where this contravenes the key underlying principles of Policy 18 relating to *Conservation of Estate Values; Consistency of Recreation and Tourism with Purpose of the Estate; Equity, Management; and Enriching Visitor Experience* (see pages 3-4). In practice this allows access on foot to most areas and access by boats or land-based vehicles to many parts of parks and reserves (see section 1.5.3). In areas where the primary purpose of reservation is for nature conservation (e.g. terrestrial and marine nature reserves), public access will be permitted and in some cases facilitated, subject to the management planning process and activity specific provisions outlined elsewhere in these policy guidelines. See section 1.15 for access in relation to commercial concessions.

- 1.5.2 Subject to section 33 of the CALM Act and in accordance with approved management plans, foot access will be encouraged by construction of paths in areas where the amenity values, environmental protection and visitor demand justify their construction. Where appropriate, interpretative trails will be constructed according to the principles specified in section 1.10. Advice on construction standards will be provided through the Parks and Visitor Services Division. Construction of all facilities will accord with the policy on visitor risk management (see section 1.6) and will, where practicable, allow for people with disabilities.
- 1.5.3 Vehicle access will be generally determined within the constraints of section 33 of the CALM Act. In most areas a system of roads and/or tracks exists before a management plan is prepared. Access along such roads/tracks will generally be permitted until a management plan is prepared, but in circumstances where the values of the land are under threat (e.g. by disease) it may be necessary to close or restrict vehicle access. In general, public vehicular access will be discouraged in areas of high conservation value.
- 1.5.4 Existing vehicular use of beaches within national parks and other lands managed by DEC will generally be allowed unless otherwise stated in a management plan, or as a necessary operation (e.g. on the grounds of visitor safety). New or additional access along beaches would be allowed only to holders of special licences (e.g. people with disabilities, or for commercial fishers transporting equipment and produce to market), or by means of a management plan.
- 1.5.5 Subject to financial limitations, and urgency as ‘necessary operations’, track management will be considered during the management plan process.
- 1.5.6 Road design standards will be established by DEC in conjunction with Main Roads WA or local government authorities (refer to the Department’s Policy Statement No. 40 - Road Management).
- 1.5.7 Access by vehicles off roads and tracks will be limited to designated areas as defined in area management plans (see section 5.5.3).
- 1.5.8 Use of unregistered vehicles will not be permitted except in compliance with the *Control of Vehicles (Off Road Areas) Act 1978*. A permit is provided under that Act by the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, and requires DEC’s approval for use on lands managed by DEC (see sections 5.5.2 and 5.5.5).
- 1.5.9 Access by aircraft is subject to Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulations. DEC may seek to apply additional conditions for access by agreement with operators. Access by aircraft, including helicopters, at emergency airstrips that are not maintained for general public use, should comply with the conditions outlined in section 7.1.
- 1.5.10 Where an airstrip is deemed necessary, it will be constructed in accordance with an approved management plan or as a ‘necessary operation’ for emergency purposes such as visitor safety (e.g. Royal Flying Doctor access).
- 1.5.11 Power boats will not be permitted on inland waters where their use is not already established, e.g. Lake Unicup, Lake Towerinning, Lake Preston. Permission will not be withdrawn except through the management planning process. Management plans may seek to review existing use where such use is not in accord with the principles discussed in the Policy Statement at the beginning of this document. In some areas, it may be necessary to restrict the timing and/or type of craft used to adequately protect natural values and visitor appreciation of those values (see section 6.2).
- 1.5.12 Sailboats, canoes and small rafts may be permitted in “closed waters” (i.e. waters closed to power boats). However on domestic water supply dams and other water bodies such as Lake Clifton, watercraft may be prohibited for reasons of preservation of the resource, health and safety of other users. Before new activities are established, Regional Managers should check these with the Director of Parks and Visitor Services. In general, boating will only be allowed on nature reserves

by way of a management plan or interim management guidelines after consideration of the likely environmental and social impacts (see section 6.1).

1.6 VISITOR RISK MANAGEMENT

Introduction

There is always an element of risk in all outdoor recreation activities and so it is not possible to guarantee visitor safety absolutely. In addition, many people choose to actively seek physical challenge and risk in recreation in natural areas. Nevertheless all reasonable efforts need to be taken to ensure that risks are minimised.

A separate policy outlines DEC's commitment and approach to visitor risk management (see the Department's Policy Statement No.53 – Visitor Risk Management).

1.7 PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Introduction

As outlined in the State's *Nature Based Tourism Strategy* and DEC's *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007 – 2011* (Appendix 1), DEC plays a major role in the provision of recreation and tourism opportunities for both interstate and international visitors as well as local residents. Many of the State's key recreation and tourism attractions are located in areas managed by DEC and it provides a wide range of facilities and services for the assistance and enjoyment of the public. DEC also works in partnership with State government agencies, local authorities, recreational associations, interest groups as well as the private sector to ensure that residents and visitors are afforded quality nature based tourism and recreation opportunities.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.7.1 The provision of nature-based recreation and tourism services and facilities on lands and waters managed by DEC will be in accordance with the key focuses as outlined in the *Parks and Visitor Services Strategy 2007–2011* (Appendix 1) and the necessary management planning approvals.
- 1.7.2 Climate change issues will be taken into account in planning for parks and visitor services.
- 1.7.3 DEC will ensure that a diversity of sustainable nature based recreation opportunities and high quality visitor experiences are provided on lands and waters managed by DEC. Planning frameworks will be developed that determine and set upper limits on the extent of development and use in order to maintain the desired recreation experience, rather than allowing incremental development to occur.
- 1.7.4 Opportunities will be identified for possible future tourism developments that are sustainable, compatible with conservation objectives and meet tourism demand. Where appropriate, opportunities may be offered to the private sector under lease agreements (see section 1.15 and 1.16).
- 1.7.5 DEC will continue to develop and maintain strong links with all sectors of the tourism industry, and will participate in a broad range of cooperative, educational and promotional opportunities with other tourism operators and agencies (see section 1.17).
- 1.7.6 DEC will continue to develop and market appropriate nature based recreation and tourism opportunities, services and facilities in consultation with Tourism Western Australia and the tourism industry.

- 1.7.7 Development of new sites and facilities will be communicated and directed through the preparation of master plans that provide a framework of development and site development plans that document in detail the level of development and change. The site design process will incorporate visitor information and interpretation to ensure the integration of visitor services and facilities.
- 1.7.8 Location and design of facilities will conform with DEC and Australian Standards where practicable.
- 1.7.9 DEC will endeavour to make visitor facilities as accessible as possible to people with disabilities and their families (see the Department's Disability Services Plan 2001 – 2006 on DEC's *NatureBase* website at <http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/tourism/index.html> under the 'Visitor Services' heading).
- 1.7.10 DEC will plan and manage for a range of experiences and access levels on a continuum from highly developed and easily accessible to remote areas with no assisted access and visitor facilities. DEC is guided by the general philosophy that development for accessibility will always need to be balanced against resource protection requirements. However, as a starting point, most sites, facilities and services will be designed to accommodate the needs of as many people as possible. Facilitated access will not be provided where it will fundamentally alter the nature of the experience, is prohibitively expensive or has an unacceptable impact on natural, cultural or visual landscape values.
- 1.7.11 Coordination of design and construction standards for both new and redeveloped recreation areas and facilities will be the responsibility of the Recreation and Landscape Unit, which will act in consultation with other senior staff as required.
- 1.7.12 Design of facilities will be in accordance with the Department's Policy Statement No. 34 - Visual Resource Management on Lands and Waters Managed by CALM.
- 1.7.13 Buildings and other facilities will be maintained in a clean, safe and serviceable condition subject to available finance. Where proper maintenance is not possible or repeated vandalism occurs, the removal of the facility or its replacement should be considered.
- 1.7.14 Subject to section 33 of the CALM Act, new facilities will be considered where (a) replacement is considered to be a better alternative than maintenance of an old facility; (b) a new facility is justified in terms of levels of use, protection of estate values, or is necessary for the management of recreational use. In general built structures will be developed in nature reserves only where necessary for resource protection or public education.
- 1.7.15 Consistent with the general principles discussed in the Policy Statement at the beginning of this document, facilities for intensive sporting activities are not appropriate for nature reserves and are not generally appropriate for many other areas managed by DEC. However, such facilities may be considered for regional parks.
- 1.7.16 Regional parks may, in general, have a more intensive recreational use than other categories of land, and facilities in regional parks, either existing or to be built by DEC, may reflect this use.

1.8 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Visitors who participate in camping and day use activities may generate considerable amounts of rubbish and other refuse as a result of their recreational activities. Unless properly disposed of, this material can lead to significant degradation of the natural environment and a corresponding decline in visitor enjoyment, safety and satisfaction. Items such as non-biodegradable plastic products can also endanger wildlife, particularly in

marine environments. Waste collection and disposal is a time consuming and costly exercise, diverting staff resources and funds from other important work.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.8.1 DEC will continue to actively promote the Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace/minimal impact camping philosophy in which visitors to wilderness/remote or natural areas are encouraged to “clean, crush and carry out” all rubbish. This philosophy will be promoted via the use of publications, signs and information displays as well as through educational programs such as DEC’s Outback Safety and Bushcraft course.
- 1.8.2 Wherever practicable, DEC will remove litter disposal bins from day use and other recreation areas and request that visitors take all their refuse with them. The reasons for bin removal will be promoted through the use of signs on site.
- 1.8.3 Rubbish bins and/or larger disposal units will be provided in major camping and day use areas where the absence of such disposal facilities is likely to contribute to littering problems or unduly inconvenience visitors to such areas. Where appropriate, mobile rubbish disposal trailers may be used in more remotely located camping areas.
- 1.8.4 The use of dog excreta bins and bags may be considered in appropriate areas, such as regional parks.
- 1.8.5 Where powered campsites are provided for caravans and motor homes, sullage pits will be provided for the sanitary disposal of liquid wastes.
- 1.8.6 In camping and picnic areas where a high proportion of the rubbish consists of recyclable materials such as glass or aluminium cans, consideration will be given to providing recycling bins.
- 1.8.7 The location and design of solid waste disposal sites should be considered as an integral component in the planning and development of all major recreation and tourism developments. Where practicable, arrangements should be made to use existing disposal sites providing this is environmentally acceptable and cost efficient.

1.9 ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH TOURS BY THE DEPARTMENT

Introduction

The objective of these policy guidelines is to ensure that environmental research programs involving lands or waters managed by DEC and DEC’s staff occur in such a way that the potential benefits to conservation, DEC, the fee-paying participants and the general community are optimised.

Environmental research tours undertaken by DEC involve fee-paying ‘volunteers’ who assist in supervised research or management programs on lands or waters managed by DEC.

The benefits of these programs for DEC include:

- their potential to contribute directly to protecting threatened plants and animals through financial as well as human efforts;
- they are a means of generating greater community support and understanding for the research and management programs of DEC;
- they provide funds to directly support the research/management effort, and in some cases, to actually enable specific scientific programs to take place; and
- they are a means by which the knowledge and experiences of staff can be shared with the community.

DEC's environmental research tour programs

There are two types of environmental research tour programs currently operating: (i) those initiated by DEC such as the LANDSCOPE Expeditions run by DEC in association with University of Western Australia (UWA) Extension; and (ii) the privately initiated tours which are usually run in conjunction with DEC activities.

To date, privately initiated tours have been established on an opportunistic basis, for example in discussions between DEC staff and individual tour operators. This has provided an ideal opportunity to experiment and evaluate DEC's involvement in these programs. However, as further interest in these types of tour arrangements is generated, DEC needs to be in a position to deal with proposals in a formal manner.

In the past, standard fees have not been set but rather negotiated on a case-by-case basis between DEC officers involved and the tour operator. This may mean that the best return for the Department has not been obtained. It also means that the full costs of DEC's involvement may not have been recouped. In some cases, the return to DEC has not covered the costs incurred by Regions/Districts and administration costs.

DEC has developed policy guidelines in regard to its involvement in ecotourism to:

- ensure that future negotiations with ecotour-based companies proceed according to an established and open framework;
- identify opportunities in both research and management programs where the involvement of supervised fee-paying volunteers would be of benefit to DEC;
- determine a set of procedures for making these opportunities available to the ecotourism industry in an equitable way;
- ensure that pricing aims to recoup as much as is practicable or appropriate of the real costs of DEC's involvement and is consistent with the requirements of National Competition Policy. (Recoup of the full costs of DEC's involvement may not be appropriate in instances where the activity would not have been possible - and therefore benefits to DEC not generated - without the involvement of the paying volunteers);
- ensure appropriate standards are met in the development of tours with which DEC has an association.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.9.1 DEC will establish and maintain a register of nature based research and management programs that would be suitable for, and benefit by, the involvement of fee-paying volunteers or ecotourists.
- 1.9.2 DEC will continue to run LANDSCOPE Expeditions in association with UWA Extension in order to improve public understanding of the natural environment and native plants and animal species in Western Australia and to demonstrate the viability and standards required in ecotours.
- 1.9.3 The involvement of fee-paying clients in projects managed by DEC will only take place when the use of untrained paying volunteers will not compromise the integrity of the project.
- 1.9.4 Tours involving research programs will conform to the priorities determined in DEC's annually produced rolling five-year research plan.
- 1.9.5 Environmental research tours will be subject to agreed conditions including access, supervision, safety, equipment as well as conditions ensuring benefits to research.
- 1.9.6 All tours should aim to recoup as much as practicable or appropriate of the real costs to DEC of its association with the ecotour, including the full costs of the salaries of scientists and managers, the

costs incurred by the Region/District, and administration costs taking into account the benefits to DEC generated by the tour.

1.10 VISITOR INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Communicating with the public through personal contact, guided experiences and a variety of media is an integral part of management of the natural estate and heritage values. Visitor information and interpretation are key strategies in DEC's communication with the public. Interpretive planning strategically targets visitors and others in appreciating and supporting the management of the natural and cultural values within the areas managed by DEC as well as throughout the State. It informs the public of opportunities for recreation and the facilities and services available. As such, it is important to the marketing and appropriate use of protected areas as places for visitors and others for recreation and as tourist destinations. Also, it is a most important tool for their management - selective communication can modify the demand on particular areas and specific messages can foster appropriate behaviour so minimising visitor impact. This is interpretation - communication that conveys values, reveals meanings, enhances experiences and assists management by improving visitors' understanding, appreciation and support of nature conservation.

The principles of communicating information about natural areas, historic sites, cultural values and wildlife are well developed and are embodied in the concepts "visitor information", "interpretation", "community education" and "community involvement".

"Visitor information" constitutes the basic data about recreation areas, for instance, area orientation, location and distances, facilities, codes of conduct, costs, attractions and things to know and do. Before the visit it sets expectations; on-site it orients the visitor and provides choices for recreational pursuits.

"Interpretation" is the explanation of natural and cultural features and concepts and conveys feelings and ideas, reveals meanings and adds value to a visitor's experience. Effective interpretation programs are planned strategically to (i) minimise impact, (ii) maximise the value of visitors' experience and (iii) achieve support for management of natural and cultural values.

"Community education" is learning about the area in a more comprehensive way, often involving provision of resource materials, presentations by knowledgeable leaders and formal field activities.

"Community involvement" is public participation in educational and social development programs that build community awareness and support for management of natural and cultural values. DEC's communication strategy employs information, interpretation and community education to help support such involvement.

Many communication channels are available for visitor information, interpretation and community education. They can be divided into pre-visit, on-site and post-visit. While contact with staff and other guides on-site through interpretive activity programs and ecotours are the most effective means of communicating to individuals and groups because they are interactive, they are also labour intensive and must be augmented by pre-visit publications, publicity and advice, on-site signs, displays and other products.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.10.1 Visitor information and interpretation is the responsibility of all DEC staff supported by the expertise of PVS Service staff.
- 1.10.2 Co-ordination of standards for visitor information and interpretation is the responsibility of the Interpretation and Visitor Information Unit, which will act in consultation with the appropriate Regional and District Managers, Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs Division staff and other senior staff as required.

- 1.10.3 DEC will communicate strategically through the preparation of Interpretation Plans and by using interpretation in ways that assist management, rather than placing additional pressure on available resources. Visitor information and interpretation will be incorporated into the site design process to ensure the integration of visitor services and facilities.
- 1.10.4 DEC will maintain a hierarchy of pre-visit information material such as books, magazines, brochures, CD-ROMs and DEC's website *NatureBase*, which range from State-wide cover to site specific. These publications and products are provided at a range of different DEC offices and sites. Resources for publications will be generally allocated on the basis of demand for recreational use of the area concerned, but other factors such as the need to protect specific areas will be taken into account.
- 1.10.5 Visitor information is provided as a service covered in part by visitor fees in accordance with the policies of PVS Division and the Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs Division. More extensive publications, maps and other information materials and interpretive facilities and services will be priced, where appropriate, to recover costs at market value. The cost of disseminating materials via mail and through non-DEC outlets will be recovered where appropriate.
- 1.10.6 Specialised visitor information centres may be developed on-site or at a strategic location within the region where visitor demand is sufficient, resources allow and according to the principles identified in the Visitor Interpretation Manual. DEC may also develop partnerships with tourist bureaux and display interpretive material at these locations.
- 1.10.7 Communication with visitors by DEC staff as well as people involved in DEC's volunteer programs is a high priority. Staff and volunteers (such as campground hosts and honorary rangers) will be trained in appropriate communication skills and, where appropriate, should wear name badges and appropriate DEC insignia when interacting with visitors and the media. Activity programs will be developed at areas of major concentration of visitors. In addition, support will be given to tour operators and guides in providing quality interpretive services for visitors through training, publications and workshops.
- 1.10.8 Interpretative signs, displays, exhibits and guided experiences will be designed and prepared according to the objectives of the Interpretation Plan and the principles and standards determined by the Interpretation and Visitor Information Unit as specified in the Corporate Sign Manual and Visitor Interpretation Manual. Unit staff may be involved in design, in consultation with Regional and District staff.
- 1.10.9 Location and construction of interpretative displays should be in accordance with site development plans in consultation with Recreation and Landscape Unit.
- 1.10.10 Signs and displays should be worded to ensure a message of welcome to the area and meet visitor and management needs for safe and enjoyable experiences that gain visitor support for management.
- 1.10.11 Sign text, layout, construction, location and size will conform with directions in DEC's Sign Manual and the Visitor Interpretation Manual.
- 1.10.12 DEC will work with Tread Lightly! Australia, Leave No Trace and other agencies to actively promote responsible actions by visitors in natural areas according to established codes of conduct.

1.11 INTERACTION WITH VISITORS BY DEC STAFF AND DEC VOLUNTEERS

Introduction

It is recognised that DEC staff play a key role in facilitating the public's use, enjoyment and appreciation of natural areas. Staff in some areas have substantial experience in this field. Skills required for positive visitor contact are partly derived from personality and interest in this subject, but much can be done through training and personal development to ensure that DEC staff are able to facilitate high standards of visitor satisfaction.

DEC also has a community involvement program that encourages participation of volunteers in a variety of conservation and recreation activities. In 2005/06 there were 3,882 volunteers registered with DEC, contributing 470,600 hours of their time to DEC volunteer projects. These people include campground hosts, wildlife carers, honorary DEC rangers and other volunteers who all play a significant role in the provision of key services for DEC. DEC has a responsibility to ensure that these people are adequately trained to carry out the services they provide on behalf of DEC and receive recognition and reward for the substantial contribution they make to the community.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.11.1 DEC will develop programs to improve the visitor interaction skills of DEC staff (refer to DEC People Services Manual). This will include both formal training and other forms of personal development.
- 1.11.2 DEC will produce materials and information such as the Customer Service Charter, to assist and support staff in their interaction with the public.
- 1.11.3 DEC volunteers will be provided with induction and training courses appropriate to the services they provide and the level of interaction they have with the public, and will be recognised and rewarded for their work in accordance with the Department's Policy Statement No. 15 – Community Involvement (Public Participation and Volunteers).

1.12 MANAGEMENT OF ORGANISED NON-COMMERCIAL EDUCATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Introduction

DEC frequently receives requests from clubs, schools, community groups, recreational and sporting associations and other organisations to conduct non-commercial leisure and educational activities and/or special events on lands and waters managed by DEC. Such activities may include everything from school excursions and camps to competitive events such as orienteering, rogaining and car rallies and special events such as weddings. In general, many group activities and events are an acceptable use of the lands and waters managed by DEC, providing that they are sensitively located and properly planned and managed.

It should be noted that it is an offence to, without lawful authority, organise, promote or conduct any event involving cross country running, orienteering, rogaining, cross country navigation exercises, equestrian events, car rallies or associated navigation exercise, mountain bike event or any race involving vehicles on or through DEC-managed land (see regulations 50 and 53, *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*). At the Regional or District Manager's discretion, lawful authority for these and other events may be obtained through the standard application form for 'Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters' provided in Appendix 2. This form was developed to be used in those instances where:

- there is a significant degree of lead time and pre-planning required to assess and field check proposed areas, obtain environmental clearances, prepare and print maps (as is the case for activities such as orienteering and rogaining) and/or where DEC operations such as prescribed burning could significantly impact on or cause the cancellation of an approved event;
- there is a likelihood that an organised activity/event could endanger or otherwise significantly impact on or disadvantage other user groups (e.g. approved car rallies such as Rally Australia);

- the activity or event could result in a significant or unacceptable level of environmental damage if not properly managed/controlled (e.g. trial and enduro bike events, car rallies, etc);
- where there is an obvious element of personal risk to the group participants and where DEC wishes to ensure that the organisers and participants are made aware of the risks and their legal and insurance requirements (both for their own protection and that of DEC in the event of some misadventure occurring);
- where there is no other acceptable means for effectively communicating with organised groups and event organisers and managing their activities.

Organised activities/events where the use of the application form for ‘Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters’ is required or may be considered appropriate by District or Regional Managers include:

- cross country running;
- orienteering;
- rogaining,
- cross country navigation exercises;
- car rallies;
- equestrian events;
- trial/enduro bike events
- major event activities involving dogs;
- group bushwalking events (25 people or more) involving overnight activities where the participants will be walking off established tracks on land managed by DEC (see section 2.1.17);
- mountain bike events;
- weddings;
- competitive or ‘extreme’ event applications (see section 2.12);
- organised non-commercial surfing events (see section 6.3);
- events, meetings or functions likely to involve the attendance of more than 100 people.

Approval via the application form for ‘Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities’ may be given for an extended period (for instance a year or longer), covering a number of events. A list of events that are covered by the one approval form may be attached to the approved form. The approval process via the form is not necessarily required for each individual event if there are likely to be ongoing events of a similar nature. The length of time that may be covered by an approved form is at the discretion of the Regional or District Manager.

The use of the application form for ‘Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters’ will not be required for 4WD clubs who camp and/or undertake tours on land managed by DEC. DEC has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WA 4WD Association and Track Care WA and also meets with these groups and associated clubs on a regular basis. The MOU requires that clubs contact relevant DEC offices prior to their trips, and this form of communication and liaison process is considered to be adequate for the activities of 4WD clubs.

A permit system for abseiling and caving (see sections 2.3 and 2.4 of these guidelines) may be applied under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*. A permit system currently operates for abseiling and caving in the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park.

Policy Guidelines

1.12.1 DEC will attempt to accommodate organised activities and events subject to section 33 of the CALM Act (which addresses management plans, "necessary operations" and "compatible operations") and the general principles listed at the beginning of this document. The assessment of

requests should give particular attention to maintenance of the values of the land managed by DEC, and to possible interference with other forms of recreation as well as the cost to management.

- 1.12.2 Approval of activities is generally the responsibility of Regional and District Managers. In the case of major events Managers may need to consult with the Corporate Executive and with the Conservation Commission of Western Australia and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority as appropriate before granting approval. Where approval is sought to conduct an activity within a Public Drinking Water Source Area, applications will be referred to the Department of Water and Water Corporation for their review.
- 1.12.3 Where major activities or events are proposed, these can result in significant environmental and social impacts. Often such impacts can be minimised or mitigated through careful planning and management and the advice of specialist staff should be sought where appropriate.
- 1.12.4 Where an external organisation or group seeks to bring people onto lands and waters managed by DEC for an organised event, it is important that all relevant management issues are identified and assessed when considering such requests.
- 1.12.5 A standardised application form with general conditions of approval (including indemnity and public risk insurance requirements) and an accompanying information sheet on obtaining approval to conduct organised, non-commercial educational and leisure activities is included as Appendix 2.

Guidelines for the conduct of car rallies are outlined in sections 5.3 and 5.4. Guidelines for rogaining activities are outlined in section 2.2.

1.13 DOMESTIC ANIMALS/PETS (INCLUDING DOGS)

Introduction

These policy guidelines deal with the presence of domestic animals including dogs on lands managed by DEC. It does not relate to horse riding or other animals capable of being ridden, which are dealt with in section 2.7.

There are opposing and often strongly held views in the community about the presence of domestic animals/pets on public lands. Many visitors believe that pets should be allowed to accompany them as part of their recreation activity. Other people resent the nuisance that may be presented by other visitors' animals (e.g. by noise from barking dogs, from the potential for a child to be knocked over by a large dog or other potential personal injury, or from pet excrement).

Domestic pets can also have an impact on wildlife. For example, the smell and general activity of dogs and cats can impede the activity of wildlife in areas which otherwise may present ideal wildlife viewing opportunities for the public. Cats and dogs can also kill or injure wildlife.

There may be dangers to pets arising from the presence of poison baits in areas where feral animals are controlled. Pets may also be lost on DEC-managed lands, for instance after pursuing wildlife in isolated areas.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.13.1 Dogs, cats (see 1.13.3 below) and other domestic animals are not permitted on DEC-managed lands and waters, with the following exceptions:
 - (i) guide dogs for people with visual impairment and dogs for management/security purposes (see 1.13.6 below);

- (ii) where designated areas for dogs are established by being declared and published in the *Government Gazette* under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*;
 - (iii) where dogs are travelling in vessels in a marine park or marine management area;
 - (iv) in special cases, as determined by the Coordinator, Park Policy and Services in consultation with the relevant Regional/District Manager.
- 1.13.2 Designated dog areas will:
- (i) not be permitted in nature reserves or marine nature reserves except in exceptional circumstances;
 - (ii) generally not be declared in national parks, conservation parks, marine parks and marine management areas, except in circumstances where dog access is considered to be manageable and/or there has been a history of dog access in those areas;
 - (iii) be more likely to be declared in State forest, timber reserves and CALM Act section 5(1) (g) and (h) reserves.
- 1.13.3 Domestic cats are excluded from all DEC-managed lands because they prey on native fauna. There are no exceptions to this ‘exclusion of cats’ policy.
- 1.13.4 Where dogs are permitted on DEC-managed lands and waters in the Perth Metropolitan Region and in townsites, they are required to be on a lead unless they are in an area declared by the local government authority to be a dog exercise area.
- 1.13.5 Where dogs are permitted on DEC-managed lands and waters outside the Perth Metropolitan Region and townsites, they are required to be on a lead except where DEC has designated the area for dog exercise without the requirement for a lead. Where a dog is not on a lead in these particular areas, it is required to be under the control of a competent person.
- 1.13.6 Guide dogs for people with sight impairment are permitted on all DEC-managed lands and waters. Specially trained animals for management (i.e. feral animal control), search and rescue, security purposes or the display of animals for educational purposes, may be permitted on DEC-managed land and waters.
- 1.13.6 Staff resident on reserves may keep family pets (excluding cats) with the approval of the Regional Manager, provided the animals are confined to the area rented by the staff member and any designated dog areas.
- 1.13.7 Residents adjacent to reserve entrances where domestic animals are not permitted should be encouraged to provide boarding facilities on a commercial basis for visitors who inadvertently arrive with a domestic animal.

1.14 VISITOR FEES AND CHARGES

Introduction

Visitor fees include both camping and entry fees. All fees collected are retained by DEC to assist in conservation and park management, including the improvement of visitor services and facilities. The growing number of visitors to areas managed by DEC creates considerable costs in the provision of nature based recreation and tourism opportunities and maintenance and protection of the conservation values of these natural areas. The user-pays principle provides an equitable means of raising funds to offset some of these costs.

While the revenue raised from visitor fees and charges assists with conservation and park management including the funding of recreation and tourism services and facilities which provide visitor benefits, DEC’s

overall Government budget appropriations fund the establishment and conservation of parks and major capital works and other improvements.

Fees are reviewed annually, which is a requirement of the Treasury Manual (May 1998) and consistent with section 53(b) of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1985*, although it may not be practical to adjust fees and charges annually. Generally, DEC recommends a review of fees from time to time that requires the assent of the Minister for the Environment. Visitor fees are charged by DEC in accordance with section 127(c) of the CALM Act and regulation 99 and Schedule 1, Division 1 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.14.1 Generally, fees will be collected from visitors, within the bounds of cost-efficiency, where a service or facility is provided (see 1.14.2 below).
- 1.14.2 The level of fees will be set from time to time under regulations according to a number of factors including reasonable facilities and services provided and the associated management costs, level of visitation and the number of manageable entry points.
- 1.14.3 Revenue collected from visitor fees will be retained by the Region/District in which the fees are collected and used for conservation and park management, including the improvement of visitor services and facilities and protection of the natural environment. Opportunities should be taken wherever possible (through signs, publications and verbal communication) to explain to visitors that this is the case.
- 1.14.4 It is at the discretion of the CEO to grant a waiver or concession of park entry fees (regulation 104). This discretion has been delegated to the Coordinator of Park Policy and Services. In general, entry fee waivers are only granted to school groups entering for education purposes related to the school curriculum, aged and infirm groups or groups of disabled people. Forest tours by non-profit organisations for educational purposes will also be granted an entry fee waiver. Federal, State and local government officers will not be charged an entry fee when entering parks for official business purposes.
- A reduction of camping fees may be approved for those adults participating in group programs to provide opportunities for rehabilitation, self development, or raising self esteem for unemployed, young offenders, people at risk of offending and socio-economically disadvantaged. In these cases the adult camping fee will be reduced to the child rate. Camping is discussed in more detail in section 3.2 of these guidelines.
- 1.14.5 Holders of recreational fishing licences are not required to pay a park entry fee if entering only for the purpose of their licence, however they are required to pay camping fees if they stay overnight. (Recreational fishing licences are required for the following types of fishing: abalone; rock lobster; south-west freshwater angling; marron; and net fishing.)
- 1.14.6 Fees are also collected for commercial concessions (see section 1.15) and other services and facilities, including interpretive activities and tours.
- 1.14.7 Notice of an increase in fees/charges will be provided to commercial tour operators at least 12 months in advance.
- 1.14.8 In relation to commercial tours, free park entry is given to:
- children under the age of six;
 - tour company staff – the driver and tour guides/interpreter; and
 - industry/media group, provided the visit is for the purpose of their business and approval is sought in advance with no less than 48 hours notice from the Coordinator, Park Policy and Services.

- 1.14.9 Aboriginal people entering a park where entry fees apply are not required to pay the fee if they are entering for the purpose of carrying out traditional activities.
- 1.14.10 Community service groups conducting bona-fide services such as rescues or training will not be required to pay a park entry fee.

1.15 COMMERCIAL CONCESSIONS – LEASES AND LICENCES ON LANDS AND WATERS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT

Definition

A commercial concession is a "right granted by way of lease, licence, or permit for occupation or use of part of an area of land or water entrusted to the Department, for the purposes of provision of appropriate facilities and services for visitors' use and enjoyment" (CONCOM Working Group Paper on Concession Management in National Parks and other Protected Areas, 1985). Although it is most commonly applied throughout the world in national parks, the definition is appropriate for general use on all lands and waters managed by DEC.

Background

One of DEC's key objectives is:

Creating sustainable community benefits - Generate social, cultural and economic benefits through the development of a "World Class Parks System" and provision of a range of services that are valued by the community and are consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability.

To assist in meeting this objective, DEC enters into commercial arrangements with private sector partners. These arrangements, or concessions, can be by way of a lease or licence for the purpose of providing appropriate facilities and services for visitors' use and enjoyment.

Leasing and licensing are an important means of meeting the rising demand for high quality services while at the same time ensuring that financial contributions from tourism help DEC meet the costs of managing the natural resource.

This section outlines DEC's policy guidelines on the use of commercial concessions (leases and licences) to provide visitor services and facilities on the lands and waters that it manages. The policy guidelines are consistent with the CALM Act and general business principles.

Further detail on policy related to leases can be found in DEC's draft Policy Statement - Leases on Land Managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Leases and Licences

Under the provisions of the CALM Act, leases may be granted on land or waters to which the Act applies, i.e. State forest, timber reserves and certain Crown lands, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves, marine parks, marine nature reserves and marine management areas, CALM Act section 33(2) reserves and certain other land reserved under the *Land Administration Act 1997* [see section 87(2), 98(1)(b) and 33(2) of the CALM Act].

There are two types of leases - (i) forest leases (granted under section 97 of the CALM Act), and (ii) leases for other land and waters covered by the CALM Act (granted under section 100). Forest leases are covered by Division 1 of Part VIII of the CALM Act (section 97). Leases for other land and waters are covered by Division 2 of Part VIII of the *Act* (section 100).

Licences are issued under sections 97A and 101 of the CALM Act. A lease allows the lessee to occupy a particular area of land or water, whereas a licence allows the licensee to enter and use lands and waters.

Leases are issued when the activity involves significant infrastructure and/or retailing and requires the exclusive use of the land. A lease provides security to protect the significant levels of investment involved with infrastructure development. Examples are the Yanchep Inn and Yanchep kiosk leases, the Matilda Bay Restaurant and the Hamelin Bay Caravan Park leases.

Licences are issued to facilitate concessions of a more itinerant nature or degree of access. Licensed activities generally do not involve substantial infrastructure. Licensed activities include nature-based tours (safari tours, adventure tours, boat tours, diving charters, wildflower tours) and minor retail outlets such as mobile kiosks.

In summary, leases and licences issued as commercial concessions –

- enable access to and use of the area to be monitored and managed,
- ensure that conservation values are maintained,
- secure resources for management from those using the land,
- provide the private sector with appropriate opportunities for commercial involvement on lands and waters managed by DEC.

Leases and licences must be consistent with the purpose of the park or reserve and the protection of its values. Facilities or services which conflict with the purpose of the reserve or which unduly impact on natural or cultural values or reduce visitor experience will not normally be provided on public land or waters managed by DEC.

Leases and licences provide a mechanism to bring private capital and management expertise into visitor services in natural areas. They need to be carefully designed and managed, or they may detract from the conservation and landscape values of the park or reserve, while appropriate concessions can significantly enhance public access, enjoyment and appreciation of these areas.

DEC's responsibilities in relation to leases and licences include protection of conservation and landscape values, ensuring quality of experience, as well as enhancing understanding of the natural environment.

Forest Leases (section 97 leases)

Forest leases may be granted by the CEO on State forest, timber reserves and certain Crown land, subject to consultation with the Conservation Commission and the approval of the Minister for the Environment, for a range of purposes. These purposes include recreation uses such as ropes courses and rifle ranges, and accommodation developments (e.g. the Dwellingup, Logue Brook and Waroona Dam Caravan Parks).

Forest leases on public water catchment areas must be consistent with water supply legislation with respect to the protection of water quality.

Forest leases may be granted for a term not exceeding 21 years, and may include an option or options for a further term or terms not exceeding, in the aggregate, 21 years.

No compensation is payable to a lessee at the expiry of a forest lease for any improvements to the land but the lessee is entitled, at any time before the lease expires, to remove any buildings or fences erected by him or dispose of them to an incoming tenant. If any improvements are not removed or sold to an incoming tenant, then they become the property of the Crown.

Forest leases must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 14 sitting days of their execution.

Leases for Other Lands and Waters (section 100 leases)

Leases may be granted under section 100 for all other land or waters to which the Act applies. This includes national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, marine parks, marine nature reserves, marine management areas, section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves, private land managed under section 16 agreements and certain Crown land placed under the management of DEC (under section 33(2)) but excludes State forest, timber reserves and wilderness/remote areas.

Section 100 leases may be granted by the CEO (subject to consultation with the Conservation Commission and approval by the Minister for the Environment) for a term not exceeding 21 years on such terms and conditions as determined by the CEO. Such a lease may include an option or options to renew that lease for a further term or terms not exceeding, in the aggregate, 21 years. This means in effect that there is a maximum of 42 years available for both section 97 and section 100 leases.

In leases where significant infrastructure is involved, the improvements to the lease area will become the property of the Crown at the expiry of the lease.

Within these legal parameters, the length of a lease is primarily dependent on the level of capital expenditure proposed and the timeframe over which the capital investment can be amortised. There are other factors which will also influence the length of the lease period entered into, including the capacity for return on investment (i.e. use/visitor level). A business plan is required before either a section 100 lease or a forest lease for accommodation/visitor facility development will be issued.

Under section 99 of the CALM Act, consultation with the Conservation Commission and, where applicable, an associated body is required, as well as the approval of the Minister for the Environment before a lease can be granted by the CEO under section 97 or section 100. Any leases proposed in marine reserves, or section 5(1)(g) or 5(1)(h) reserves vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA), require consultation with the MPRA and approval of the Minister before a lease is granted.

Section 100 leases on public water catchment areas must be consistent with water supply legislation with respect to the protection of water quality. Consultation is also required with the Swan River Trust for areas within the operation of the *Swan River Trust Act 1988*.

Where a lease is within the Metropolitan Region Scheme and development is involved, approval of the relevant local authority and the WA Planning Commission is required before a lease is issued. Outside of the Metropolitan Region Scheme, local authorities will be consulted or involved in lease proposals involving significant infrastructure development within their boundaries.

If the land is subject to a section 16 agreement under the CALM Act, the approval of the owner and consent of the occupier is required before a lease can be granted. Similarly, approval is generally sought from any other relevant authority involved with the lease.

Section 99 also requires that leases are only granted in conformity with section 33(3) of the CALM Act relating to management plans as discussed in the following section.

Section 100 leases and section 97 leases must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament within 14 sitting days of their execution.

See section 3.2 of these Policy Guidelines for discussion of other legislative issues relevant to the management of leases and licences for caravanning and camping facilities on lands managed by DEC.

Management Plans

Where a management plan exists for a particular reserve, such a plan determines whether or not a lease or licence may be issued. If there is no management plan for a reserve, a lease or licence cannot be issued unless the activity proposed for the reserve is deemed to be either a necessary operation (in the case of nature reserves or marine nature reserves) or a compatible operation (in the case of national parks, conservation

parks, marine parks, marine management areas) or in accordance with the purpose of the reserve in the case of section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves and State forest and timber reserves.

Necessary operations are those operations that are:

- necessary for the preservation or protection of persons, property, land, waters, flora or fauna; or
- necessary for the preparation of a management plan.

Compatible operations:

- include necessary operations;
- are operations approved by the Minister as being in his or her opinion compatible with the purposes for which the park or management area is managed and generally are related to recreation.

In the case of compatible operations, the CALM Act requires that the public is notified of any proposed compatible operations within a reserve and given an opportunity to comment (see flow chart for Compatible Operations in Appendix 4).

Lease Rental

The CEO may charge a rental for a lease pursuant to section 35 of the CALM Act. Rental on commercial leases is set by market forces and is normally based on a business plan. It is usually calculated as a percentage of gross turnover (usually 5 - 10%). A lesser rent may be set for non-commercial leases, such as leases by educational institutions and sporting clubs.

Licences

There are two types of commercial operations licences that may be issued under Part 7 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*:

1. T Class Licences: these are issued for activities where it is not necessary to restrict the number of licences for environmental management and/or visitor safety reasons. This is often the case with vehicle-based safari tours and may be the case with, for example, boat tours, and 4WD tours.
2. E Class Licences: these are issued where it is necessary to restrict the number of licences for an activity or variety of activities in a particular location for environmental or management reasons, including the protection of life, property or the environment. Licence numbers are limited only in circumstances where DEC's management objectives cannot be achieved solely through appropriate licence conditions. Generally this type of licence is issued subsequent to calling for Expressions of Interest. There may be strong demand for these licences because they can provide an element of protection from competition as a result of the restriction on the number of licences issued. As a result, a publicly advertised competitive process is usually undertaken. Examples of E Class licences include whale shark interaction tours within Ningaloo Marine Park, wildlife charter boat tours out of Monkey Mia, and a single scenic helicopter tour within Purnululu National Park.

Licence Period and Fees

E Class licences can be granted for up to five years with the capacity to renew for up to a further five years. The period is determined by DEC and is based on the nature of the activity, the amount of capital investment, the impact on the environment, and accreditation requirements.

Since 1 April 2002, tour operators have been able to apply for T Class licences on a one, three or five year basis, depending on the number of industry accreditation programs they have completed. A one-year licence is issued to an operator who is not accredited with any program. These operators are ineligible for long-term licences. A three-year licence is issued to an operator who is accredited with one tourism program. The operator can be accredited with a business program such as the National Tourism Accreditation Program

(WA) operated by the Tourism Council of Western Australia (TCWA) or an ecotourism activity or product accreditation program such as Eco Certification. A five-year licence is issued to an operator who is accredited with two tourism programs such as a business accreditation program and an ecotourism activity/product accreditation program.

A non-refundable application and renewal fee applies to both T and E Class licences. An annual licence charge also applies to T Class licences. The charge for an E Class licence is either based on a percentage of the tour operator's gross turnover or is a "per head" figure based on the number of passengers carried or a flat rate as determined on a case-by-case basis. The revenue from E Class licences would normally be used to undertake research or provide management and facilities associated with the licensed activity. The circumstances requiring the licence numbers to be limited often require an intensive management approach.

For further information about commercial operations licences, refer to the Department's Administrative Instruction No. 41 - Guidelines for Approving Commercial Operators' Concessions.

Process

When a particular lease or E Class licence opportunity arises, a call for Expressions of Interest (EoI) is advertised. Guidelines for the EoI that clearly set out the requirements for the development opportunity, and the responsibilities of the successful proponent, are made available. A thorough selection process is carried out, and consultation with the Conservation Commission (or in the case of marine areas, consultation with the MPRA) and the approval of the Minister for the Environment is required before a lease or licence can be issued (see Appendix 4 for the flow chart on the Expression of Interest process).

Pre – Existing Commercial Operations

Where a commercial operation has been established in an area that subsequently is declared a conservation reserve, the commercial operator will be required to be licensed in accordance with the Act and regulations.

An assessment will be made as to whether the types of licence granted for the new reserve will be T Class (Unrestricted) or E Class (Restricted). This may be in accord with the requirements of the management plan or an assessment by DEC.

T Class Licence:

All commercial operators will be required to apply for and be granted a T Class commercial activity licence.

E Class Licence:

Where it has been determined that for environmental, management or for the protection of life, property or the environment, the number of licences should be restricted, the licences will be allocated as follows:

1. Where the restriction on the number of licences to be allocated is equal to or greater than the number of commercial operators who can demonstrate historical and sustained conduct of the activities prior to the declaration of the reserve then the existing operators will be offered first refusal for the opportunity for an E Class licence. Should the existing operators not take up all the available licences, any unused licensing capacity would be allocated through a publicly advertised expression of interest process.
2. Where the restriction on the numbers of licences is exceeded by the number of existing operators who can demonstrate historical and sustained conduct of the activities prior to the declaration of the reserve, the licences would be allocated through a competitive process amongst those existing operators.

Where, at a later date, it is determined that a T Class licence should become a restricted E Class licence, a licence holder who can demonstrate a history of operation prior to the declaration of the reserve would be

allocated the opportunity for an E Class licence without the requirement to apply through a competitive process.

Policy Guidelines

General

- 1.15.1 DEC will consider proposals for the establishment and operation of facilities and services by private enterprise under concession agreement, subject to 1.15.24 and 1.15.25 where commercial developments, facilities and services are commercially viable, and in order to permit deployment of DEC's financial and human resources elsewhere.
- 1.15.2 Facilities or services being proposed by way of a concession will need to meet the following objectives:
- be consistent with DEC's corporate goals in respect to nature conservation, heritage and cultural conservation and the provision of recreation and tourism opportunities;
 - be consistent with the management plan for the land or water in question or carried out in accordance with a compatible or necessary operation;
 - provide an equitable financial return to DEC and a return on inputs;
 - enhance the appropriate use of, enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of lands and waters managed by DEC;
 - be consistent with the purpose of the Reserve and with the preservation of values of the land, e.g. they do not impinge upon rare or fragile ecosystems or impair key features of the landscape, or increase visitor pressure on the land to an unacceptable level and do not detract from the reasonable enjoyment of the land by the public;
 - can demonstrate that it can meet all statutory and industry requirements relevant to the operation, including regulations applying to the land under the CALM Act;
 - can demonstrate that the concession is economically, environmentally, socially and technically sustainable.
- 1.15.3 All concession rights will be subject to conditions that may include specification of the requirements and standards of services and goods to be provided e.g. aesthetic standards, safety standards, hours of operation, restrictions on litter generating products, and the appropriate rate of fees charged (subject to periodic review).
- 1.15.4 All concession rights will be monitored. Failure of concession holders to comply with conditions is likely to result in a penalty or cancellation of the concession.
- 1.15.5 Advertising or promotion of the concession will be in harmony with the values of the land or waters concerned and the objectives of DEC.
- 1.15.6 A register of concessions (leases and licences) will be maintained by the Coordinator, Park Policy and Services.
- 1.15.7 Licences for commercial operators to access terrestrial and marine reserves will need to be consistent with the area or regional management plan.
- 1.15.8 Proposed concession operations involving significant levels of capital investment may be required to prepare a business plan.
- 1.15.9 Any opportunity that restricts the number of concessions available will be publicly advertised through a public competitive application process.

- 1.15.10 All concession holders will be required to carry public liability insurance and indemnify the CEO against any claims that may arise through their activities. Minimum levels of insurance cover will be set by DEC from time to time.
- 1.15.11 All concession holders will be encouraged to undertake tourism industry accreditation appropriate to their activities.
- 1.15.12 All establishment costs will be met by the concession holder.
- 1.15.13 The concessionaire will be provided with reasonable commercial freedom and opportunity to make a profit within the terms and conditions granted.
- 1.15.14 Concessionaires must ensure that DEC's roles and responsibilities are accurately presented in any publications/brochures they prepare.

Commercial Leases

- 1.15.15 In principle, a lease will be for as short a term as possible concomitant with the amortisation of the invested capital.
- 1.15.16 Sub-leasing and assignment of leases will be facilitated where such proposals are consistent with the purpose and standards of the original lease.
- 1.15.17 Where a proposal for a lease development complements existing external facilities, or provides a service not currently provided elsewhere, the Department will consider the establishment of the facility on lands or waters that it manages, subject to section 1.15.2.
- 1.15.18 DEC will release commercial and tourism lease opportunities to the private sector via a public competitive process where it considers the proposal is a viable commercial proposition subject to section 1.15.2.

Restricted Licences

- 1.15.19 E Class licence opportunities will be identified by DEC and where appropriate released to the private sector through a public competitive process.
- 1.15.20 Where proponents present new E Class licence ideas to DEC, the Department will maintain intellectual property information on a confidential basis where possible.

Lease Rental, Fees and Charges

- 1.15.21 Rental for non-commercial leases will be reviewed regularly and set from time to time by the Minister, in consultation with the Valuer General, as appropriate. In most circumstances fees will at least recoup management and administration costs incurred by DEC. Lesser fees may be charged where DEC is materially assisted by the concession holder, e.g. by educational benefits, or by amenities provided for public use as a by-product of the concession.
- 1.15.22 Lease agreements will make provision for adjustments in accordance with CPI.
- 1.15.23 Commercial rentals will be determined by negotiation. Fair rental should reflect current market values. Rentals may take into account other factors such as lease premium, lease period, potential for return on investment and additional services provided by the lessee.

Commercial Activities of the Department

Introduction

There are some recreation and tourism facilities and services provided by DEC that include a commercial or business component. Campgrounds, huts, cave tours, boat tours, caving opportunities, caravan parks and interpretive tours and activities are some that apply the user-pays principle. In most cases because of location, seasonality or the nature of the activity, these activities are not capable of being operated as commercially viable businesses. In other cases it is appropriate that DEC provides these services as part of its charter irrespective of the business potential.

These operations may at times conflict with or compete with private businesses. In all cases where DEC sets a fee or charge or carries out a 'business' activity it will need to comply with National Competition Policy. (Refer to the Competition Policy Memo on the Park Policy and Services homepage on DEC's intranet).

Policy Guidelines

1.15.24 DEC will continue to provide and operate commercial services and facilities where the activity:

- is a core or traditional responsibility of DEC;
- is of important educative or interpretive value to visitors;
- complements facilities and services provided by external providers;
- would not constitute a viable commercial opportunity to the private sector.

1.15.25 DEC will retain those commercially viable activities that it operates where:

- no suitable private sector operator can be found to operate the service or facility;
- the public interest is best served by its management by DEC;
- privatisation would disadvantage or displace important user groups within the community;
- the educative or interpretive value of the site to DEC is paramount and would be diminished under concession management.

1.15.26 Commercial services will be conducted in accordance with National Competition Guidelines and the *Trade Practices Act*.

1.15.27 Proposals to establish new commercial activities or those that involve significant changes to an existing commercial service require the approval of the Director of Parks and Visitor Services.

Refer to the Department's Administrative Instruction No. 41 for greater detail on the management of concessions.

Table 1. Summary of Principles for Granting Leases under Sections 97 and 100 of the CALM Act

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPLES FOR GRANTING SECTION 97 AND SECTION 100 LEASES	
Principles	Description
Lease Period	Shortest possible with regard to the invested capital. Can be up to 21 years; with option to renew for periods up to a further 21 years.
Capital expenditure by lessee	Often major for section 100 leases (i.e. greater than \$1 million).
Rental	Usually a percentage of gross turnover (usually between 3 - 10%), for tourism leases. Otherwise according to approved rent schedule.
Provision of additional visitor facilities	Often required of a lessee, in some cases in lieu of some component of the rent.
Public involvement	Via management plan process, or if no management plan, as a compatible operation notice or necessary operation.
Approval required:	Consultation with the Conservation Commission (or Marine Parks and Reserves Authority for marine areas) and approval of the Minister for the Environment
Land tenure	Section 97 leases: State forest, timber reserves, and certain Crown land. Section 100 leases: national parks, nature reserves, conservation parks, marine parks, marine nature reserves, etc.
Operational services (e.g. waste collection, picnic ground management, cleaning)	Usually by the lessee.
Ancillary infrastructure requirements	Usually required of the lessee, in some cases in lieu of a proportion of rent.
Effect on the park or other land	Consistent with the purpose of the land.
Access/equity of access	Generally provides exclusive possession to the lessee but the purposes of commercial concessions for recreation and tourism should not prevent, limit or obstruct public access (some exceptions).
Commercial exclusivity	Opportunity made available through public call for expressions of interest, or through publicly available register of ecotourism opportunities on lands and waters managed by DEC.
Appropriateness of design	Must conform to DEC's design(s) and specifications.
Examples	Matilda Bay Restaurant, Yanchep Inn, Hamelin Bay Caravan Park.

1.16 LEASES FOR ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS

Introduction

Several leases for clubs occur on national parks, reserves and State forests. These are mostly long standing and are often highly capitalised.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.16.1 New leases will be provided to clubs only where:
- the applicant can demonstrate that it is not able to conduct these activities elsewhere;
 - impact on landscape and environment generally is negligible;
 - impact on public amenity and use of the area is negligible;
 - the use is consistent with the purpose of vesting;
 - or the provision of the lease will benefit the land and water managed by DEC.
- 1.16.2 Existing leases will be reviewed according to the principles in 1.15.1 when they are about to expire or where the lessee requests renegotiation.
- 1.16.3 Fees for leases will be set by the Valuer General and will be reviewed at least every three years.
- 1.16.4 In the event that a new lease is issued, it will be subject to conditions applying to concessionaires (see section 1.15).
- 1.16.5 Where possible, leases for associations and clubs will be made to State organisations rather than local clubs.

Further information on leases is available in DEC's draft Policy Statement – Leases on Lands Managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

1.17 CONSULTATION AND LIAISON WITH ORGANISED RECREATION GROUPS AND TOURISM AGENCIES

Introduction

Many agencies and the public are involved in the planning and provision of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities in this State. It is recognised that there is a need for DEC to liaise with local authorities and State Government Departments to ensure that recreation and tourism developments are complementary to those planned by other agencies and that DEC's management objectives are not compromised.

Similarly, consultation is required with groups having commercial interests to ensure that recreation and tourism developments and information services are compatible with DEC's management objectives.

User groups such as local clubs, State associations, Aboriginal and community interest groups should have their aspirations represented in the planning and management of recreation resources. A considerable contribution to the ongoing planning and management of recreation on lands and waters managed by DEC can be achieved through effective liaison with such bodies.

Policy Guidelines

- 1.17.1 In the development of area management plans, there will be opportunities for extensive input from other bodies. These include State instrumentalities such as the Department of Sport and Recreation, Tourism Western Australia, the WA Water Corporation, the Department of

Environment, the Department of Water, local government, commercial and voluntary groups (clubs and associations, and organisations such as Outdoors WA) as well as the general public. Such groups will be actively consulted. In development of such plans, the management of other public lands and waters will be considered so that nature based recreation and tourism opportunities within regions is integrated to the greatest extent possible.

- 1.17.2 Where possible, involvement in the ongoing management of DEC-managed lands and waters will be encouraged by interested and affected bodies and individuals.
- 1.17.3 Where new recreation opportunities or developments are to be provided, active consultation will take place with those agencies and individuals likely to be affected.
- 1.17.4 Where appropriate, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) documents and similar agreements will be developed with other State and local authorities, recreation groups and organisations to facilitate the planning, provision and management of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities (eg. existing MOUs with Tourism Western Australia, the Department of Corrective Services, Track Care WA and the WA Four Wheel Drive Association, and Leave No Trace Australia Limited).
- 1.17.5 DEC will continue to liaise with relevant public and private sector interests on nature based tourism and recreation issues through forums such as the Tourism Industry Reference Group, the Nature Based Tourism Advisory Committee and the Cross-Agency Committee on Outdoor Pursuits, which both provide industry input to DEC. Flow charts that outline the opportunities for public input and consultation in the provision or procurement of recreation and tourism facilities are provided as Appendix 4.

SECTION B

POLICY GUIDELINES APPLYING TO SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

2. ACTIVE LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

2.1 BUSHWALKING

Introduction

Bushwalking is an activity that can be enjoyed by people of varying ages, interests and levels of physical fitness and mobility. In its various forms, bushwalking can encompass everything from a short, leisurely stroll to a major trek lasting days or even weeks. In comparison with motorised or other assisted types of access, bushwalking offers visitors a more immediate experience of the natural environment.

Opportunities for bushwalking on lands managed by DEC are extensive and diverse. Tracks vary in length, standard, remoteness and in the level of information and interpretation provided, from short, easy tracks with high levels of use, to challenging, remote bush routes.

For those visitors primarily interested in passive outings, there are the short self-guiding tracks. Typically, such tracks utilise signs and/or publications to describe and interpret various natural or cultural features. Often such tracks are developed in conjunction with or as an ancillary attraction to other recreation facilities such as camping and picnic areas, and generally fall within Australian Walking Track Classification 1 to 3 (see Table 2 at the end of section 2.1 of these guidelines).

At the other end of the spectrum are the longer distance walking tracks, which may traverse a range of landscapes and which offer visitors the opportunity to explore the natural environment free from most comforts and luxuries of modern day living. The use of these long distance walking tracks need not be restricted solely to the fit and hardy. By using carefully planned access points, feeder and circuit routes, the long distance walking track can also cater for walkers interested in shorter outings or those who wish to complete a given walk in sections over an extended period of time.

The impact of bushwalking on the physical environment, while generally low, can be quite variable depending on soil conditions, landform, vegetation type and intensity of use. Where use levels are high, bushwalking can lead to the loss of vegetation as well as localised soil compaction and erosion problems. Other impacts such as the introduction and/or spread of weeds and plant diseases or the escape of fires from overnight campsites may also occur. Usually these problems can be effectively minimised through the sensitive location and design of walking tracks and the careful selection of walk-in campsites.

Also of concern are the potential safety problems associated with long distance hikes through remote, undeveloped bush areas. In the event of a wildfire or a walker becoming lost or injured, the resultant search and rescue operations could lead to more substantial environmental impacts. Such problems can be largely overcome through the provision of a walking notification (self-registration) system, which DEC is considering. Effective signage and visitor information programs are designed to ensure walkers are adequately informed about, and are equipped to handle, the conditions they will encounter.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.1.1 A range of bushwalking opportunities will be provided and maintained on lands managed by DEC consistent with the Australian Standard for Walking Tracks, Part 1: Classification and Signage - AS 2156.1; and Part 2: Infrastructure Design - AS 2156.2. The Standard identifies six track classes ranging from sealed disabled access to untracked routes. DEC has developed a summary of the Walking Track Classification System based on the Standard, which is provided in Table 2 at the end of section 2.1. Refer to Australian Standard AS 2156.1 and AS 2156.2 (2001) for details.

Information relating to tracks should be provided to visitors at trailheads and in other suitable formats such as brochures, maps, guidebooks and web pages.

- 2.1.2 The provision of walking tracks on lands managed by DEC will be based on a careful appraisal of visitor needs and environmental impacts as well as the availability of resources for construction, marketing, provision of information and on-going maintenance. These bushwalking opportunities will be considered in master plans, site plans and other recreation planning documents.
- 2.1.3 The construction of all tracks will be undertaken in accordance with established planning procedures and environmental controls, e.g. provision of boot cleaning stations for dieback control.
- 2.1.4 The development of future walking tracks will be considered in conjunction with other visitor and management access requirements. Where practicable, walking tracks on lands managed by DEC will be located so as to complement or link up with tracks on adjoining public lands.
- 2.1.5 Walking tracks will be located so as to enhance visitor experiences and, where appropriate, interpretation opportunities. Alignments and grades will be selected so as to provide safe access that is consistent with the Australian Standard for Walking Tracks, Part 1 - Classification and Signage and Part 2 - Infrastructure Design, and with minimum disturbance to the natural environment and minimum maintenance.
- 2.1.6 Where conflicts arise between walkers and other users on multi-use or dual-use tracks, managers are encouraged to investigate and resolve the problem through education wherever practicable. If this fails, single use tracks may be developed.
- 2.1.7 Priority will be given to the development of self-guiding and loop walks along major tourist routes or at popular visitor nodes. Access points or trailheads should be carefully linked to other visitor facilities to facilitate walk track use and management.
- 2.1.8 Where practicable and appropriate, walking tracks and associated facilities will be constructed to a standard suitable for use by people with disabilities (refer to item 1.7.9).
- 2.1.9 Where walking tracks are provided in remote areas, these should be of an appropriate classification that does not adversely impact on nature conservation values. In remote areas, tracks and other ancillary facilities will not generally be constructed except where deemed necessary for environmental reasons, e.g. toilets in sensitive areas. No facilities will be provided in wilderness areas (see the Department's Policy Statement No. 62 - Identification and Management of Wilderness and Surrounding Areas).
- 2.1.10 Where the intensity of hiking in remote bush areas threatens resource values or the enjoyment of other users, various management controls including the issuing of permits, the temporary resting or closure of tracks and backpack campsites may be introduced.
- 2.1.11 The decision whether to designate and develop specific backpack camping areas in conjunction with bushwalking tracks and routes or to allow "free-range" backpack camping will be generally made within the context of a regional, area or issue management plan.
- 2.1.12 Where backpack camping areas are provided, these should be located in protected, stable landscapes with well-drained, non-erodible soils. Where possible, designated campsites should be situated within reasonable proximity (200-300 metres) of potable water, but with careful consideration being given to minimising potential downstream impacts on any water body.
- 2.1.13 Backpack camping sites should not generally be located within areas of heavy or highly volatile fuels where the risk of accidental ignition could place unacceptable risk on either human life or conservation values. Where use of such areas is unavoidable, then DEC may act to reduce the build

- up of heavy fuels. In addition, visitors may be advised by way of information or on-site signs or notices of appropriate steps to take in the event of a wildfire and the location and use of escape routes.
- 2.1.14 The use of open campfires, gas barbeques, fuel stoves and other cooking appliances in various parks and reserves may be subject to seasonal or total bans on days of very high or extreme fire danger. Where campfires are allowed, they should be contained in appropriately designed and located fireplaces and adequate supplies of fuel made available to backpack campers where appropriate/possible. In general, the use of compact fuel stoves will be encouraged in preference to the use of campfires.
- 2.1.15 Where backpack camping areas and/or sleeping shelters are provided, these should be located in close proximity to designated routes at intervals that can be comfortably traversed in one day (generally 15 to 20km). Minimum sanitary facilities (borehole toilets) may be provided where appropriate.
- 2.1.16 Bushwalkers will be required to adhere to the "clean, crush and carry" philosophy of rubbish disposal. In other words, all litter must be carried out. Disposal by burying is not permitted except in the case of toilet waste, which should be buried at least 100m from any creek or watercourse and at least 15cm deep.
- 2.1.17 Non-commercial, organised bushwalking groups either intending to stay overnight, where the number in the group is expected to exceed 25, or where the group comprises school aged children who propose to conduct walks off established tracks on lands managed by DEC will be encouraged to notify DEC of the activity. Details of the requirements and a permission form are included in Appendix 2.
- 2.1.18 All walkers are encouraged to notify DEC of their walking intentions:
- if they plan to undertake any extended overnight walk on any track, particularly if they are walking alone;
 - if they intend to walk off recognised tracks or in remote or wilderness areas;
 - if they plan to walk at times of very high or extreme fire danger.
- 2.1.19 DEC will encourage all organised groups to have leaders registered in the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme at a level appropriate for the walking area.
- 2.1.20 DEC will promote the adoption of the following 'Caring Code for the Bush', which embraces the philosophy of minimal impact or 'Leave No Trace' camping. This code will be promoted through the use of signs, publications, track self-registration stations, the provision of suitably structured training courses on outback safety and bushcraft skills and the encouragement of these skills and ethics in outdoor education and recreation curriculum at all levels of the education system.

Caring Code for the Bush

Before setting out

- Plan a trip within the fitness and capabilities of all participants.
- Keep to small groups. However it is suggested a minimum group size of three people for isolated places.
- Study appropriate maps and guidebooks in planning your trip and take them with you, along with a reliable compass.
- If entering wilderness areas or isolated areas, it is suggested you take an EPIRB safety beacon (emergency positional beacon) with you.
- Be aware of the regulations and special concerns in the areas where you are going and obtain required permits or approvals.

- Tell at least two people of your trip plans and itinerary.
- Pack appropriate clothing and equipment for the variable local weather conditions.
- Pack adequate water for the duration of your trip. Do not rely on natural water supplies, mills or bores.
- Travel lightly, consider your body weight and fitness level when packing for your trip.
- Ensure you are up to date with current first aid practices and outback survival techniques. Maintain your knowledge and skills by completing a suitable training course.
- Pack a first aid kit and be aware of and prepared for the hazards you may encounter e.g. snakebite.

During your trip

- Be prepared to take your rubbish with you.
- Keep to existing tracks and campsites where possible.
- Respect the privacy of others.
- Respect cultural and heritage sites and artefacts.
- Observe native animals from a distance; do not follow, approach, feed or disturb them.
- Do not pick wildflowers or remove flora, trees or parts of trees.
- Do not mark trees, damage vegetation or leave any permanent route markers.
- If you use flagging tape, remove it as you leave.
- Light fires in authorised fireplaces where wood is provided. Preferably use a portable gas or fuel stove for cooking.
- Where ground fires are permitted under certain conditions, observe fire regulations, be aware of the bushfire danger, keep the fire small, clear away flammable leaf litter, extinguish the fire thoroughly when finished and remove all traces of the fire site.
- Wash utensils at least 50 metres away from lakes or streams. Use sand as a scourer, and minimise the use of detergents and soaps.
- Bury toilet waste 15-20 centimetres deep and at least 100 metres from water, campsites and tracks.

After your trip

- Inform your friends of your safe return.
- Dispose of your rubbish responsibly.

For further information to minimise your impact on the environment, refer to organisations such as Leave No Trace Australia, Tread Lightly and Caring for Country.

**Table 2. Department of Environment and Conservation
- Classification of Walking Tracks -
Based on Australian Standard AS 2156.1 (2001)**

Class	General Description	Physical characteristic
1	Class 1 tracks provide an opportunity for most visitors, with no previous experience, including those with reduced mobility, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have abundant opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.	A hard surfaced track at least 1200mm wide, constructed to wheelchair standard where alternative ramp access must be provided if steps are present. Tracks are maintained regularly and have no obstacles or intrusions. Built facilities will include seats and lookout platforms and barrier rails where required.
2	Class 2 tracks provide an opportunity for many visitors, with no previous experience, to complete a walk on the track. Users may have many opportunities to learn about the cultural and heritage values of the track's environment through provision of interpretive signs. They and will not need a map as arrow markers are present at all intersections and they require no special skills beyond normal care regarding their personal safety.	A track with modified or hardened surface with a minimum width of 900mm, a maximum gradient of 1:10 and minimal steps. Tracks are maintained regularly and have no obstacles and minimal intrusions. Built facilities will include seats and lookout platforms and barrier rails where required.
3	Class 3 tracks provide an opportunity for visitors with a moderate level of fitness and a small degree of skill and self-reliance, to complete a walk on the track. Provision of interpretive information is not common but many opportunities will be available to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment of the track. A map is generally not required and directional markers and management signs may be present. Users are responsible for their own safety that could be affected by adverse weather conditions such as storms or extreme heat.	A track with a generally modified surface with a maximum width of 1200mm, where steps may be common and short sections may be steeper than 1:10. Track is kept mostly clear of obstacles and intrusions but they may be present. Where campsites are present toilets are required, but other structures and facilities are generally not provided except for environmental or safety reasons.
4	Class 4 tracks provide an opportunity for visitors with a higher level of fitness and specialised skills and self-reliance, to explore and discover relatively undisturbed natural areas on a distinct track. Only management and directional signs may be present there will be many opportunities to observe and appreciate the natural and cultural environment. Maps and navigational aids may be required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.	A track with a generally unmodified surface with a maximum width of 1200mm that may have steep sections but no steps except for environmental reasons only and intrusions and obstacles may be common. Where campsites are present toilets are required, but other structures and facilities are generally not provided except for environmental or safety reasons.
5	Class 5 tracks provide an opportunity for visitors with high levels of fitness and advanced specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to find their way along often indistinct tracks in remoter natural areas. Only minimal management signage may be present. Maps and navigational aids will generally be required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be	A track with a unmodified, often indistinct surface with a variable width less than 900mm that may have steep sections but no steps and where intrusions and obstacles are common. Where campsites are present toilets are required, but other structures and

	affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.	facilities are generally not provided except for environmental or safety reasons.
6	Class 6 routes provide an opportunity for highly experienced walkers with high levels of fitness and specialised outdoors skills and self-reliance, to navigate through remote, challenging natural and wilderness areas. Maps and navigational aids always required and natural hazards are to be expected. Safety and navigation could be affected by storms, extreme heat or aridity.	There is no modification of the natural surface and the route may have steep sections but no steps. No facilities are provided in wilderness areas, and toilets will only be provided where required for environmental reasons in other remote areas.

2.2 ORIENTEERING, ROGAINING, CROSS COUNTRY RUNNING AND GEOCACHING

Introduction

Orienteering is an organised activity that requires participants to visit on foot a set number of control points in the bush in a given sequence in the shortest time. There are usually multiple courses per event.

Rogaining is a long distance cross-country navigation event that is generally 12-24 hours in duration including overnight bush camping. Participants on foot visit control points on a course in any order, the aim being to accumulate the highest number of points possible. Each control has a value according to its ease of location and access. Several hundred competitors are widely distributed over an area of about 20 by 12 kilometres with no set course. Given that an event area is used only once and participants are dispersed over a sizeable area, the level of environmental impact is generally less.

Cross-country running is a foot race that occurs outdoors over a variety of surfaces along a single, marked course. The object is to complete the course in the shortest time. All competitors follow the same course.

It is an offence to, without lawful authority, organise, promote or conduct any event involving cross country running, orienteering, rogaining, cross country navigation exercises or equestrian events (regulation 50, *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*).

Geocaching is a new sport that involves the use of a GPS to locate hidden containers. Individuals and organisations set up caches all over the world and share the locations of these caches on the Internet. GPS users can then use the coordinates of the locations to find the caches.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.2.1 Orienteering, rogaining, cross-country running and geocaching are appropriate on DEC-managed lands where they do not conflict with the protection of the natural and cultural environment, with other park visitors or management operations.
- 2.2.2 Orienteering, rogaining, cross-country running and geocaching are not permitted in nature reserves, wilderness/remote areas, sites of scientific or cultural significance or camping areas.
- 2.2.3 The decision about whether or not orienteering, rogaining, cross-country running or geocaching will be permitted in an area will be addressed by way of a management plan. Where such a plan does not exist, the responsibility for the decision rests with the Regional or District Manager (regulation 50, *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*).
- 2.2.4 Decisions on the suitability of an area to cater for these activities will in part be based on the proposed intensity, frequency and timing of events so that unacceptable environmental impact or interference with other users or management operations does not occur. Limits, modifications and conditions may be set, particularly with respect to maximum numbers of participants and location of courses, to make an event acceptable in a desired area.
- 2.2.5 Any permanent course marking must have the approval of the District Manager before erection and all temporary marking must be removed after each event.
- 2.2.6 Geocaching is not an appropriate activity in highly cavernous areas. Caves and cave entrances are not to be used as hiding places for a cache.

Procedures

1. If a management plan allows for these activities, applications for mapping and staging an event will be dealt with by the District Manager. If no management plan exists for the area, applications must

- be forwarded to the District Manager for approval at least 3 months prior to the event to enable thorough evaluation. In the case of organised team events such as rogaining which require considerable pre-planning and mapping, a six to nine month lead time for assessment and approval may be required.
2. DEC's standard application/permission form (see Appendix 2) to conduct organised non-commercial education and leisure activities should be used in processing and approving proposed events.
 3. All applications should include details of the event status (club, State or national), timing and number of competitors and observers expected.
 4. Assessment of suitability of these activities in an area should include the following considerations:
 - protection of flora and fauna;
 - susceptibility of soils to erosion and disturbance in general, and under certain conditions, for example, after rain or after prolonged dry weather;
 - compatibility with DEC's management activities and operations, for example, fuel reduction burning;
 - potential conflicts with other visitors;
 - availability of areas or facilities suitable for the event, for example car parking areas, toilets and barbecue areas;
 - potential to spread dieback, weeds or any other plant or animal diseases;
 - availability of suitable campsites in the case of overnight events;
 - potential to damage structures on the proposed course, for example jumping fences or the heavy use of bridges.
 5. Care should be taken to ensure that sensitive environments are not subject to overuse when selecting areas and/or approving events, particularly where it is proposed to conduct multiple events in the same area.

2.3 ROCK CLIMBING AND ABSEILING

Introduction

There are many areas in Western Australia managed by DEC where rock climbing and abseiling occur. Undoubtedly there are many other potential sites suitable for such activities, especially in the more remote areas of the estate managed by DEC.

The Climbers' Association of Western Australia (CAWA) was established in the late 1960s at which time rock climbing was in its infancy in Western Australia. In 1989, following liaison with DEC's South Coast Region, the CAWA adopted a "code of ethics" which addresses safety, environmental and social impact considerations associated with rock climbing. This code was subsequently expanded in 1993 to provide more explicit advice on the issue of the placement of rock bolts for safety reasons. CAWA remains the major State-based focal point for recreational rock climbing while smaller groups exist in other areas such as Albany. Other organisations that participate in rock climbing include the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of WA (FESA), the S.A.S. and other defence forces groups, school and university outdoor adventure groups and several commercial operators.

Abseiling is a skill learnt by rock climbers and involves safely sliding down a rope using some form of friction device. It is used in order to safely retreat from rock faces or mountainous terrain due to inclement weather or impassable sections, or sometimes to safely access the base of cliffs typically in coastal or gorge situations where foot access is impractical. In the context of this policy such involvement in abseiling as a necessary part of a rock-climbing venture is regarded as 'rock climbing'. The same principle applies to the necessary use of abseiling in caving activities.

In the early 1980s, abseiling began to develop as an activity in its own right in Western Australia. Naturally, many of the sites popular with rock climbers are also attractive to abseilers. However, abseiling can be undertaken, and is often learnt, in artificial situations such as disused quarries and buildings. Most abseiling in WA involves groups and may result in environmental impacts around the top and bottom of popular abseil routes. Under regulation 33 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person must not, without lawful authority, abseil on DEC-managed lands except in an area designated for abseiling in accordance with regulation 6. Lawful authority must be obtained from the Regional or District Manager. In accordance with regulation 102A, fees may not be charged for abseiling unless the activity occurs in a designated abseiling area, and abseiling fees must be clearly signposted.

Under regulation 31 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person may not, without lawful authority, cause any significant damage or disturbance to a naturally occurring feature on DEC-managed land; damage or disturb any naturally occurring feature on DEC-managed land in a way that causes, or creates a potential for, adverse consequences to or in relation to DEC-managed land; or remove any naturally occurring feature from DEC-managed land. Any bolting or other modification of natural rock faces must only be carried out in accordance with the CAWA Climbing and Bolting Ethics with any additional requirements specified by the Regional or District Manager. If problems arise with adherence to these Ethics, enforcement provisions under regulation 31 of the regulations may be applied to limit damage or disturbance.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.3.1 Rock climbing and abseiling are recognised as legitimate forms of public recreation on lands managed by DEC and will be permitted subject to the recognition and adequate maintenance of conservation values, safety standards and the rights and enjoyment of other visitors. Area management plans or interim management guidelines will specify suitable areas/sites and may indicate any restrictions on rock climbing or abseiling activities.
- 2.3.2 Lawful authority must be obtained from the Regional or District Manager to conduct abseiling activities on DEC-managed lands, unless the activity occurs in a designated abseiling area. Appropriate areas for abseiling activities will be designated, and abseiling fees will not be charged except in designated areas. Abseiling fees must be clearly signposted.
- 2.3.3 Any bolting or other modification of natural rock faces, including the provision of fixed belay points, must be carried out in accordance with the CAWA Climbing and Bolting Ethics and any additional requirements specified by the Regional or District Manager. The CAWA Climbing Ethics and CAWA Bolting Ethics are included with these policy guidelines. All climbers will be required to observe these codes, as well as relevant DEC policy guidelines and requirements in the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, when climbing on lands managed by DEC. If reliance on these codes and ethics is found to be unworkable, bolting associated with climbing and abseiling may be regulated through enforcement provisions under regulation 31 of the regulations.
- 2.3.4 The development by DEC of facilities at climbing or abseiling areas may be appropriate to enhance safety, enjoyment and avoid/minimise environmental impacts (e.g. parking, trails, anchor points, toilets, etc).
- 2.3.5 Restrictions may be introduced limiting the times, numbers and sites in which climbing and abseiling can be undertaken, should such activities threaten or conflict with conservation of the natural or cultural environment, e.g. breeding sites, significant flora or fauna, track erosion, edge or cliff base erosion, Aboriginal rock paintings, special geological features. The danger of rocks falling on walkers, other rock climbers below or spectators using paths or areas below climbing and abseiling sites may also require restrictions to be imposed or paths to be realigned. Restrictions will be appropriately publicised.

- 2.3.6 People conducting commercial rock climbing and abseiling on lands managed by DEC must obtain a commercial activity licence.
- 2.3.7 All commercial operators referred to in 2.3.6 above as well as not-for-profit groups conducting rock climbing and abseiling with dependent participants such as school groups, scout groups, community groups, or youth groups will be required as part of the conditions applying to their licence or other approval to be registered under the National Outdoor Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS) or hold current equivalent accreditation recognised by DEC's CEO. The scheme conducted by the Professional Association of Climbing Instructors (PACI) is currently regarded as equivalent to NOLRS. (The term 'dependents' includes children, as well as adults who are dependent on another person/s providing them with support, skills and assistance to undertake the activity). Not-for-profit groups where participants are non-dependent (e.g. military and emergency services training groups or specialist rock climbing and abseiling clubs/groups) generally operate under their own training guidelines and competencies and do not require NOLRS or equivalent level accreditation. However, DEC may check the leader qualifications of these groups if that action is considered warranted.
- 2.3.8 Adequate safety precautions must be taken. At popular climbing destinations, on-site information may be provided by DEC to encourage safe practice. Abseiling and rock climbing should only be undertaken by people who are appropriately skilled, experienced and equipped.
- 2.3.9 The wearing of hard-shell, secured helmets at all times is recommended.
- 2.3.10 A maximum allowable number of people may be nominated for specific areas by the Regional or District Manager for environmental, social or safety reasons.
- 2.3.11 A permit or bookings system may apply in some areas.
- 2.3.12 Single rope techniques will be practised in a responsible and safety conscious manner. Some single rope technique (SRT) activities such as forward abseiling and angel jumping are high risk activities inappropriate on lands managed by DEC and are prohibited. (Note: Outdoors WA, which represents a wide range of industry sectors in outdoor adventure/education/recreation activities, is currently conducting a review of forward abseiling/run down, star jumps, angel jumps and other practices. DEC will take the Outdoors WA review and comments from other stakeholders into account in any future review of section 2.3.12).
- 2.3.13 DEC endorses the Climbers' Association of WA (CAWA) Climbing and Bolting Ethics in regard to natural areas. Adherence to the CAWA Climbing and Bolting Ethics (see below) will be a condition of any approval for access to natural areas for climbing and abseiling activities.

Climbers' Association of WA (CAWA) – Climbing Ethics

CAWA encourages the following State-wide basic climbing ethics in all climbers:

- Do not damage the bush around crags or access paths.
- Use lower-offs where provided rather than walking down, which creates erosion.
- Carry out all rubbish.
- Take all body waste at least 50 metres from the crag.
- Do not retro-bolt climbs or interfere with existing routes without the permission of the first ascensionist.
- Do not place bolts in new areas unless aware of: (a) who owns or administers the crag, and (b) how they are likely to respond.
- We encourage that aggressive dogs should be muzzled or leashed when at crags. (*Note: - these are CAWA's Climbing Ethics. When climbers are on DEC-managed lands, they are required to follow the guidelines for access for domestic pets - see section 1.13 of these guidelines.*)

Climbers' Association of WA – Bolting Ethics

CAWA asks that anyone wishing to place bolts in Western Australia respect the following ethics. These ethics were developed and are maintained in conjunction with DEC and the WA climbing community.

- Bolting should never be carried out by persons who have insufficient experience in outdoor climbing. Good judgement needs to be employed when placing bolts, and this can only be developed from long climbing experience. Natural rock is not the place to practice bolting.
- Bolts should not be added to existing climbs or boulder problems. Existing routes should not be interfered with in any way without the permission of the first ascensionist.
- Fixed protection may only be used on new routes where there is no possibility of arranging protection by common traditional means. Common traditional means include nuts and cams of all sizes.
- New routes must not be bolted within reach of established routes.
- Bolts must be visually unobtrusive, especially in areas visited by the non-climbing public. The installer must strive to use the least conspicuous method of bolting and installation and minimise the number of bolts.
- Any bolt installer must be competent and employ only suitable fixtures and materials of sufficient strength.

2.4 CAVING

Introduction

Western Australia has a remarkable diversity of caves and other karst features. These range from the caves and gorges of the Kimberley Devonian Reefs in 350 million year old limestone to the vertical "wells" of Cape Range and the myriad of sinkholes, collapsed dolines and massive caverns and underground tunnels of the Nullarbor. Along the west coast, the aeolian limestones which extend from approximately 200 kilometres north of Perth to 300 kilometres south contain a wealth of caves, many with impressive decorations. A significant number of these caves and karst features are situated on lands managed by DEC and several are important tourist attractions.

Caves require careful protection and management because of their special scientific, aesthetic and recreational values. Once damaged, cave decorations (speleothems) and other features may never reform or can take thousands of years to re-establish and thus they must be treated and managed as non-renewable resources.

To assist in this process, a revised cave management classification system has been developed by DEC in conjunction with the Caves Management Advisory Committee (CMAC), which advises on cave management issues relating to the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park (see Table 3 at the end of this section).

The objective of these policy guidelines is to provide general directions as to DEC's management of and the public's recreational use of caves. DEC acknowledges that expertise on cave management in Western Australia largely resides with the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (ASF) and its Western Australian member bodies such as the Western Australian Speleological Group (WASG), the Australasian Cave and Karst Management Association (ACKMA), the Caves Management Advisory Committee (CMAC) and with other unaffiliated speleologists. Consequently, the on-going involvement of all parties in the future exploration, classification, management and protection of caves and karst features on lands managed by DEC is seen as essential.

A publication produced by the The World Conservation Union (IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas) Working Group on Cave and Karst Protection 'Guidelines for Cave and Karst Protection' (ISBN 2 8317 0388 3), which was synthesised and edited in Australia with input from DEC, should be consulted for both dry and wet cave considerations.

It should be noted that regulation 29 (Fires and smoking in caves), regulation 49 (Caves) and regulation 31 (Damage to naturally occurring features) of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* are relevant to this section. Under regulation 29, a person must not smoke a cigarette, cigar or pipe in any cave or part of a cave on DEC-managed land. Regulation 49 deals with cave fees, permits and conditions. Under regulation 31, 'naturally occurring features' include fossils, mineral specimens, stalactites and stalagmites.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.4.1 DEC will, in close liaison with the Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (ASF) and other speleologists, develop and maintain a confidential and up to date inventory of all caves and major karst features on lands that it manages.
- 2.4.2 All known caves on lands managed by DEC will be assessed according to the cave management classification system as outlined in Table 3.
- All caves should be considered "Restricted Access" until an assessment has been made of the cave's values and level of risk.
 - Where appropriate, caves that have already been damaged by visitation should be selected as Tourist and Adventure Caves.
- 2.4.3 The preparation of management plans and/or programs for individual caves will be undertaken as time and resources permit.
- 2.4.4 Care will be taken to ensure that surface land management by DEC does not adversely impact on cave features or their management. Where their water catchment areas extend beyond the boundaries of DEC managed land, efforts will be made to encourage similar sensitivity by other land managers.
- 2.4.5 Where appropriate, visitor fees to tourist caves will be charged in accordance with Schedule 1 Division 7 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* and permit fees will be charged in accordance with Schedule 1 Division 8 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*.
- 2.4.6 Where practical, the use of Adventure Caves will be carefully controlled and monitored through the development of an entry permit system and/or self-registration stations. Where necessary, DEC may close or otherwise restrict/limit public use where such use is resulting in unacceptable damage to caves, cave features or decorations, or cave flora and fauna.
- 2.4.7 Because cave features and decorations are easily damaged by uncontrolled access and use, cave locations will not be divulged on DEC maps and publications with the exception of Tourist Caves and Adventure Caves - Class One caves. Where possible, DEC will discourage the disclosure of this information in maps and publications produced by other agencies/organisations.
- 2.4.8 DEC will alert speleologists and other visitors to the potential hazards within public access caves situated on lands that it manages through the use of signs and other means of communication. Similar strategies will apply to restricted access caves in some cases.
- 2.4.9 DEC will recognise that the best natural protection for caves and karst is an increase in the awareness of individual visitors of the natural values of caves and the need for careful use, protection and management. This will be encouraged by the use of signs and other means of communication and the education of cave leaders.
- 2.4.10 Caves classified as "Restricted Access" will not be available as a concession, but access to other caves may be managed by way of a lease or licence, subject to conditions specified in section 1.15.
- 2.4.11 A cave may be gated and locked (temporarily or permanently) once the following criteria have been considered:

- There is no practical alternative to preventing damage to the cave features/decorations, flora, fauna, or the cave itself.
- There is no practical alternative to protecting significant decoration, scientific work undertaken, rehabilitation or protecting the general public from a particularly dangerous area.
- It is practical to do so without damaging the cave.
- It is practical to do so without disturbing wildlife (e.g. bats), airflows and/or water flows.
- It is not contrary to any existing management plan.

2.4.12 Access to and use of caves by all persons including DEC personnel will be provided in accordance with DEC's Code of Practice for Caving (following), which has adopted parts of the Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) Code of Ethics and Conservation and the ASF Minimal Impact Caving Code (for full details of these codes see the ASF Website at www.caves.org.au). DEC also provides cave leadership training under its 'Cave Leadership Course'.

DEC's Code of Practice establishes a minimum standard of caving practice. If higher standards are required by DEC at a particular cave, they will be signposted accordingly (e.g. cavers entering restricted access caves should abide by the ASF Minimal Impact Caving Code).

The Department of Environment and Conservation's Caving Code of Practice

Towards Management Authorities and the General Public

1. Where required, cave visitors must have specific permit approval before entering any cave. They will enter only caves authorised by the relevant permit and at the permit specified times. All permit or other entry conditions must be complied with.
2. The prevailing procedures regarding nearby camping areas will be followed and care taken to prevent damage to signs, equipment, wildlife or landscape features. In short, leave as found, with particular emphasis on complete removal of all rubbish.
3. All cave visitors will be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of water, supplies, assistance required, etc.

Towards caves and karst

1. Caving activity must be conducted in a manner responsible to the cave environment, taking particular care to avoid damage to speleothems, sediments, biota and other natural phenomena. The maximum and minimum size of any party will be limited to that authorised by the relevant permit.
2. Cave entrances and passages should not be excavated/enlarged, water levels in sumps should not be modified and stream flows should not be diverted without prior consent of DEC.
3. Established marked routes must be used: single tracks should be followed and care taken to avoid needless deposition of mud. Mud throwing or modelling is unacceptable.
4. All human introduced wastes must be removed from the cave and disposed of properly.
5. Cave visitors will not light fires or smoke in any cave.
6. Caves must not be disfigured by unnecessary marking (including direction arrows).
7. Disturbance should not be caused to any biotic community. No disturbance should be caused to maternity or over wintering roosts of bats. Sampling of wildlife (dead or living), palaeontologic material, or archaeological material will not occur without special permit approval.
8. All cave visitors will carry at least one light source (but preferably two or more sources) and wear a "fasten-on" head helmet where practicable when in a cave. Light sources should be adequate for the planned duration of any particular trip. Trip Leaders are responsible for the gear worn by each member of his/her group.
9. No person will be coerced to go underground/through squeezes, etc.
10. When underground, no trip member will be deprived of any light source (except to aid in emergency).

11. Policy guidelines for recreational abseiling (see section 2.3) must be followed in caves and karst features such as dolines that may attract recreational abseiling outside of essential cave access and exploration requirements.

Table 3 – DEC Cave Management Classification System (2006)

PUBLIC ACCESS	<i>TOURIST CAVE</i> (Guided or self-guided) e.g. Crystal Cave, Yanchep National Park (YNP); Calgardup Cave, Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park (LNNP)	General public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and managed for tourist use and/or as an educational resource; • Clearly signposted with access restricted to specified times. • Payment of a fee required for entry. • Infrastructure installed to facilitate access, decrease visitor impacts and improve safety.
	<i>ADVENTURE CAVE</i> – Class 1 e.g. Tunnel Creek, Kimberley.	General public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be required to register at the cave entrance and/or pay a fee. • May be some infrastructure and signage to decrease visitor impacts and improve safety.
	<i>ADVENTURE CAVE</i> - Class 2 (horizontal) e.g. Golgotha Cave, Calgardup Window Extension (LNNP) Yonderup Cave, Mambibby Cave (YNP). - Class 3 (Vertical) e.g. Mill Cave (LNNP)	Novice groups (general public) lead by an experienced leader, e.g. school groups and licensed commercial tour operators. Speleologists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General protection • Entry permit needed. • DEC approved leader needed. • May be limited infrastructure.
RESTR-ICTED ACCESS	Restricted Access Note: All caves are in this category unless designated otherwise. (Refer to section 2.4.2)	Experienced and responsible speleologists, scientists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum protection • Entry permit needed • DEC approved leader needed. • Speleological club visits. • Research, monitoring or management purposes.

2.5 CAVE DIVING

Introduction

Diving within submerged cave systems is becoming increasingly popular as a quite separate activity from caving, especially on the Nullarbor Plain. Cave diving is carried out for both exploration (scientific) purposes as well as a recreation activity.

The Nullarbor region is the southern hemisphere's largest contiguous semi-arid karst system and has the longest underwater passages in Australia. Microbial mantles, unique ecosystems at risk of damage through diving, are found in many of the flooded passages. The Australian Speleological Federation Inc. (ASF) has a registration process for cave diving, based on the Australian National Outdoor Recreation Competencies. The Cave Divers Association of Australia (CDAA) and other cave diver training agencies have formal training and an accreditation system for cave divers which form the basis for access agreements to cave diving areas on public lands managed by government agencies within other Australian States. The CDAA also maintains a register of members who are trained in cave diving.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.5.1 DEC recognises cave diving as a legitimate scientific and recreational activity on lands that it manages.
- 2.5.2 DEC will maintain liaison with the ASF, the CDAA and representative cave divers with regard to access requirements and management for caves on lands that it manages.
- 2.5.3 DEC will maintain strict permit entry control to cave divers. Permits may require the submission to DEC of trip reports (including any maps produced) for archival/monitoring purposes, detailing any scientific evaluations or information obtained.
- 2.5.4 The microbial mantles of the Nullarbor caves will be protected by the permit system, the designation of 'no-go' areas and diver education.
- 2.5.5 The ASF Code of Ethics and Conservation, the ASF Minimal Impact Caving Code and the ASF Cave Diving Code of Practise (see internet site www.caves.org.au) will apply to all sections of caves used for cave diving. Details on Australian National Competencies for Caving and Cave Diving are available from the National Training Information Service (see internet site www.ntis.gov.au, search SRO03 Outdoor Recreation Industry, caving).

2.6 SAND BOARDING

Introduction

Sand boarding involves the use a specialised board to 'surf' down steep sand dunes. Sand boarding has become increasingly popular amongst young age groups as an activity separate from surfing. Sand boarders carry out their activities along all sections of Western Australia's sandy coastline.

Sand boarding may be an unacceptable recreation activity, particularly in coastal areas of high conservation value as it is very destructive on dunes that can be very expensive to repair. The sand boarding activity itself plus the ascent of the dune (usually on top of the fringing surviving vegetation) is particularly destructive on surviving vegetation.

Under regulation 32 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person must not, without lawful authority, on DEC-managed land use a board or other object to slide down a slope (penalty \$500).

Policy Guidelines

- 2.6.1 Sand boarding is a potentially destructive activity and is generally not permitted on lands managed by DEC. Areas managed by DEC where sand boarding may be appropriate will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine the suitability of such sites to support this activity without unduly compromising conservation values. The designation and establishment of such sites may be permitted in accordance with the necessary management planning approvals.
- 2.6.2 Visitors who engage in sand boarding will be made aware of the environmental impacts of this activity through publications and signs. Any areas managed by DEC that are assessed as being suitable for sand boarding will be signposted accordingly.

2.7 HORSE RIDING

Introduction

The use of horses in natural areas is part of the cultural heritage of Australia and a source of pleasure and enjoyment for many people. The objective of these policy guidelines is to manage horse-riding activities on DEC-managed lands so that such activities will not detract from the overall values of these natural areas. Horse riding is accepted as a suitable means of appreciating and enjoying those natural areas where environmental and social impacts can be kept to acceptable limits. (These policy guidelines apply to horses as well as other animals capable of being ridden, including camels and llamas).

The use of natural areas for active recreation, however, always carries some risk of overuse and disturbance that may lead to deterioration of the natural values. Some of the potential impacts associated with horse riding include the possible introduction of weeds or parasites, spread of disease such as dieback, trampling or browsing of native flora, soil erosion, siltation or fouling of watercourses, disturbance of native fauna and the potential for conflict with other users.

Horse-riding activities should only be allowed on DEC-managed lands in those locations where the impacts are considered manageable. Generally, this will mean that horse riding may be approved on land categorised under section 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) of the CALM Act, State forest and timber reserves, national parks and conservation parks, provided that such activities will not detract from the overall values of the area, and subject to the policy guidelines below. Horse riding may not be allowed in areas of special scientific or cultural value such as wilderness/remote areas or other areas requiring special protection. Horse riding will not generally be permitted in nature reserves, except in circumstances outlined in section 2.7.3 below.

Evaluation of proposals to ride horses on national parks, conservation parks and nature reserves will take into account any previous history of horse riding and may also recognise situations of undue hardship where riders may claim a prior “right of access” to cross through lands managed by DEC.

Under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, areas where horse riding is allowed need to be designated. Regulation 17 allows for a person to bring a horse on to a designated area; the person must control and manage the horse in a designated area in accordance with conditions specified on the signs erected in or in the vicinity of that area for the purposes of regulation 6 (3) (penalty \$500).

Consideration of horse riding on lands managed by DEC might cover a range of opportunities, including day-use trails, designated areas, free-range riding and the exercise of horses on beaches.

Horse riding on dedicated public roads within the estate managed by DEC must comply with the *Road Traffic Act 1974*. Dedicated public roads are not land to which the CALM Act applies and are not managed by DEC, but by local government or Main Roads Western Australia. Horse riding on tracks and roads that are part of CALM Act land such as national parks, nature reserves or State forest, including disease risk areas (DRA), are subject to regulations administered by DEC. Regulation of horse riding on tenures managed by DEC is enforceable under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.7.1 Horse riding is recognised as an appropriate activity in some areas managed by DEC and is permitted where environmental and social impacts are considered manageable and where the activity does not conflict with other management operations or estate values.
- 2.7.2 Horse riding will not be permitted in wilderness/remote areas, areas of special scientific or cultural value or other areas requiring special protection except with the approval of the CEO.
- 2.7.3 Horse riding will not generally be permitted in nature reserves except in some circumstances, by way of an approved management plan, where “right of access” is recognised or where the activity has been previously allowed and the impacts of the activity can be minimised and controlled.
- 2.7.4 Horse riding may be permitted in national parks and conservation parks by way of an approved management plan, or where “right of access” is recognised or where the activity has been previously allowed and the impacts of the activity can be minimised and controlled.
- 2.7.5 In the absence of an approved management plan for a national park or conservation park, the CALM Act allows for approval of horse riding and any construction of horse riding paths and associated infrastructure (e.g. yards, drinking troughs) by way of compatible operations.
- 2.7.6 Horse riding is permitted in State forest and timber reserves and CALM Act section 5(1) (g) and (h) reserves provided it does not put natural values at risk or conflict with other users. Horse riding on these land categories is not constrained by CALM Act compatible operations requirements in the absence of a management plan.
- 2.7.7 For all DEC-managed lands where horse riding is permitted, horse riding will be along defined tracks, firebreaks and roads except where accommodated elsewhere in a management plan or in accord with accepted previous arrangements.
- 2.7.8 All horse riding will need to be in accord with a designated horse riding notice made under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* for all land to which the regulations apply. The only exceptions will be in the period where the designated horse riding notices are being drafted or where lawful authority is given by the Regional or District Manager for horse riding to be allowed.
- 2.7.9 To control the spread of dieback and other diseases, horses are subject to the same restrictions as vehicles in disease risk areas (DRA), i.e.:
- horses may use dedicated public open roads (which are not CALM Act land) that pass through DRA, but must not leave the road surface;
 - in dry summer months, horses may be allowed to enter DRA on road surfaces if an access permit has been issued by the local office of DEC.
- 2.7.10 Proposals to conduct special equestrian or horse riding events such as endurance rides or historical enactments through lands managed by DEC will require the approval of the relevant Regional or District Manager(s) in accordance with section 1.12.
- 2.7.11 Where horse riding is permitted on lands managed by DEC, horses must be controlled at all times, including yarding or tethering overnight or during rest periods, and must be kept within specified zones or on designated horse trails, as indicated by signs, markers or brochures or as authorised by permit. (See regulation 17 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*).
- 2.7.12 Where practicable, paths for horse riding, cycling and bushwalking will be separated to minimise any conflicts between these activities.
- 2.7.13 In areas where camping is permitted with horses, riders should camp at approved campsites, preferably where yards or tethering rails are available. If designated horse campsites are not

provided, camps must be kept as small as possible and at least 100 metres from lakes, rivers and streams. Manure should be collected and removed from the site or, if this is not possible, buried in the horse holding area.

- 2.7.14 Where it is necessary to feed horses in areas managed by DEC, the use of processed, weed-free feed may be required. Horses are not permitted to graze in national parks and conservation parks and grazing may also be restricted or disallowed in other areas as determined by area management guidelines.
- 2.7.15 Commercial horse riding activities must comply with section 1.15 and the Department's Administrative Instruction 41.
- 2.7.16 Horse riding zones, trails or campsites may be closed if weather conditions, erosion, disease, weed introduction/spread, degradation of vegetation or water sources, conflict with other users, visitor safety or lack of compliance to conditions of use warrant such closure.
- 2.7.17 Fees for entry on horseback to DEC-managed lands may be charged in accordance with regulation 102 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*.

2.8 SHOOTING

Introduction

Shooting as an activity includes the use of small and large bore rifles, pistols, guns, bows (long and cross) or any other device which projects an object. Shooting in this context generally refers to the activity of shooting at targets for accuracy or shooting for distance. As indicated in the policy guidelines on hunting (section 2.9), the shooting at or of any wildlife is prohibited unless authorised by the Minister under the provisions of the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* or, in the case of feral species or declared vermin, by the CEO.

The CALM Act also prohibits unauthorised hunting, shooting or trapping of indigenous fauna. Under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* it is an offence to take an unauthorised firearm or ammunition on land managed by DEC unless the firearm is stowed within a vehicle or vessel and the firearm is unloaded and disassembled (see regulation 12).

Target shooting is a popular activity requiring control and patience. As a recognised sporting activity, it is generally undertaken by clubs or groups and involves competition and socialising. DEC administers general shooting ranges by way of a lease. There are no areas where "free range" shooting is allowed.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.8.1 Shooting activities as a recreation/sport will generally only be allowed in State forest and timber reserves in lease areas and subject to the lease conditions (see section 1.15 of these guidelines for information on leases on lands managed by DEC). Where leases for shooting activities exist on lands managed by DEC that are subject to tenure changes (e.g. former State forest becoming new national parks or other reserves), their continuation will be determined through the management planning process.
- 2.8.2 Recreational or sport shooting on lands and waters managed by DEC will require Regional Manager approval and will only be permitted in designated areas which can be adequately buffered and managed to exclude the general public.
- 2.8.3 Such areas will generally be administered by way of a lease. In the case of once off special events, designated areas can be set aside. Organisers will be required to meet the cost of informing and excluding the public.

- 2.8.4 If facilities are provided by way of a lease, priority will be given to State or regional facilities rather than local club facilities. Existing single user ranges will be phased out as and when opportunities arise.

2.9 HUNTING

Introduction

The term "hunting" in these policy guidelines is defined as the recreational trapping or shooting of mammals, birds and reptiles using any type of trap or weapon such as a firearm, bow, crossbow, sling, gidgee or other projectile. These policy guidelines do not address hunting by Aboriginal groups and individuals, or commercial hunting, which is not permitted on most categories of lands or waters managed by DEC.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.9.1 Hunting will not generally be permitted on lands or waters managed by DEC. The hunting or taking of ducks, geese and quail for sport or recreation is not permitted under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*.
- 2.9.2 The CEO may authorise the shooting or trapping of declared vermin and feral species such as rabbits, foxes, pigs and goats on lands and waters managed by DEC.

2.10 FOSSICKING

Introduction

Fossicking is defined, for the purposes of these policy guidelines, as the search for bottles, coins and other artefacts, as well as biological material such as fossils, bones or shells, using hand tools only (e.g. pick, shovel, metal detector, panning dish).

Fossicking as defined for these guidelines does not apply to rocks and minerals. 'Fossicking' as defined in the *Mining Act 1978* involves the search for and removal of small quantities of rock, ore or minerals (other than gold and diamonds because of their high value even as small specimens) as samples for a mineral collection, lapidary work or as a hobby. 'Mining' as defined in the *Mining Act 1978* includes fossicking, prospecting, and exploring. Fossicking, prospecting and exploring as defined in the *Mining Act 1978* must be in accordance with that Act which includes penalties for non-compliance.

Prospecting (which is defined under the *Mining Act 1978*) is a more systematic activity involving the search for minerals. Fossicking for gold or other minerals is considered to be prospecting. A prospector must operate in accordance with the Mining Act. It is an offence to, without authority, damage, disturb or remove any naturally occurring features under regulation 31 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, including fossils and mineral specimens.

Collection of dead marine shells is dealt with in section 6.6 of these policy guidelines and penalties apply under regulation 31 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*.

The search for and indiscriminate removal of artefacts and relics can result in localised disturbance of the environment as well as the loss of cultural and historical records. For these reasons, fossicking needs to be carefully controlled and managed.

Many fossicking clubs have a code of ethics that involves minimal disturbance of the environment and replacement of soil removed during their activities. Where such activities are permitted, fossickers will be required to replace soil, rocks and debris. Fossickers will also be encouraged to hand in items of possible importance to the history of a site or the area in general. In the case of registered archaeological sites and

wrecks, this is a statutory obligation. Removal of the surviving components of historic sites such as bricks, mining machinery and other relics, or disturbance to them is not permitted.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.10.1 Fossicking is not permitted on lands and waters managed by DEC without the written approval of the CEO.
- 2.10.2 Hand tools only may be used for fossicking. These include pick and shovel, metal detector, panning dish and portable cradle. No horses or motor driven devices may be used.
- 2.10.3 Relics and artefacts that are part of the historical feature of an area, particularly above ground items such as bricks, building stones and mining machinery, must not be dislodged or removed. Such sites should not be included in areas available for fossicking.

Fossickers will be encouraged to report to DEC the discovery of any relics of European settlement (such as old bottles and coins) on lands and waters managed by DEC. Such relics will subsequently be referred to authorities such as the Western Australian Museum or the University of Western Australia's Department of Anthropology (Centre for Archaeology) so that their historical significance/value can be assessed. Items of significance may be retained for interpretive and educational purposes.

- 2.10.4 The discovery of Aboriginal relics should be reported to the Department of Indigenous Affairs. The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* defines Aboriginal cultural material, which is not to be disturbed, removed or tampered with except as part of traditional use or customs.

2.11 CYCLING (INCLUDING MOUNTAIN BIKING)

Introduction

For the purposes of these policy guidelines, a bicycle is defined as a two-wheeled non-motorised vehicle that includes BMX and mountain bikes as well as conventional bikes. An amendment to the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* will allow for the use of 'power assisted pedal cycles' on the Munda Biddi Trail and other touring bicycle trails designated by DEC. This amendment would bring the above regulations in line with the recently amended *Bicycles Regulations 2002* under the *Road Traffic Act 1974*, and greatly assist cycling for less able cyclists.

There has been a rapid growth in the popularity of cycling, particularly mountain biking, both as a recreational and a competitive activity. Recreational mountain biking, like bushwalking, occurs across a broad spectrum of natural settings and includes widely varying levels of challenge (trail technical difficulty) and participant expertise. Mountain bikes themselves have evolved so that specific styles of bikes are available for specific styles of mountain biking. These styles are described in Table 4 at the end of section 2.11. Participation in long distance bicycle touring has also increased in Western Australia, particularly with the construction of the Munda Biddi Trail.

Cycling brings about considerable health benefits for users, enables closer interaction with the environment than is the case with motorised vehicles, and provides a relatively inexpensive means of accessing and exploring park and forest areas. The impacts of cycling on the natural environment are generally minimal, providing this activity is confined to roads and trails that are appropriately located, designed, managed for disease control and maintained. However, conflicts can arise between other trail users and bicycles, particularly mountain bikes on pedestrian and shared access trails. Careful attention to the planning and design of appropriate trails will ensure that such conflicts are minimised.

Policy Guidelines

- 2.11.1 Cycle trails will be developed on DEC-managed lands where appropriate, subject to the recognition and adequate maintenance of conservation values, safety standards and the rights and enjoyment of other visitors. Management plans or interim management guidelines may specify suitable areas/sites. Generally, DEC's trail planning, construction and maintenance standards will reflect International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) standards.
- 2.11.2 Cycle trails and cycling opportunities will be provided and maintained in accordance with the Mountain Biking Management Guidelines that DEC is currently developing. A classification and difficulty rating system based on IMBA standards will be a key component of the Guidelines and is summarised in Table 5 at the end of section 2.11.
- 2.11.3 It is an offence to, without lawful authority, organise, promote or conduct any event involving mountain bikes on or through DEC-managed land (see regulation 53, *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*). Lawful permission for these activities may be obtained from the Regional or District Manager through the standard application form for 'Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters' provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.11.4 In accordance with regulation 51 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, bicycle riding will be permitted on public roads and vehicle tracks on lands managed by DEC, and on designated bicycle trails and shared paths. Where cycling is not permitted, for example, management access only tracks, the tracks will be clearly signposted. Bicycles are considered vehicles under the *Road Traffic Act 1974* and therefore are not to be ridden within Disease Risk Areas without a permit.
- 2.11.5 Bicycle riding off public roads and vehicle tracks will not be permitted unless in designated areas or on designated bicycle trails. Such areas and/or trails may be designated through the management planning process, but will generally not be designated in nature reserves. Whilst regulation 6 of the amended *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* allows access by vehicles (including bicycles) which would otherwise be unlawful under these Regulations, it is unlikely that specific off-road areas will be designated for bicycles other than designed cycle trails.
- 2.11.6 Competitive bicycle events may be permitted on roads, tracks and designated bicycle trails on DEC-managed lands, subject to the conditions specified in section 1.12, unless such activities are specifically excluded by way of a management plan for the particular park or reserve.
- 2.11.7 Commercial bicycle tours and the operation of bicycle hire businesses may be permitted on DEC-managed lands in accordance with section 1.15.
- 2.11.8 Designated bicycle trails may be developed where demand justifies the provision.
- 2.11.9 Bicycle riding may be permitted on existing walking tracks (subject to 2.11.10 below) or other tracks providing the safety and enjoyment of pedestrians or other users is not jeopardised and the track surface can be adequately maintained. Shared paths will be signposted accordingly and information provided to educate walkers and bicycle riders and other users.
- 2.11.10 Bicycle riding will not be permitted on trails developed and signposted for the sole purpose of pedestrians (e.g. Bibbulmun Track) or horse-riders. Regulations 5 ('Restricted areas') and 51 ('Vehicles') of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* have been amended to allow the exclusion of bicycles and other vehicles from walking trails and horse riding areas.

Table 4 – Mountain Biking Styles

Mountain biking is a diverse activity but is essentially about riding specialised bikes on off-road trails. Most riders beyond novice level seek ‘singletrack’ trails, while for most riders the key motivators are enjoyment of natural settings, physical activity and technical challenge.

‘Singletrack’	The trail type sought by enthusiasts, because of the technical challenges, segregation from motor vehicles and experiences of natural areas it offers.
Cross-country mountain biking	Focuses on trail riding, using standard mountain bikes that are designed to go uphill as well as down. Most mountain biking is cross-country (XC) riding. XC trails vary in technical challenge from easy to extremely difficult. XC racing is the most common mountain bike race format and is an Olympic and Commonwealth Games sport.
Downhill mountain biking	Focuses on descending as fast as possible, usually on technically demanding ‘singletrack’ trails, and usually either competitively or in training for competition. Purpose-built downhill bikes are used, that are too heavy and highly geared to be ridden uphill.
Free-riding	A newer form, focusing on extreme technical challenge, high risk and riding in unconventional or extreme terrain. It crosses over with downhill and XC mountain biking.

Table 5 – Mountain Bike Trail Difficulty Rating

The International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) trail classification system has been adopted worldwide. The system classifies trails from Easiest through to Extremely Difficult, relative to the trail's grade, surface type and width, technical trail features and trail obstacles. This system does not rate the trails' physical exertion requirements, only the technical challenge.

Mountain Bike Trail Difficulty Rating System¹

	Easiest White Circle 	Easy Green Circle 	Difficult Blue Square 	Very Difficult Black Diamond 	Extremely Difficult Double Black Diamond 
Trail Width	1800mm or more	900mm or more	600mm or more	300mm or more	150mm or more
Tread Surface	Hardened and surfaced	Firm and stable	Mostly stable with some variability	Widely variable	Widely variable and unpredictable
Average Trail Grade*	Less than 5%	5% or less	10% or less	15% or less	20% or more
Maximum Trail Grade**	Maximum 10%	Maximum 15%	15% or greater	15% or greater	20% or greater
Natural Obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTF)	None	Unavoidable obstacles 50mm tall or less. Avoidable obstacles may be present. Unavoidable bridges 900mm or wider.	Unavoidable obstacles 200mm tall or less. Avoidable obstacles may be present. Unavoidable bridges 600mm or wider. TTF's 600mm high or less; width of deck greater than 1/2 the height.	Unavoidable obstacles 400mm tall or less. Avoidable obstacles may be present. May include loose rock. Unavoidable bridges 600mm or wider. TTF's 1200mm high or less; width of deck is less than 1/2 the height. Short sections may exceed the criteria.	Unavoidable obstacles 400mm tall or less. Avoidable obstacles may be present. May include loose rock. Unavoidable bridges 600mm or narrower. TTF's 1200mm high or less; width of deck is unpredictable. Many sections may exceed the criteria.

***Average Trail Grade:** the steepness of the trail over its entire length calculated by the total elevation gain divided by the total distance.

****Maximum Trail Grade:** the steepest section of trail that is more than approximately 3m in length that a rider may encounter.

¹ Trail Solutions, IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack. IMBA, 2004. Page 75.

2.12 COMPETITIVE ADVENTURE OR ‘EXTREME’ SPORTS

Introduction

There has been a long tradition of individuals or small groups undertaking one or more competitive adventure or ‘extreme’ sports activities, in particular the active land based activities, at a level of involvement beyond ‘normal’ personal recreation experience in a natural setting. Typically these have focussed on sponsorship and fundraising, e.g. sponsored walks for charity that may involve large groups for short distances such as schools, or smaller groups/individuals over long distances such as the Bibbulmun Track. Activities such as orienteering, rogaining and cross-country running (section 2.2), mountain biking (section 2.11), sea and river canoeing (section 6.1) take pedestrian and other activities into a similar competitive level.

With a trend towards increased commercialism in adventure activities through adventure tourism and a massive increase in outdoor gear and equipment manufacture and supply, sponsorship has expanded beyond, for example, donation of equipment or cash support for international mountaineering expeditions, to a new era of ‘extreme’ competitive sports, often at an international scale.

These activities involve individuals or teams competing against each other, generally on a time basis, to traverse defined courses which typically include running, cycling and canoeing, but which also now seek higher risk challenges such as rock climbing, ‘flying fox’ rope slides and in some instances traversing caves and steep gorges. Typically the higher risk adventure opportunity, or at least the ‘best’ terrain, in Western Australia is located in the State’s protected area system of national parks and other reserves and lands and waters managed by DEC.

Such competitive activities bring with them support crews for the competitors, large numbers of marshals and officials, experienced crews to establish and manage roping courses, and, in cases where the route is pre-known to competitors, large numbers of spectators.

All of the above activities and interests can pose management challenges to organisations such as DEC who have a duty of care to all visitors including the above mentioned groups plus other park visitors and, not least, the need to manage any environmental impacts in a sustainable manner.

The following policy guidelines provide a framework for DEC to manage competitive adventure or extreme sport activities where they cross a range of recreational activities and do not meet the criteria for commercial operations licences.

Policy Guidelines.

2.12.1 DEC will consider proposals for competitive adventure or extreme sport activities with due regard due to:

- consistency with DEC’s corporate goals in respect to nature conservation, heritage and cultural conservation and the provision of recreation and tourism opportunities;
- consistency with management plans for the lands or waters in question;
- potential to cause unacceptable visitor risk to competitors, any other associated participants, and the general public;
- consistency with the purpose of the protected areas and with the preservation of natural values, e.g. they will not impinge upon rare or fragile ecosystems or impair features of the landscape, or increase visitor pressure to an unacceptable level and should not detract from the reasonable enjoyment of areas by the public;
- ability to demonstrate that they meet all statutory, equipment, and industry requirements relevant to the event, including regulations applying under the CALM Act;
- ability to demonstrate that the event is economically, environmentally, socially and technically safe and suitable;

- evidence that organisations and their leaders are registered and competent to conduct the event;
 - provision of a guaranteed equitable financial return to DEC in order to manage the pre-planning, the establishment of the event, and the aftermath;
 - carriage of acceptable public liability insurance and formal indemnity of the CEO and DEC staff against any claim that may arise through the event;
 - agreement of the proponents to ensure that advertising or promotion of the event reflects the values of the lands or waters concerned and the objectives of DEC;
 - agreement of the proponents to ensure that DEC's role and responsibilities are accurately presented in publications/brochures/media statements/competition and support crew briefings that they prepare or provide.
- 2.12.2 DEC may choose to impose an 'environmental bond' to ensure that costs associated with the event are fully recovered and to allow sufficient time for environmental damage caused by the event to be identified, for example delays in evidence of trampling damage to cliff line vegetation. This damage will be assessed and agreed by both DEC and representatives of the organised event (i.e. similar to the pre- and post-event assessments associated with competitive car rallies – see section 5.3).
- 2.12.3 Due to the special visitor risks and irreplaceable decoration or other karst features, competitive events will not be permitted in caves or cave systems.
- 2.12.4 The standard application form for 'Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters' provided in Appendix 2 may be used for applications for these events (also see section 1.12).
- 2.12.5 DEC will review each application before making a decision to permit or not permit an activity and will require a minimum period of 2 months for assessment of completed applications which will in most cases require prior on site visits. Lead times for international events may be considerably longer.

3. PASSIVE LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

3.1 PICNICKING AND BARBECUING

Introduction

The opportunity to relax and socialise with family or friends over an outdoor meal in the bush has become something of a tradition for many Australians. The bush picnic or barbecue often provides the central focus for other nature based leisure activities such as driving for pleasure, sightseeing, bushwalking and camping.

If unmanaged, picnicking and barbecuing can result in various localised impacts including the trampling and loss of understorey plants, soil compaction and erosion, littering, and removal of both live and dead vegetation for kindling and cooking fires. If a barbecue fire escapes, the impact can be severe and widespread. These impacts can be largely eliminated or minimised through careful site selection, facility placement and design and the provision of firewood or alternative heat sources.

Policy Guidelines

- 3.1.1 The provision of picnic and barbecue areas on lands managed by DEC will be subject to established planning procedures and approvals.
- 3.1.2 Where practicable, picnic and barbecue areas should be situated within reasonable proximity of major public roads or tourist routes and/or important visitor destination points.
- 3.1.3 Picnic and barbecue areas will be located in stable landscapes that are capable of sustaining intensive visitor use over the long term. Particular attention will be given to ensuring sites are situated so that they do not unduly impact on biophysical, cultural or scenic values. The site planning and design guidelines as outlined in section 1.7 will be adhered to.
- 3.1.4 Picnic/barbecue areas and associated facilities such as parking, walkways, tables and toilets will, wherever practicable, be designed and constructed to a standard suitable for use by everyone in the community including people with disabilities.
- 3.1.5 The practice of encouraging visitors to remove their own litter will be promoted.
- 3.1.6 Where firewood supplies are limited, fallen timber provides critical habitat, or where the lighting of cooking fires may result in an unacceptably high risk of wildfire, the use of wood fires may be prohibited. In such instances, gas or electric barbecues may be provided by DEC and/or visitors will be encouraged to bring their own fuel stoves. These circumstances may vary across DEC-managed lands, so there will be variation in different areas in terms of opportunities for wood fires. Where wood fires are permitted, there will be fireplaces provided by DEC. DEC will endeavour to provide firewood where this is possible, although visitors will be encouraged to bring their own firewood with them.
- 3.1.7 Regulations pertaining to litter disposal, the collection of firewood for barbecues and cooking fires and other management concerns will be conveyed through the use of pre-visit guides and brochures supported by on-site signs. Regulations 24 ('Litter'), 27 ('Removal of litter') and 71 ('Firewood') of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* apply.
- 3.1.8 The lighting of all fires, including barbecues and cooking fires, will be subject to the relevant provisions of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*, the CALM Act and the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* [regulation 39 ('Unlawful lighting of campfires') and regulation 40 ('Authorised Officer may direct that campfire, barbecue or portable stove be extinguished')]. Ground fires (that is fires lit in other than authorised fireplaces) are prohibited in national and conservation parks, nature reserves and other areas as may be specified.

- 3.1.9 Regulation 75 ('Alcohol and drugs') of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* allows DEC to manage intoxicated or drug-affected persons and to stop a person from bringing alcohol onto lands to which the regulations apply if a DEC officer believes the consumption of that alcohol or the volume available to be consumed in the possession of that person, may give rise to offensive or dangerous behaviour.

3.2 OVERNIGHT STAYS (INCLUDING CAMPING)

Introduction

There are increasing demands by the public for opportunities to stay overnight in the attractive surroundings of lands and waters managed by DEC. Overnight accommodation is often a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the visit or for pursuit of other activities. Overnight stays can be catered for in two ways, in built accommodation or through camping. Policy guidelines on construction of facilities and buildings are discussed in section 1.7. The Department's Policy Statement No. 59 – Mooring, is relevant to overnight stays in marine areas.

The *Health Act 1911* does not generally bind the State (DEC). This exemption generally flows to private operators under leases and licences issued under the provisions of the CALM Act. Advice should be sought from the Parks and Visitor Services Division in respect to the specific application of legislation on lease/licence operations. The exception is the area of food preparation. The *Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993* apply to the State and any third party concession.

It is expected that close liaison will continue with the Health Department of Western Australia and local authorities. Health surveyors may continue to contribute through comments on location and design of facilities as well as inspecting works after installation.

DEC is able to provide caravanning and camping facilities of a less sophisticated type on lands that it manages. This ensures that the community has access to the widest range of camping and caravanning opportunities.

DEC will not generally make provision for permanent residency in leases for caravan parks in national parks, State forest and other reserves. This restriction needs to be communicated to prospective operators as part of any expression of interest process for caravan park leases/developments and the assignment of caravan parks leases.

Policy Guidelines

Built Accommodation

- 3.2.1 Built accommodation on lands and waters managed by DEC should generally be provided by way of a concession (see section 1.15). In this area attention will be given to cooperating with the private sector in the provision of a range of accommodation. There may be, however, instances where remoteness, seasonality or other factors necessitate DEC itself providing the built accommodation.
- 3.2.2 Accommodation such as motels, hotels and formal caravan parks would generally be provided off lands and waters managed by DEC, but nearby. There are some circumstances where such accommodation is not available or appropriate. In this event, visitor accommodation may be built on a concessional basis within an area of lands and waters managed by DEC, subject to a management plan or 'compatible operations' approval. An example of such circumstances would be in large and remote national parks, such as Karijini.
- 3.2.3 Houses, cabins, huts or other forms of low cost accommodation where provided, whether by concession or otherwise, should be available to the general public and not given over to any organisation for exclusive use.

- 3.2.4 Where for various reasons DEC has inherited privately used built accommodation, e.g. "squatters' shacks", their continued presence will be reviewed in the course of management planning, with the view of eventual elimination of this use. Generally there will be no built accommodation for public use provided in nature reserves, except where accommodation may be used for research and educational purposes (e.g. Perup Nature Reserve).
- 3.2.5 DEC will consult with Tourism Western Australia, local authorities and tourism associations in the event that proposals for built accommodation are put forward.

Camping

Camping is generally divided into two categories:

1. designated and sign-posted site camping - areas set aside for the purpose of camping, often with the provision of facilities and usually accessible by vehicle; and
2. remote camping - where facilities are generally not supplied and which may only be accessible by foot. Areas for remote camping may be designated under regulations 6 and 66 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, or remote camping may be by way of lawful authority from Regional or District Managers provided under regulation 4 of the regulations.

Policy Guidelines

- 3.2.6 Camping will be permitted in areas approved by DEC. Camping is permitted in nature reserves where provided through an approved management plan.

Designated Camping Site

- 3.2.7 Areas are set aside for the purpose of camping, and sited so as to minimise visitor impact and conserve natural and cultural values. These sites may have limited development of facilities such as vehicle access, campsites, basic toilets, water supply, picnic tables and rubbish removal.

Regulations 6 and 66 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* require designated camping areas to be published in the *Government Gazette*, and contain an offence provision for camping without lawful authority outside the designated areas. Under regulation 2 of these regulations, a camping area can also be designated by the placement of a sign. In these policy guidelines, the description 'designated camping site' means by a *Government Gazette* notice or by signage.

- 3.2.8 A variety of designated sites may be developed to suit specific styles of camping such as vehicle based camping (e.g. caravans or campervans), backpacking or remote camping.

Guidelines for development and maintenance of sites will be incorporated in DEC's training courses.

- 3.2.9 Designated campsites will not normally be developed on lands managed by DEC of less than 1000 hectares in area unless the land is specifically reserved or managed for camping or recreation.
- 3.2.10 Caravans and campervan sites may be permitted at sites that have suitable access and/or turn-arounds. Formal caravan parks with full facilities will normally be developed outside of areas managed by DEC. Where this is not available or appropriate, visitor accommodation may be provided on areas managed by DEC under the terms of a lease (see section 1.15).
- 3.2.11 Portable generators or battery charging plants may be permitted at selected sites. Hours of operation will be specified.
- 3.2.12 Fees may be charged for camping at designated sites where practicable (see section 1.14).

- 3.2.13 Information on the location of designated camping sites, facilities available and fees and charges will be provided through a variety of information sources.
- 3.2.14 Overnight accommodation on boats will be permitted subject to conditions appropriate to the water(s) concerned. The Department's Policy Statement No. 59 – Mooring, is relevant to overnight stays in marine areas.

Remote Camping

- 3.2.16 Subject to Regional/District approval, remote camping may be permitted anywhere within a reserve or State forest, but generally not within prohibited areas or within two kilometres of designated campsites. Where remote camping is limited to a specific area and/or limited period of stay, this will be specified in a management plan and/or by the Regional/District Manager.
- 3.2.17 A camping fee does not generally apply for remote camping.
- 3.2.18 Remote camping areas may be designated under regulations 6 and 66 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* or provided for by way of 'lawful authority' under regulation 4 of the regulations. Under regulation 2 of these regulations, a remote camping area can also be designated by the placement of a sign.
- 3.2.18 Refer to sections 2.1.10, 2.1.11, 2.1.12 and 2.1.13 for policies regarding the location of remote campsites and the use of campfires.

4. WILDLIFE INTERACTION

4.1 NATURE APPRECIATION

Introduction

The basic human desire to explore, experience and study nature first hand is fundamental to the notion of setting aside and maintaining relatively undisturbed areas in parks and reserves. Western Australia's system of natural areas contains a great diversity of landscapes, plants and animals, each with its own unique qualities and appeal. These representative areas of Western Australia's biota afford significant opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the natural environment as well as undertake a range of nature study and appreciation activities such as bird watching, photography and landscape painting.

Policy Guidelines

- 4.1.1 DEC will encourage, promote and facilitate public awareness, appreciation and study of Western Australia's biodiversity and conservation values. This will be achieved through the provision of appropriately designed visitor interpretation and facilities, the development of field-based interpretative programs, the production and distribution of visitor information and interpretation documents such as maps, brochures, posters and resource notes and through personal contact with DEC staff and volunteers.
- 4.1.2 Visitor interpretation facilities and products will be designed to raise community awareness about conservation values and management programs and to promote the wise use of the natural environment. Where possible, preference will be given to those facilities that enable the public to directly experience and interact with the environment on a personal level.
- 4.1.3 Self-guided walks and trails will be developed where appropriate, in order to provide controlled access through interesting or sensitive environments.
- 4.1.4 Natural and cultural features will be interpreted where appropriate using various techniques including brochures, signs, information display shelters, and narrow range digital radio broadcasts as well as informal and structured presentations by DEC staff and others. Where possible these should be prepared in accordance with an overall interpretation plan/program for the particular area. Identification and interpretation of sensitive features such as Aboriginal cultural sites or rare plants will only be permitted when necessary approvals have been obtained.
- 4.1.5 Opportunities for viewing wildlife in the natural environment will be provided where this can be done safely and without undue disturbance to the species being observed or its habitat. Viewing facilities such as boardwalks and wildlife hides will be developed in conjunction with other visitor facilities and in accordance with accepted engineering and design standards for structures in natural environments. Access for visitors with disabilities will be provided where practicable. Regulation 11 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* places restrictions on people approaching certain marine fauna.
- 4.1.6 DEC will undertake to train its own staff and, where appropriate, volunteers in the principles and procedures of public communications and the planning and effective presentation of visitor interpretation programs.

4.2 PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING FOR PRIVATE PURPOSES

Introduction

Photography is recognised as being an important activity on all lands and waters managed under the CALM Act and an important part of recreation.

Policy Guidelines

- 4.2.1 Photography for private purposes (including video taping and movie filming) will be encouraged except where unusually sensitive issues are involved, e.g. close to private residences, or certain Aboriginal cultural sites.
- 4.2.2 Where photography is for commercial or documentary purposes, reference should be made to the Department's *Policy Statement No. 55 - Commercial Filming/Advertising Photography on Lands and Waters Managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management*. Under regulation 108 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, lawful authority must be obtained (see Policy 55) for photography for commercial purposes.

4.3 WILDLIFE FEEDING

Introduction

Western Australia's native fauna, especially the birds and mammals, are particularly appealing to many people including visitors to the State. Observing animals in the wild can be a very rewarding experience and many people are attracted to places that offer such opportunities. Many animals can become habituated to the presence of people and soon learn to take advantage of food refuse and offerings. For some people this provides an opportunity to observe and 'make contact' with wild animals, and many people cannot resist the desire to encourage closer contact by offering more food. Though this is usually done with good intent, many people are unaware that these actions can have an adverse impact on wildlife.

There are three typical responses of wildlife to recreational visitors: habituation, avoidance and attraction. These responses can lead to altered behavioural or physiological responses from wildlife. Habituation occurs where there is a waning of the response to a repeated stimulus that offers neither a positive or negative reward. Avoidance behaviour is associated with negative impacts such as pain or suffering. Attraction is caused by the positive response of wildlife to some form of reward, typically supply of food or water.

The *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* is the primary Act in relation to the protection of wildlife in Western Australia. It states that any person "taking" wildlife commits an offence. Taking in relation to fauna includes "...to kill or capture by any means or to disturb or molest any fauna by any means...". In essence, any activity detrimental to the well being of any fauna is "taking" under the Act.

Under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* (regulation 10) it is an offence to feed fauna or entice fauna with food without lawful authority.

Wildlife feeding

Many visitors to Australia's national parks are familiar with wildlife attracted to visitor areas by deliberate feeding. Such behaviour has been encouraged by visitors, concessionaires, and occasionally conservation agencies to enable intimate interactions with native wildlife. Experiencing such interactions can make a significant contribution towards the growth of a conservation ethic when reinforced through education. Although there are few quantitative studies, anecdotal evidence suggests wildlife feeding can also have negative impacts, including:

- health deficiencies as a result of incorrect diet;
- behavioural changes, leading to the collapse of territorial systems and impacts on reproductive behaviour;
- increased aggressiveness of animals seeking handouts, and reduced wariness of dangerous animals. Examples include kangaroos attacking visitors for food where feeding has been frequent and regular; and
- biophysical impacts, such as displacement of species and dispersal of weeds through seeds fed to animals.

The seasonal nature of tourism in Western Australia could exacerbate these impacts. Animals may become reliant on a steady supply of food during the main visitor season, only to be left to fend for themselves during the off-season. This will generally coincide with the period of least natural food resources.

Unintentional supply of food can also lead to attraction behaviour. For example, currawongs, crows, and brush-tail possums all scavenge from rubbish bins in natural recreation sites. This not only impacts on animal behaviour and welfare, but reduces visitor enjoyment and creates management problems for DEC staff through the spread of rubbish.

A Wildlife Interaction Review Panel was formed in August 2004 to carry out an independent review of the Department's guidelines for human interactions with wildlife. The Panel found that managing interactions between humans and wildlife is an extremely complex issue, and that formulating a set of guidelines that effectively covers all circumstances across the State for which the Department is responsible is problematic. Consequently the Panel supported the position that a case-by-case assessment of human-wildlife interaction management issues was required. DEC will be guided by the results of this review and the Government's response to the report of the Panel in dealing with these matters and in the development of guidelines relating to wildlife interactions.

In the meantime, DEC will manage wildlife interactions in the following way:

- 4.3.1 Where appropriate, visitor interaction with wildlife will be managed by way of planned interpretive programs (e.g. dolphins at Monkey Mia, Nearer to Nature, LANDSCOPE Expedition tours etc) or by way of licensed commercial tour operations (e.g. whale viewing and whale shark interaction tours).
- 4.3.2 Opportunities for visitors to view and learn about native wildlife will be developed as part of captive breeding programs where appropriate (e.g. Penguin Island, Dryandra Woodland and François Peron National Park).

5. VEHICLE-BASED ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The vast majority of visitors to lands and waters managed by DEC rely on some form of vehicle transport to reach their chosen destination(s). Apart from cars, other types of assisted access include four wheel drive vehicles, vans, buses, trucks, motorcycles and bicycles. In addition, motor sports such as trial and trail bike riding and competitive car rallies frequently take place in natural environments. The following policy guidelines provide the necessary management controls required to ensure that both motorised and non-motorised land-based vehicles are used in an environmentally and socially acceptable manner. The Department's *Policy Statement No. 40 – Road Management* (currently under review) outlines the appropriate standards for road management. To determine its road responsibilities, DEC is collecting and assessing road inventory data on land it manages, including surrendered pastoral lease land and other land proposed for reservation.

Regulations 51 to 57 (Division 2) of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* relate to vehicles.

5.1 SCENIC DRIVING

Introduction

Driving for pleasure and sightseeing using public roads on lands managed by DEC is an important recreational pursuit for many interstate and overseas visitors as well as the majority of Western Australian residents. A large proportion of the recreating or touring public who annually visit Western Australia's parks, reserves and forest areas could aptly be termed "windscreen" visitors, as much of their experience and enjoyment of the natural environment is derived from scenic driving.

Policy Guidelines

- 5.1.1 All roads through lands managed by DEC have the potential to provide pleasurable and scenic driving experiences. DEC will endeavour in its planning and management to conserve and/or enhance the inherent scenic values of all public travel routes.
- 5.1.2 Selected public roads on lands managed by DEC that have important scenic values and which afford outstanding views of surrounding landscapes may be identified, promoted and managed as scenic drives. The identification, selection and management of such roads will be based on the Department's policies on Road Management and Visual Landscape Management as well as other considerations such as available interpretative opportunities, driver safety and the resources required for ongoing management and maintenance.
- 5.1.3 Information on selected scenic drives or tours through lands managed by DEC will be prepared and promoted through Departmental and other publications (e.g Tourism Western Australia and Royal Automobile Club guides), through local tourist centres and via DEC's website, *NatureBase*.
- 5.1.4 The Department will continue to work with Tourism Western Australia, Main Roads WA, the RAC and other agencies as a member of the State Tourist Drive Committee to identify and assess potential tourist drives throughout Western Australia, including scenic drives through lands managed by DEC. Departmental roads that are nominated and qualify as State Tourist Drives will be signposted and promoted.

5.2 VEHICLE RALLYING (SOCIAL)

Introduction

For the purposes of these policy guidelines, rallying involves the driving of road-licensed motor vehicles over a pre-planned route past selected checkpoints, generally within a specified period of time. Vehicle rallies may vary from casual, social outings to highly competitive events requiring expert driving and navigational skills and the use of specially equipped vehicles. These policy guidelines address the non-competitive or social forms of vehicle rallying.

Family, social and community groups often conduct vehicle rallies as an organised recreational activity on lands managed by DEC. Often such events are associated with a barbecue or picnic meal at the conclusion of the event. As this type of activity is conducted with road-registered vehicles on public roads, the regulations of the *Road Traffic Act 1974* apply.

Policy Guidelines

- 5.2.1 Social vehicle rallies are a legitimate use of public roads. Providing road traffic regulations are adhered to and the roads are open to public use by vehicles, there is limited need to control or regulate this activity.
- 5.2.2 Groups wishing to conduct such an event should be encouraged to contact local DEC offices for approval and planning of the event in accordance with the procedures relating to the management of organised, non-commercial educational and leisure activities on lands and waters managed by DEC (see section 1.12). Safe routes can therefore be suggested to the event conveners. Routes can also be directed away from areas of conservation value, or popular recreation sites where there is the possibility of a nuisance being created to other visitors. Under regulation 53 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, DEC has the ability to require permission to be sought for car rallies.
- 5.2.3 Managers may establish a booking system so that large groups, such as those attending a social car rally, can be allocated a picnic site prior to the event. Booking procedures established in this way may assist in avoiding conflicts that can occur when large groups arrive at a site late in the day and impose on small informal groups of visitors.

5.3 COMPETITIVE CAR RALLIES AND OTHER MOTOR SPORTS

Introduction

There is considerable demand by organised groups to access and use DEC-managed lands for competitive car rallies and, to a lesser extent, trial, trail and enduro motorcycle events. The State currently hosts several major events each year, including an international rally. Motorised recreation is an exciting sport for competitors and spectators alike. Apart from the recreation and social benefits associated with this form of leisure, rally events are also capable of generating considerable economic activity.

The impact of competitive motor sports on the physical environment and on the experience and enjoyment of other visitors to lands managed by DEC can be significant and is largely dependent on how well such events are planned and managed. DEC's policy guidelines on competitive car rallies and other motor sports are designed to provide the necessary planning controls and management procedures to enable this activity to occur while ensuring that detrimental impacts on the environment and the enjoyment of other visitors is minimised as far as practicable.

Under regulation 53 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person must not, without lawful authority, organise, promote, or conduct a car rally, associated navigation exercise, mountain bike event or other race involving vehicles on or through Department land (penalty \$2000).

Policy Guidelines

- 5.3.1 Competitive rallies and other motor sport events will not be permitted in nature reserves, or generally in conservation parks or national parks. Such activity may be inconsistent with the protection of conservation values of these areas or with the enjoyment and safety of the public who visit these areas. However, where there has been a change of land tenure from State forest, and there has been a history of competitive car rallies and other motorised sport events in those areas, consideration may be given to allowing the activity to continue unless such activities are specifically excluded by way of a management plan for the particular park or reserve.
- 5.3.2 Competitive rallies and other motor sports may be approved in State forests, timber reserves, 5(1)(g) and 5(1)(h) reserves and other reserves subject to the procedures and conditions outlined in section 5.4.3 being met. If areas for this purpose are allocated by way of lease, priority in provision will be given to State or Regional associations rather than local clubs. Where approval is sought to conduct an activity within a Public Drinking Water Source Area, applications will be referred to the Department of Environmental Protection and the Water Corporation for their review and approval (refer to section 1.12).
- 5.3.3 The following procedures and conditions will apply to groups/organisations who wish to conduct any motorised recreational events on DEC-managed lands. The term "motorised" includes competitive car rallies, trail and enduro motorcycle events and trial bike/hill climb events and associated activities deemed to be compatible with the management of the event. Other activities involving the off-road use of motorcross/scramble bikes, 4WD vehicles, dune buggies and other motor vehicles will not be permitted on land managed by DEC except on areas specifically set aside and managed for this purpose (see section 1.15). Also refer to section 5.5 relating to off-road vehicles.

Procedures:

1. Where a group or club is a member of a State or national organising body such as the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS), the written approval of the parent body should be obtained prior to seeking permission from DEC to conduct that event.
2. In the case of CAMS affiliated events, a Road Rally Coordinating Committee has been formed to oversee the planning of competitive rally events on DEC-managed lands. This committee consists of the CAMS Panel Chairman and Area Coordinator and a representative of DEC. The Committee meets annually to negotiate and finalise the routes for those rallies to be held over the next 12 months and to oversee the disbursement of funds to DEC's forest districts and regions for road upgrading and maintenance from the Rally Trust Fund (refer to procedures 6 and 7).
3. Acceptance of the conditions contained in DEC's standard application form (Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters – see Appendix 2) is necessary before planning of the event can proceed.
4. It will be the organiser's responsibility to ensure that applications to conduct motorised events are submitted sufficiently in advance of the date of the event to enable proposed routes and wet weather alternatives to be negotiated and inspected. As a general rule, a minimum of 3 months will be required to process applications for major rally events.
5. In the case of competitive car rallies, the proposed routes to be used will be inspected by an officer of each District in which the rally is to be conducted and an official of the organising club. This inspection will be carried out at the last practical time prior to the event to assess and carefully document road conditions and identify any safety hazards so that appropriate action can be taken.
6. The upgrading of DEC's roads used for CAMS sanctioned rallies and the periodic maintenance and repair of roads damaged as a result of competitive rally events will in part be financed from a Rally

Trust Fund which was established in 1994 and generated from an entry fee levied on all competitors. The trust funds will be allocated back to DEC districts for the purpose of upgrading and/or maintaining those roads that are used for rallying. The allocation of funds to DEC in any given year will not exceed the sum of the fees collected from competitors in the preceding year.

7. As a general rule, funds will be primarily allocated for the purpose of upgrading and maintaining selected roads and tracks prior to an event being held as opposed to post-event maintenance and repairs. This practice has proven effective in the management of Rally Australia events through lands managed by DEC. However, some contingency funds will be kept in reserve to help finance any unforeseen road repairs that may need to be undertaken following an event. Any call on contingency funds will be investigated by the Rally Road Coordinating Committee and if agreement cannot be reached on the disbursement of funds for post-event repairs, the matter will be referred to CAMS and DEC's executive for resolution.

Conditions:

1. In the case of competitive events, the organising body is required to possess public liability insurance to indemnify the Minister, CEO and their respective agents/servants against any claim for compensation to cover property damage, personal injury or death which occurs as a result of the event (see the form 'Organised Non-commercial Education and Leisure Activities on DEC Lands and Waters' provided in Appendix 2). A copy of the indemnity needs to be forwarded to the appropriate Regional or District Manager before approval to conduct the event will be given.
2. Only vehicles registered/licensed under the *Road Traffic Act 1974* or *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Act 1978* are to be used. Noise level emissions of competitors' machines must comply with the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997*.
3. Only routes/areas approved by DEC are to be used. These will be clearly indicated on a plan attached to the application. DEC reserves the right to cancel this permission at short notice for particular sections of the approved route should changes in weather conditions and other factors dictate such action. Alternative routes shall be nominated and approved to cover this situation where possible.
4. The organiser(s) of the event shall check by telephone with the relevant DEC District Manager three days prior to the event that this approval still stands.
5. Where an approved route traverses roads/tracks frequented by the public, adequate warning signs shall be erected just prior to the event. Spectator control and management including the provision of temporary ablution facilities as required in the conduct of the event will be the responsibility of the event organiser. The organiser will be required to provide details of spectator control provisions and procedures (e.g. access to specified spectator viewing areas and parking arrangements) and may be required to provide marshals in areas where public safety considerations dictate.
6. Nails or spikes shall not be used to secure signs, markers or bunting to trees. All signs, route markers and litter resulting from the event shall be removed by the organiser immediately after the event.
7. Any damage to public property or serious accidents from the event shall be reported as soon as practicable to the officer in charge of the local District.
8. Adequate fire precautions shall be observed in accordance with the provisions of the *Bush Fires Act 1954*. No fires may be lit except where authorised or where a properly constructed fireplace has been provided as part of an existing recreational facility.
9. Hygiene requirements to minimise the risk of disease introduction and spread may be specified and must be observed. Any accidental entry into a Disease Risk Area (DRA), which has not been

- approved for use for a competitive car rally or other motorised event, shall be reported promptly to the officer in charge of the local District.
10. Most DEC roads and 4WD tracks are designed for low to moderate speed travel as opposed to high speed competitive rallying. Consequently, DEC will not guarantee that the roads/tracks are or will be suitable and safe for the purposes of the event. Accordingly, each person who uses these roads/tracks does so entirely at his or her own risk.
 11. The roads and tracks used during any competitive event are to be inspected by an organising official and a representative of the District as soon as practicable following the event. All roads/tracks used in the competition will be restored to a condition that existed prior to the event. Where this road/track restoration involves work in addition to that required under routine road/track maintenance, agreed costs of this additional restoration may be sought from the Rally Trust Fund as previously outlined.
 12. Failure to adhere to these conditions may result in the denial of permission to the organisation concerned to conduct future events on lands managed by DEC.
 13. The following guidelines are provided as an aid to both organisers of motorised recreational events and DEC in:
 - identifying and selecting suitable areas/routes on which to conduct such events;
 - regulating when and how these events are conducted.

Identification and Selection of Suitable Areas

To assist in the preparation and processing of applications for motorised recreation events, lands managed by DEC will be zoned to identify those areas that are:

- not available for motorised activities. These would generally include national and conservation parks and nature reserves (see 5.4.1 above).
- generally suitable for motorised activities under dry weather conditions only.
- generally suitable for motorised activities under all weather conditions.

In addition to this zoning plan, motorised events should be planned with the following principles in mind:

1. As far as practicable, each motorised event should be confined either to dieback infected or uninfected areas. Where a route unavoidably passes from a predominantly dieback infected area to a predominantly dieback-free area, vehicle wash-down facilities may, at the discretion of DEC, be supplied at the organiser's expense.
2. Where existing 4WD tracks or roads are used, preference should generally be given to those that are low in the landscape to prevent the spread of dieback.
3. In the case of off-road motorcycle events, sensitive environments where disturbance is more likely to occur and/or where the rate of recovery is slower should be avoided. Such environments include:
 - wetlands or seasonally waterlogged sites (i.e. soils with impeded drainage);
 - stream/river embankments;
 - steep slopes with erodible soils. As a general rule, sandy and lateritic soils are preferable to clay, which is more prone to erosion and compaction, particularly under wet conditions.
4. Spectator access, parking areas and observation points should be carefully located and planned so as to minimise environmental impacts and visitor risks.

5. Assembly areas, starting lines, checkpoints, refuelling and service areas should be located on relatively flat, open sites that are well drained. Refuelling areas will not be permitted within 500 metres of any permanent stream or water body, unless refuelling is carried out on tarpaulins providing an effective barrier in which case the distance will be reduced to 100 metres.
6. Events should be organised so that they have minimal impact on or interference with other forms of public recreation, either directly or indirectly (i.e. noise impacts). Important areas to avoid include picnic and camping areas, walk paths, horse trails and scenic drives.
7. Events should be organised so as not to unduly disrupt other operations (e.g. commercial logging operations, beekeepers) and/or users of DEC-managed lands.
8. Events should be located sufficiently distant from adjoining properties so as not to create noise and dust problems for those residents or unduly interfere with their land use activities.
9. In competitive events, mass starts where large numbers of competitors leave simultaneously from the same point should not be permitted. Instead, staggered starts (e.g. 2-3 competitors leaving at one-minute intervals) are to be used.
10. If there are no existing arrangements in place, events, whether on or off-road, will be subject to periodic monitoring by DEC to identify any impacts resulting from such activity and to subsequently carry out at the organiser's expense any rehabilitation which might be required.

5.4 OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Introduction

These policy guidelines deal with the public's off-road use of all motorised vehicles on lands managed by DEC, whether by conventional vehicles, four-wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles, dune buggies, all-terrain vehicles or other motorised vehicles such as farm tractors.

This policy needs to define what is regarded as a 'road' so as to explain the term 'off-road' and to describe the types of vehicles likely to be involved in off-road driving.

The definition of 'road' in section 5 of the *Road Traffic Act 1974* (Road Traffic Act) includes any highway, road or street open to, or used by the public. The *Land Administration Act 1997* defines a road as land dedicated at common law or reserved, declared or otherwise dedicated under an Act as a road, street or thoroughfare for pedestrians or vehicles or both. Whilst a road is not defined in the *Local Government Act 1995* there is reference to public thoroughfares and (obliquely) to those thoroughfares that are dedicated for public use. Roads under these three Acts can best be described as dedicated roads, being Crown land set aside as a road. Earlier descriptions included the terms 'public road' and 'gazetted road' (there is no requirement now to publish road details in the *Government Gazette* nor to give a dedicated road a number) but the preferred term 'dedicated road' is now gaining acceptance. Dedicated roads are managed by Main Roads WA or by a local government.

Where dedicated roads pass through land managed by DEC, the road remains a Crown land road reserve and does not form part of the surrounding CALM Act land estate.

Another category of road is that which is constructed on CALM Act land, is maintained by DEC and which is open to use by the public. These CALM Act roads are not dedicated under the three Acts cited above. Parts of these CALM Act roads or tracks may be closed to the public by DEC by signage or barriers e.g. 'management track - authorised vehicles only/no access' type signage.

'Off-road' driving includes accessing roads or tracks closed to the public or driving where there are no roads, e.g. across vegetation, beaches/sand or rock.

All motorised vehicles travelling on DEC-managed lands are subject to this policy. Included are conventional vehicles, motorcycles and four wheel drive vehicles licensed under the Road Traffic Act; all-terrain vehicles also licensed under the Road Traffic Act (which include four wheel and six wheel motor bikes and ‘gofer’ type vehicles often used by the disabled); vehicles licensed under the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978* (notably dune buggies); and all other vehicles which are not licensed under either Act (e.g. farm tractors).

It is recognised that the ownership of four-wheel drive vehicles licensed under the Road Traffic Act has increased significantly in recent years and that a growing number of people enjoy off-road or four-wheel driving. At the same time, there has been considerable community concern expressed over the environmental damage that can be caused by vehicles used in such a way. Considerable funds have been spent by all levels of Government to restore areas damaged by the use of vehicles off-road, particularly in coastal and hilly areas. There has also been an encouraging involvement by four-wheel drive clubs and associations seeking to promote responsible four-wheel driving on DEC-managed lands.

The *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978* is currently under review, and DEC has provided input to this review process.

Policy Guidelines

- 5.4.1 Any motorised vehicle used on land managed by DEC must be licensed/registered under the Road Traffic Act or the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road Areas) Act 1978*. Vehicles that are not licensed under either Act are not permitted on land managed by DEC (either on roads or off-road) unless given written lawful authority to do so by the Regional or District Manager. Prohibited unlicensed vehicles will include farm tractors. Unlicensed drivers, including under-age drivers, will be similarly prohibited on DEC-managed land and roads, except on permitted areas under the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978* in accordance with that Act.
- 5.4.2 CALM Act roads may be closed to all public vehicle access or to selected classes of vehicles and will be signposted accordingly. These closures may be for restricting access in declared Disease Risk Areas, or as a temporary measure for management purposes, such as logging, maintenance, bridge repair or safety reasons. Regulations 5 (‘Restricted areas’) and 51 (‘Vehicles’) have been amended to enable vehicles to be excluded from CALM Act roads that form part of walking tracks (e.g. Bibbulmun Track) and exclude vehicles other than bicycles from cycle trails (e.g. Munda Bididi Trail). Roads may be designated as being for management purposes only and therefore not available to public access by vehicle. This section does not apply to dedicated roads managed by Main Roads WA or local government.
- 5.4.3 All vehicles are required to stay on established roads or tracks while operating on lands managed by DEC. Vehicles may only be used off a dedicated or CALM Act road if an area has been designated and signposted for such use, e.g. areas designated under the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978* (see 5.4.4 below), beach access, or tracks or firebreaks suitable for four-wheel drive vehicles. Regulations 6 (‘Designated areas’) and 51 (‘Vehicles’) have been amended to allow vehicular access that would otherwise be unlawful under the Regulations, e.g. vehicular access along the Cape Le Grand National Park beachfront. Such designation will not be given in nature reserves and will only be given in other lands managed by DEC by way of a management plan, compatible operations or interim management guidelines.
- 5.4.4 Under regulation 52 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person must not have or drive on DEC-managed land an off-road vehicle within the meaning of the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978*, unless on a permitted area under that Act or with a permit issued under section 8(4) of that Act. Vehicles within the meaning of that Act are not registered for on-road use under the Road Traffic Act and can include unlicensed conventional vehicles. Areas may be established as permitted off-road vehicle areas consistent with the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978* for vehicles registered under that Act. Vehicles licensed under the Road Traffic Act do not require separate off-road registration to utilise these permitted areas. Permitted areas under the former Act will cater for motorised recreation but will only be established on State

forest and timber reserves and on CALM Act section 5(1)(g) and (h) reserves, consistent with approval from the CEO. Adjoining landholders will be consulted prior to the designation and establishment of permitted areas under that Act. DEC-managed permitted areas may also be cancelled if environmental or safety concerns cannot be accommodated. Permits under section 8(4) of the *Control of Vehicles (Off-road areas) Act 1978* need to be issued by the Minister administering that Act (currently the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development) and it is anticipated that their issue will continue to be restricted in number.

- 5.4.5 There may be instances where permission will be sought to use motorised vehicles (including all-terrain vehicles such as four- or six-wheel motorcycles and ‘gofer’ type vehicles) off-road to allow a disabled person access or to accommodate a particular event or activity. The DEC Regional or District Manager may issue permission for the use of a vehicle for such a purpose, as long as the vehicle is registered under the B class conditional registration arrangements of the Road Traffic Act. Registration of vehicles under that Act will provide the owners with comprehensive third party insurance for personal injury. Conditions of use attached to the DEC permission will include consideration of the length of time the permit is required and the designated area where any vehicles can be used.

Approval will be contingent on:

- The driver holding a current and appropriate drivers’ licence and the vehicle being registered under the Road Traffic Act.
- The CEO being indemnified from any liability arising from the use of the vehicle.
- The permit being carried by the user when the vehicle is being used on land managed by DEC.
- There not being a significant negative impact on the natural environment and the use and enjoyment of other visitors.
- Compensation being paid to DEC should damage to nature conservation values/DEC assets occur.

Permission will be withdrawn if any of the specified conditions are not adhered to.

If the vehicle has ACROD status, it may be permitted on DEC-managed lands in areas where it will not pose a danger to other users, or in situations where the user may safely access their destination.

- 5.4.6 DEC will continue to work with organisations including Tread Lightly! Australia, Track Care WA and the WA Four Wheel Drive Association to actively promote the responsible use of 4WD vehicles in natural areas. Four-wheel drive owners will be encouraged to attend special driving classes for safety and environmental awareness.
- 5.4.7 This policy does not restrict DEC staff or their agents from driving vehicles off-road to carry out DEC’s functions, e.g. feral animal control, fire fighting and rescue operations.

5.5 LAND YACHTING

Introduction

A land yacht is a wind-powered, non-motorised vehicle. Land yachting in Western Australia began on Lake Lefroy, a salt lake near Kambalda in 1897. Most land yachters belong to a club and there are at least two clubs in Western Australia - the Lake Lefroy Land Sailing Club and the Sandgropers Land Yacht Club.

Land yachts require a hard flat surface such as a hard beach, salt lake or clay pan. They rely solely on wind power, and cannot operate in soft sand. Organised clubs usually require that yachts have brakes and seat belts and that operators wear crash helmets. Land yachts can travel at speeds of 80 kilometres per hour or faster in favourable conditions.

The use of land yachts on beaches is not compatible with other beach activities such as swimming, beach walking, fishing and sunbathing. Therefore, it is at the discretion of the Regional or District Manager to determine the suitability of land yachting in designated areas, depending upon the impact of use and enjoyment of other visitors.

Policy Guidelines

- 5.5.1 Land yachts may be allowed on lands managed by DEC within designated areas only such as beaches, salt lakes or claypans. Prior permission must be obtained from the District Manager. Land yachting is not permitted on nature reserves.
- 5.5.2 There must be suitable access available to the area and fringe vegetation must not be damaged.
- 5.5.3 Land yachts must operate at least one kilometre from popular beach areas, with warning signs to be erected at both ends of the sailing area. Signs should be legible and clearly visible to oncoming traffic and should read 'Caution Land Yachts Ahead, Please Sound Horn When Approaching'.
- 5.5.4 Suitable warning signs should be erected by the land yacht operators on salt lakes and claypans.
- 5.5.5 Land yachts must meet the safety specifications required by land yacht clubs including brakes, seat belts and operators must wear protective helmets.
- 5.5.6 Commercial land yachting will be addressed through the area management planning process and in accordance with section 1.15.

6. WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

6.1 BOATING (INCLUDING CANOEING, KAYAKING, SAILING, WIND SURFING, KITE SURFING, SURF SKIING)

Introduction

Western Australia has a very high level of boat ownership. These policy guidelines cover boating in all its forms, whether powered by human exertion, wind or by mechanical power. For specific guidelines relating to high speed boating, see section 6.2 'High Speed and Freestyle Boating - including Personal Water Craft (PWC), Jet Boats, Water-Skiing, Parasailing and Hovercraft'.

Boating occurs in marine and estuarine areas as well as inland waters. Western Australia is not well endowed with inland waterways and therefore those that exist which are suitable for boating generally have high usage. However, more boating occurs in and around the coastline where the majority of the population resides.

Boating activities are controlled in terms of vessel and operational safety by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure under the *Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967* and the *Navigable Water Regulations 1958* and the *Shipping and Pilotage (Mooring Control Areas) Regulations 1983* made under that Act. The CALM Act empowers DEC to determine where boating may occur on the estate which it manages. Thus DEC can direct where boating activities may occur although the *Navigable Water Regulations 1958* and the *Shipping and Pilotage (Mooring Control Areas) Regulations 1983* still apply and vice versa. Mooring sites within marine reserves will be determined in accordance with the Department's Policy Statement No. 59 – Mooring, with the CEO delegated under the *Shipping and Pilotage Act 1967* as the controlling authority for the Maud Sanctuary Zone (Ningaloo Marine Park) mooring control area.

The *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* provide powers for the control of moorings, anchoring and operations of vessels (regulations 58 to 64).

The policy guidelines for boating will generally apply to paddling (including canoeing and kayaking), however, specific guidelines for paddling are being developed by DEC's Warren Region in consultation with Canoeing WA and the Department of Sport and Recreation. Canoeing WA is affiliated with Canoeing Australia and is recognised as the organisation with the expertise to assess the grades of water bodies and the ability to provide evaluation and training of paddlers.

Policy Guidelines

- 6.1.1 Boating will be allowed on terrestrial and marine nature reserves only by way of a management plan or interim management guidelines after consideration of the likely environmental and social impacts of any activity or where there is a pre-existing arrangement/agreement in place.
- 6.1.2 Generally boating on both terrestrial and marine nature reserves will be limited to those activities that are directed toward the appreciation of the natural values of the reserve.
- 6.1.3 Boating on water bodies managed by DEC within national parks and marine reserves will only be permitted by way of an approved management plan or interim management guidelines where there is no plan. Particular consideration will be given to the environmental impacts of boats including disturbance of wildlife, fuel pollution as well as the disturbance created to other park users (see section 1.5.11 and 6.1.1).
- 6.1.4 Where special boating events such as the Avon Descent occur on lands or waters managed by DEC, section 1.12 will be adhered to. (Under regulation 58 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person must not, without lawful authority, organise, promote or conduct a race involving vessels on or through DEC land).

- 6.1.5 Boating is particularly relevant to the use and management of marine parks. DEC will liaise with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, who will seek to regulate boating activity, particularly in sanctuary zones of marine parks and marine nature reserves. The location of launching and mooring areas and "no anchorage" zones will be determined by the management planning process (also refer to the Department's Policy Statement No. 59 - Mooring). The *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* provide for 'restricted areas' to be declared where no anchoring, operation of vessels and launching of vessels is permitted.
- 6.1.6 Much of the impact of boating on natural values occurs at the point of access to the water body and heavily used recreational fishing and dive sites. Launching areas should therefore be carefully selected, planned and controlled to minimise compaction, erosion, removal of vegetation and littering.
- 6.1.7 Given the limited areas available to boating in comparison to the level of demand, congestion is likely to occur at some time at most boat launching areas. Priority should be given to site selection and design to minimise management effort and visitor conflicts.
- 6.1.8 Commercial interest in providing boating opportunities is high. There are currently sea kayaks, canoe, small craft hire, charter boat tours and coral viewing (glass bottom) operations undertaken on areas managed by DEC. Commercial activities will be assessed and approved according to section 1.15, management plans, as well as Administrative Instruction No. 41 and the Department's Policy Statement No. 59 - Mooring. Administrative Instructions associated with the Mooring Policy are also being developed.

6.2 HIGH SPEED AND FREESTYLE BOATING - INCLUDING PERSONAL WATER CRAFT (PWC), JET BOATS, WATER-SKIING, PARASAILING AND HOVERCRAFT

Introduction

The demand for high speed boating is increasing in marine and estuarine areas as well as inland waters. Western Australia is not well endowed with inland waterways and those that are suitable for boating generally have high usage. Around the coastline where the majority of the population resides, high speed and freestyle boating is increasing. These policy guidelines cover high speed and freestyle boating in all its forms, whether PWC (e.g. jet skis), jet boats, water-skiing, parasailing or hovercraft. Other forms of boating are addressed in section 6.1.

All boating activities are controlled in terms of vessel and operational safety by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure under the *Shipping and Pilotage Act* and the *Navigable Water Regulations 1958* and the *Shipping and Pilotage (Mooring Control Areas) Regulations 1983* made under that Act. The CALM Act and regulations made under this Act can regulate where and what type of boating may occur on the estate managed by DEC.

The *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* provide powers for the operations of vessels, safe navigation of vessels and launching, beaching and retrieving of vessels (regulations 61 to 64) and the ability to restrict such activities in certain areas (regulation 5).

The *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* do not treat PWC (including jet skis) any differently from other vessels.

Policy Guidelines

- 6.2.1 High speed/freestyle boating will be allowed on terrestrial and marine reserves where it is consistent with the purpose of the reserve and an approved management plan or interim management guidelines. In making its determination about high speed/freestyle boating activity, DEC will aim to conserve the ecological and social values of the reserve consistent with the purpose of the reserve. In addition (and where there is no management plan or interim

- management guidelines for the reserve), DEC may consider pre-existing arrangements/agreements in place for high-speed boating activities (also see section 1.5.11). These activities will be reviewed from time to time.
- 6.2.2 Particular consideration will be given to the impacts of high speed/freestyle boats which may include:
- disturbance and displacement of wildlife (waterbirds, marine mammals, fish, etc);
 - direct or indirect impacts on marine and estuarine habitats and flora (e.g. scouring of seagrass meadows or increased turbidity resulting in loss of seagrass);
 - increased erosion;
 - fuel and noise pollution;
 - safety;
 - disturbance of cultural heritage sites; and
 - disturbance and loss of amenity for other reserve users (see section 1.5.11).
- 6.2.3 Where special high speed/freestyle boating events occur on lands or waters managed by DEC, section 1.12 will be adhered to. (Under regulation 58 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, a person must not, without lawful authority, organise, promote or conduct a race involving vessels on or through DEC-managed land).
- 6.2.4 Reserves or zones in reserves that are primarily for the protection, care and study of indigenous flora and fauna, the restoration of the natural environment, and the preservation of any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest, e.g. nature reserves, marine nature reserves and sanctuary zones will generally not be compatible with high speed/freestyle boating activity such as jet boats, PWCs and water-skiing (see section 13A of the CALM Act). Also see 6.2.1 and section 1.5.11 of these policy guidelines).
- 6.2.5 DEC will liaise with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure to have areas gazetted specifically for high speed boating activity, if appropriate. The location of gazetted areas will be determined through the management planning process. The *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* also provide for 'restricted areas' to be declared where operation of certain vessels is not permitted. Where areas have been gazetted following the management planning process or they precede management plans they will be monitored and periodically reviewed.
- 6.2.6 Much of the impact of high speed/freestyle boating on ecological and social values will occur at the point of access to the water body, heavily used recreational areas, wildlife habitats, sensitive habitats and areas where water circulation and 'flushing' is minimal. Launching and gazetted high-speed areas will therefore be carefully selected, planned and controlled to minimise conflict, pollution/emissions, noise pollution, wildlife disturbance and displacement and safety concerns.
- 6.2.7 Conflict between high speed/freestyle boating and the activities of other reserve users is likely to occur. Appropriate site selection and design to minimise management requirements and visitor conflicts is required. Zoning in time and space will also be used to control visitor impacts.
- 6.2.8 Commercial high speed boating activities including jet boats, PWCs, water-skiing and parasailing activities will be assessed and approved in accordance with section 1.15 relating to commercial concessions, management plans, Administrative Instruction No. 41 and the Tour Operators Handbooks. Commercial activity licences may need to be restricted. Conditions and codes of conduct may need to be developed.

6.3 SURFING

Introduction

Surfing, in all its forms, is a very popular marine recreation activity engaging all age groups and is undertaken on most of the populated shorelines of Western Australia. Surfing also draws people to very isolated natural areas in pursuit of the perfect wave.

Because of the natural basis of the activity, i.e. unpowered movement over water, the activity has minimal impact on the sea, however it can have an impact on the terrestrial environment on lands managed by DEC. That impact may occur through the consumption of natural resources (e.g. wood for campfires), damage to vegetation and dune erosion that can result from camping, driving or walking to beaches, reef trampling, and pollution, e.g. rubbish, human waste and oil/fuel spills. Organised surfing events (both recreational and commercial) can also have an impact on non-competitive users.

Policy Guidelines

- 6.3.1 Organised surfing events (recreational and commercial) that involve access from or use of DEC-managed lands or waters require approval by DEC. For non-commercial events, the form 'Application for Non-Commercial Educational and Leisure Activities' may be used (see section 1.12). The South West Region of DEC has developed guidelines in consultation with surfing organisations for approval of commercial surfing events.
- 6.3.2 Where major conflict between uses such as swimming, surfing, boating and fishing is likely in marine areas managed by DEC, areas may be zoned. Zoning will be temporal, spatial or both.

6.4 SWIMMING

Introduction

Swimming is one of the most popular of outdoor recreational activities in this State. Swimming is used as a means of cooling during hotter periods of the year, as exercise, as well as a form of therapy, pleasure and enjoyment.

A wide variety of opportunities for swimming are provided on lands and waters managed by DEC. These range from river pools, lakes and ocean beaches to waterholes and gorges in the north of the State. These guidelines only apply to lands and waters managed by DEC.

Policy Guidelines

- 6.4.1 Swimming areas on lands and waters managed by DEC may be designated subject to an assessment of the suitability of the water body to accommodate this activity being made. Such factors as the potential impact of swimming on biophysical resource values and the risk posed to public health and visitor safety will be considered.
- 6.4.2 Where major conflict between uses such as swimming, boating and fishing is likely in marine areas managed by DEC, areas may be zoned. Zoning will be temporal, spatial or both.
- 6.4.3. Where there is the possibility for unsafe behaviour in designated public swimming areas on lands and waters managed by DEC, e.g. diving from rocks, risk management measures will be used to limit that behaviour including signage and restricting access. Safety signs should be displayed at appropriate beaches.
- 6.4.4 Where there are concerns about water quality issues such as pollution and amoebic meningitis in designated public swimming areas, appropriately worded warning signs will be installed.

- 6.4.5 The condition and safety of water access points, platforms and other swimming related facilities in designated public swimming areas on lands and waters managed by DEC will be regularly assessed and maintained, replaced or removed as required and in accordance with the Department's Visitor Risk Management Policy.
- 6.4.6 At visitor sites where crocodiles may reside, hazard warning signs will be erected according to DEC procedures to ensure that visitors are aware of the risks associated with swimming.

6.5 SNORKELING AND DIVING

Introduction

In these policy guidelines, diving is defined as an activity, involving swimming, where the swimmer uses a face mask to look beneath the water and includes, but is not limited to, snorkelling or breath hold diving and diving using underwater breathing apparatus.

Diving is a popular activity enjoyed by thousands of visitors to reserves managed by DEC. Marine reserves offer a diverse range of opportunities for the recreational diver. Diving is one of the fastest growing recreational activities in Australia. It provides an opportunity for visitors to interact with the marine environment and experience an array of ecotypes and historical sites that would ordinarily remain hidden from view.

Diving is usually undertaken near areas of reef, both near and off shore and rarely in rivers, dams, and lakes. Operators who use underwater breathing apparatus must be certified by a registered training provider to Australian recreational diving standards (AS 4005.1). Divers and persons in charge of diving vessels must follow regulations prescribed in the *Navigable Waters Regulations 1958*.

Diving is often undertaken in conjunction with other activities including photography and filming (section 4.2), swimming (section 6.3), collecting marine organisms (section 6.5). Cave diving is addressed as a separate activity in section 2.5.

Policy Guidelines

- 6.5.1 Diving will be permitted in reserves managed by DEC subject to the following dive site considerations:
- accessibility;
 - resident flora and fauna;
 - aesthetic appeal and popularity;
 - interpretive opportunities;
 - diver safety;
 - the potential impact of divers on the sites biophysical resource values.
- 6.5.2 Where conflict exists with other uses or values, or is likely to exist, areas may be zoned or restrictions put in place to minimise or remove conflict. Zoning may be temporal, spatial or a combination of both.
- 6.5.3 When operating in lands or waters managed by DEC, commercial dive charters and dive tour operators servicing the recreational dive industry must hold a current Commercial Activity Licence issued by DEC, over and above any other Department-issued permit or licence for the activity they are undertaking.
- 6.5.4 All snorkel (breath hold) and compressed air diving operations conducted in DEC must comply with the Department's Diving Code of Practice (2005).

6.6 RECREATIONAL FISHING AND COLLECTING OF MARINE LIFE

Recreational Fishing Defined

Recreational fishing includes fishing and collection for personal consumption (e.g. abalone), bait (e.g. Pipis), private aquariums (fish, invertebrates etc), garden fertiliser (seagrass) or for private collections (e.g. shells). These activities have a direct impact on marine reserves. Collection for research, study or reference purposes also results in removal of biota. However this has the potential to result in benefits through the generation of useful biological or ecological information or through providing a medium to educate and inform the public about the marine environment.

Recreational fishing includes the collection of any fauna and flora for recreation purposes in marine conservation reserves that are vested in the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) and managed by DEC. Recreational fishing also occurs within terrestrial reserves managed by DEC and vested in the Conservation Commission (e.g. south coast national parks).

Legislative Controls

The extent to which recreational fishing may be permitted in a particular category of marine conservation reserve is established under the CALM Act. The three reserve categories are marine nature reserve, marine park and marine management area. A statutory permissible and exclusionary management zoning scheme which affects recreational fishing applies in marine parks, where four zones are categorised as sanctuary areas, special purpose areas, recreation areas and general use areas.

Any variation in the way recreational fishing is managed in a marine park or marine management area is considered through the statutory planning processes under the CALM Act. These include the need for the Minister for Fisheries to approve changes to zones, management plans or reserve boundaries.

Recreational fishing is managed by the Department of Fisheries throughout the State in accordance with the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*.

Recreational fishing in CALM Act marine parks and marine management areas is also managed by the Department of Fisheries.

Recreational fishing is generally controlled through orders and regulations made under the fisheries legislation in respect to size and bag limits, gear controls, closed seasons and licensing. These controls vary around the State and are amended from time to time. Any restrictions or changes to management for recreational fishing can only be implemented through the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* by way of regulations, and fishing or fisheries notices.

The application of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* and issues of fishing, pearling and aquaculture in marine nature reserves, marine parks and marine management areas are dealt with under the CALM Act. Under the CALM Act, no regulations can be made which impose any restrictions on the taking of fish or pearl oyster in a marine park or marine management area. Regulations can restrict conduct or activity incidental to the taking of fish.

The *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* prohibit the carrying of a spear gun in 'no fishing' restricted areas or a sanctuary zone of a marine park unless the spear gun is stowed and unloaded. Spear fishing is also managed by Department of Fisheries in accordance with the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*.

In respect to marine biota, mammals, seabirds and reptiles are protected under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*. All invertebrate fauna in marine nature reserves and marine parks is protected.

Policy Guidelines

Policy guidelines for recreational fishing are subject to the purposes and objectives of management prescribed for the relevant reserve category and any constraints that may be prescribed in or under the CALM Act, the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*, the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* or the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*.

6.6.1 *Marine Nature Reserves*

All fishing activities are prohibited in marine nature reserves, which will be declared fishing restricted areas under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* to facilitate enforcement.

6.6.2 *Marine Parks*

Marine Parks are multiple use areas that are zoned to facilitate the management and protection of natural and aesthetic marine values. Four categories of management zones can be utilised and the type of zone impacts on the recreational fishing and where it can occur. The management zones are determined through statutory management planning requirements, which include extensive public, stakeholder and agency consultation.

These zoning categories are:

- *Sanctuary Zones* - No recreational fishing is permitted in Sanctuary Zones under the CALM Act.
- *Recreation Zones* - Recreational fishing can occur under the CALM Act but specific activities may be prohibited or restricted.
- *Special Purpose Zones* - These zones will vary significantly from reserve to reserve depending on specific purpose or values of the zone. As such, recreational activities will be assessed as to their likely threats to the specific values of the area and a decision will be made as to which activities are acceptable through the planning process.
- *General Use Zones* - Recreational fishing can occur under the CALM Act. However specific activities may be prohibited or restricted where this is a threat to the marine values.

6.6.3 *Marine Management Areas*

These are multiple use reserves in which recreational fishing and collecting will be permitted in accordance with the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*. Controls on fishing and collecting may be imposed if these activities are not ecologically sustainable.

6.6.4 *Other Considerations*

In the absence of a management plan for a reserve established before 29 August 1997, recreational fishing and collecting will be managed in accordance with existing legislative controls of the CALM Act, the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* or the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*. These vary significantly on a regional and local scale. However, all new marine conservation reserves (post 29 August 1997) will be managed under an indicative management plan from the time reservation takes effect. Indicative management plans have to be prepared under a statutory management planning process before a reserve is established.

Terrestrial Reserves

- 6.6.5 Fishing is permitted in State forests and timber reserves, national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and CALM Act section 5(1)(g) and (h) reserves in accordance with the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*, CALM Act management plans and the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*. Management and control of fishing activities is the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries. Access to fishing sites will be regulated to ensure that environmental degradation of riverbanks and foreshores is prevented. Management directed to controlling or preventing the spread of plant pathogens such as dieback may also result in access controls being put into effect which will affect recreational fishing activities, as does management

of prescribed and wild fires. Consideration will be given to the impact of ancillary activities such as camping, cooking fires and rubbish disposal when determining access provisions.

Under the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, areas can be declared where fishing is prohibited without lawful authority. The areas to be declared in the *Government Gazette* as fishing restricted areas will be areas where fishing is not sustainable.

- 6.6.6 DEC will consult with the Department of Fisheries and will maintain contact with the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee established under the fisheries legislation, RECFISHWEST and appropriate fishing organisations and management planning advisory committees to ensure that management information concerning the activity is shared and the needs of recreational fishers are understood.

7. FLIGHT-BASED ACTIVITIES

7.1 AIRCRAFT USE

Introduction

These policy guidelines address both powered flight using fixed-wing and ultra-light planes and helicopters, and unpowered flight with gliders, balloons and parachuting. Hang gliding and paragliding (also known as parapenting) are also subject to section 7.2.

The use of powered and unpowered aircraft on or over natural areas can have various impacts, both on the biophysical environment itself and on the quality of visitor experience. The recreational use of lands and waters managed by DEC often involves the search for peace and quiet, particularly in remote areas, and the safe enjoyment of the sounds and visions of nature. The flight over, landing and departure of powered craft may constitute a significant intrusion for some users and disturb and endanger wildlife. There is also the matter of user safety and the potential impacts and costs of search and rescue operations in the event of an accident.

On the other hand, it is recognised that sightseeing of remote areas by aircraft is often the most feasible way to experience the grandeur of a unique area and that it is less physically impacting than a road.

Under regulation 65 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, lawful authority must be obtained for landing of an aircraft (e.g. authorised landing strips), except in an emergency.

Policy Guidelines

- 7.1.1 The operation of all aircraft, both powered and unpowered, on or over lands and waters managed by DEC must comply with the relevant federal regulations and orders. Under Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) regulations, powered aircraft are not permitted to operate below 500 feet and must be a minimum of 610 metres horizontal over any built up area. These limits may be breached if necessary due to inclement weather conditions, during search and rescue operations or if an exemption has been granted to a pilot or operator to undertake low-level work.
- 7.1.2 Permission to operate commercial recreation or scenic flights from lands or waters managed by DEC will be subject to an approved management plan or, in the absence of such a plan, will require the approval of the CEO or a delegated officer.
- 7.1.3 Aircraft pilots and/or commercial operators will be encouraged to abide by flight guidelines which may be developed for particular areas managed by DEC such as wilderness/remote or wildlife viewing areas. Implementation of such guidelines and restrictions will be by voluntary agreement. For policy guidelines on aircraft use relating to wilderness areas, see the Department's Policy Statement No. 62 - Identification and Management of Wilderness and Surrounding Areas.
- 7.1.4 As a general rule, the operation of powered recreational aircraft over nature reserves, wilderness/remote areas and other areas of scientific interest will be discouraged where such activity is likely to adversely impact on visitor solitude and enjoyment and/or disturb and endanger wildlife.
- 7.1.5 Flights over areas managed by DEC where on-ground visitation is likely to be adversely impacted may be subject to site specific guidelines including preferred flight paths, flight frequencies, flight-free times and the type of aircraft used (e.g. fixed wing versus helicopters).
- 7.1.6 When flying above marine parks and nature reserves, pilots will be requested to observe a minimum operating height in accordance with the *Wildlife Conservation (Close Season for Marine Mammals) Notice 1998* (made under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*).

- 7.1.7 Except in an emergency, all rotary and fixed wing aircraft departing from or landing on DEC-managed lands must use established airstrips or landing sites designated and maintained for this purpose or as otherwise arranged. Non-emergency aircraft take-offs and landings will only be permitted where the purpose is considered to be compatible with the management aims and objectives for the area in question.
- 7.1.8 The location and design of airstrips on lands managed by DEC will take into consideration such factors as physical site suitability (i.e. slope and surrounding landform, type of vegetation cover, soil structure and drainage, Aboriginal cultural values, direction of prevailing winds, etc.) as well as other factors such as safe storage of fuels, visitor safety, provision of commercial facilities and support utilities, accessibility from established roads and potential conflicts with other uses/users. Plans will usually be prepared in consultation with commercial operators and pilots.
- 7.1.9 Permission to operate all unpowered aircraft such as gliders, hot air balloons and sport parachutes from lands managed by DEC will, as with powered aircraft, require CEO or management plan approval.
- 7.1.10 Management of noise on/over areas managed by DEC including aircraft noise will be in accordance with noise mitigation plans and strategies developed as part of specific area management plans.

7.2 HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING

Introduction

Hang gliding is a well established sport in this country and Australian equipment designers and pilots are acknowledged internationally as leaders in their fields. The popular European sport of paragliding (known in France and some other countries as ‘parapenting’) has also become popular in Australia. Like hang gliding, this activity involves mountain or cliff top launches using a fully controllable gliding parachute capable of soaring flight. The sport of hang gliding, including paragliding, is administered by the Hang Gliding Federation of Australia through the State associations, including the Hang Gliding Association of Western Australia. The Association's safety procedures have been developed to a high standard, resulting in a greatly improved safety record of the sport generally. The Association offers a five-level rating scheme to pilots, from Hang 1 (Beginner) to Hang 5 (Experienced Cross Country Pilot).

Hang gliders are regarded as non-powered aircraft by the Department of Aviation and the sport is therefore automatically subject to an Air Navigation Order. Section 95.8 of the Air Navigation Order, administered by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, exempts hang gliders from the provisions of certain parts of the *Civil Aviation Regulations 1988* (Cth) and specifies the conditions to be complied with by hang glider pilots. These conditions cover eligibility to operate a glider, adherence to the rules and regulations of the Hang Gliding Federation of Australia, mandatory qualifications for glider pilots, places where and heights at which a glider may or may not be flown, and the need to obtain the approval of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to fly a glider at public gatherings. Several areas managed by DEC are currently used for hang gliding.

Policy Guidelines

- 7.2.1 Hang gliding and paragliding may be permitted at specified sites by way of a management plan or, in the absence of a plan, by approval of the CEO.
- 7.2.2 Proposals to run organised events on lands managed by DEC must be sanctioned by and in accordance with guidelines set down by the Hang Gliding Association of WA. Specific approval is required for organised events. Each application will be considered in the light of the conduct of previous events, the likely environmental impacts and potential conflicts with other visitors and adjoining landowners. Approval may be given by the Regional or District Manager.

- 7.2.3 On sites where hang gliding and/or paragliding has been approved, construction of ramps, erection of safety barriers or railings and placement of warning signs will be undertaken according to a site development plan to protect the environmental values of the areas or the safety of other visitors.
- 7.2.4 Individual requests to engage in casual hang gliding and paragliding (i.e. not organised events) on lands managed by DEC will be assessed to identify the likelihood of any adverse environmental impacts or conflicts with other visitors occurring. Approval to undertake such casual activity will reside with the local Regional or District Manager where the request originates.
- 7.2.5 Hang gliding and paragliding are also subject to section 7.1.

7.3 MODEL AIRCRAFT AND ROCKET LAUNCHING

Introduction

The construction and flying of model aircraft and rockets is a popular hobby for a growing number of people and there are several sites where organised groups/clubs currently fly their craft. This activity essentially requires a cleared area suitable for take-offs and landings and with the surrounding airspace free of obstructions. In addition, separation from residential development is also an important consideration due to noise impacts. Given these requirements, permission is sometimes sought to fly model aircraft on DEC-managed lands.

Apart from noise, other impacts associated with the operation of model aircraft and/or rockets include the increased risk of wildfire, the potential danger these craft pose to other visitors and air users and the unknown effect on wildlife.

Policy Guidelines

- 7.3.1 The flying of motorised model aircraft/rockets is not consistent with the usual use of lands and waters managed by DEC and is therefore not permitted in national parks, nature reserves, wilderness/remote areas generally or in areas of special scientific or cultural value. It will only be allowed on other lands managed by DEC if specific areas are set aside for the purpose. Such areas must be designed and located to effectively deal with the noise nuisance, fire danger and safety requirements of participants and observers.
- 7.3.2 The flying of non-motorised model aircraft is permitted only where it will not interfere with wildlife or other visitors, and only if launched unaided by hand.

POLICY STATEMENT No. 18
RECREATION, TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES
-POLICY GUIDELINES-

APPENDICES

**PARKS & VISITOR
SERVICES STRATEGY
2007 – 2011**

DRAFT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION PARKS & VISITOR SERVICES STRATEGY 2007 – 2011

To provide a world-class parks system offering recreation and tourism opportunities, visitor services and facilities that help maintain in perpetuity Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.



THE DEPARTMENT'S VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) manages over 25.5 million hectares of the State's public conservation and forest estate on behalf of the people of Western Australia and the statutory bodies in which the lands and waters are vested. These natural areas protect invaluable natural and cultural values and provide important recreation and tourism resources that make significant social and economic contributions to Western Australia. In relation to the areas it manages and the activities pursued, and consistent with the functions and responsibilities defined in the *Conservation and Land Management Act* (1984), the Department's vision is:

A natural environment in Western Australia that retains its biodiversity and enriches people's lives.

This strategy outlines the basic philosophy of the Department of Environment and Conservation in providing recreation and tourism opportunities, services and facilities on the public conservation and forest estate. It describes the vision of DEC's Parks and Visitor Services program and articulates a number of key focus areas or principles and strategic actions in relation to managing natural areas for public use. It also proposes some ways of measuring the Department's effectiveness and efficiency in delivering recreation and tourism services and facilities, and the effect recreation and tourism has on the natural environment.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The six key objectives of the Department of Environment and Conservation that will assist in meeting its statutory obligations, government policies, and mission statement are:

- Protecting the environment
- Conserving biodiversity
- Creating sustainable community benefits
- Maintaining community involvement and support
- Promoting sustainable industry
- Improving the way we do business

Of most relevance to the provision of a world-class parks system offering recreation and tourism opportunities, services and facilities are "Creating sustainable community benefits" and "Maintaining community involvement and support". The objectives and strategies for these two goals are as follows:

Creating sustainable community benefits

Objective: To generate social, cultural and economic benefits through the provision of a range of services which are valued by the community and are consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability.

Strategies:

- Plan, develop and manage all parks, recreation areas, facilities and services so as to maintain in perpetuity the values of natural areas managed by the Department by:
 - Encouraging people to enjoy nature and natural areas.
- Provide and sustain a range of safe nature-based recreation opportunities, facilities and visitor services that are compatible with conservation and recreation requirements by:
 - Establishing innovative and ecologically sustainable visitor facilities and services and nature-based recreation opportunities.
 - Redeveloping and maintain recreation areas on the basis of strategic importance.
 - Identifying and assessing natural and other risks to visitors and ensure appropriate visitor information and management controls are put in place.
- Provide enriched visitor experiences through quality information, memorable interpretive activity programs and innovative visitor facilities and services by:
 - Developing partnerships to provide recreational facilities, services and programs.
- Assist in reducing the threat of wildfire to human life, property and biodiversity values by:
 - Maintaining a trained fire fighting capability in key areas.
 - Working with the local community to implement appropriate fire management programs.
- Manage the forests and woodlands entrusted to us, and the resources they provide, in line with ecologically sustainable forest management principles by:
 - Ensuring that the values of multiple use forests and woodlands are sustained on an ecologically sustainable basis over time.
 - Continuing to implement the Government's 'Protecting our old-growth forests' policy, including assisting in the protection and sustainable management of 30 new national parks.
- Work with other agencies to ensure agreed community benefits can be developed and maintained on a sustainable basis.
- Continue to promote and implement the Healthy Parks Healthy People initiative.

Maintaining community involvement and support

Objective: To develop community awareness and appreciation of the State's rich diversity of native plants, animals and natural ecosystems, and its unique landscapes, and promote community involvement in and support for their protection, conservation and restoration.

Strategies:

- Improve community knowledge of biodiversity conservation issues and awareness, understanding and support for the Department's activities, services and policies by:
 - Developing and implementing strategic communication and advocacy programs.
 - Developing best practice publications, new media and other communication vehicles.

- Increase opportunities for youth to learn about and gain hands-on experience with conservation issues by:
 - Developing effective school and experience-based education programs.
- Be responsive to the community by:
 - Developing and implementing appropriate public participation and involvement programs that are part of core business activity of the Department.
 - Planning for people with disabilities so that everyone in the community can gain access to use and enjoy the facilities, services and programs of the Department.
 - Developing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community.
 - Facilitating and supporting meaningful volunteer initiatives.
- Increase involvement of traditional owners in managing conservation lands and waters by:
 - Providing opportunities for joint management, employment and other meaningful involvement of indigenous people in the management of natural areas and wildlife and in the protection of areas and features of cultural value.
- Partner with other agencies and groups with similar interests by:
 - Establishing strategic alliances with key stakeholders in the conservation, natural resources and recreational sectors.
- Work to increase resources available for conservation and management by:
 - Promoting a customer focus.
 - Continually improving the Department's customer focus policies and procedures.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SETTING

The Department of Environment and Conservation's mission is:

Working with the community, we will ensure that Western Australia's environment is valued, protected and conserved, for its intrinsic value, and for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Department's mission of working with the community to conserve, protect and value Western Australia's environment, for its intrinsic value, and for the benefit of present and future organisations is shared to varying degrees with other protected area management authorities both within Australia and overseas.

Outdoor recreation planners and managers who work in natural areas clearly have a dual responsibility. On the one hand, they are expected to provide a range of recreational opportunities and experiences for a diverse range of users. At the same time, they must also seek to ensure the protection and proper management of those very same natural areas and processes that attract visitors in the first place. How to successfully achieve these apparently conflicting objectives of preservation and maintenance of natural values and processes while facilitating the public's use and enjoyment of these values is a challenge which has and continues to confront natural area planners and managers world wide.

Consequently our communications and information sharing with other protected area managers is very important. Within Australia, DEC maintains active links with other sister agencies and also participates and often leads benchmarking and best practice reviews. Globally, DEC is a member of the IUCN (the World Conservation Union) and plays a significant role in one of its commissions, the World Commission on Protected Areas. This enables the Department to keep abreast of trends and developments elsewhere, especially as related to global nature based tourism, which is one of the under-pinning bases for this strategy.

The Department also regularly exchanges information with other protected area management authorities and encourages staff capacity building in a national and international context (e.g. through officer exchange programs, conference contributions and the hosting of professionals from other national and overseas agencies).

MANAGING THE ESTATE

During 2005-06, over 11.8 million visits were recorded to the public conservation and forest estate managed by DEC. The reason for such significant human interest is simple: DEC manages some of the most outstanding natural estate in WA, which covers an area in excess of 25.5 million hectares of lands and waters protecting unique landscapes, geological formations, plants and animals, and cultural sites. As manager of the estate, DEC needs to protect these sensitive areas while meeting the needs of a growing number of people seeking nature based experiences.

Conserving these lands and waters for future generations, and managing them for use by the present one, is a complex process. Western Australia has a vast range of environments that have varying capacities to accommodate human use. DEC's customers and their needs and expectations are as diverse as the environments the Department manages. The cost of providing services and facilities, and of managing and protecting these areas and the people who use them, continues to rise.

This Strategy provides a framework for the Department's planners and managers to approach the recreation and tourism challenges facing DEC. It does this by identifying key focus areas or principles, each with associated actions for developing and delivering opportunities, services and facilities for the Department's customers while continuing to protect the values of the areas in which these activities take place.

The Strategy also incorporates focuses for considering visitor safety, providing equity of use of the estate managed by DEC, providing the spectrum of opportunities required by our customers, enriching visitor experience and being accountable for the services and facilities provided. It also provides a basis for developing partnerships that involve other groups in providing services and managing the estate with DEC.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the past two decades, DEC's (and its predecessor CALM) balanced and innovative approach in providing recreation and tourism opportunities in natural areas has earned the Department widespread recognition and community support. The Department is the single largest provider of nature based recreation and tourism areas and facilities in Western Australia and is a key contributor to the State's leisure industry. The Department's numerous recreation developments, tourist attractions, visitor activity programs and its management and maintenance operations contribute both directly and indirectly to the physical, social and economic wellbeing of all those who visit and recreate in WA's parks, reserves and State forest areas.

A significant number of West Australians and interstate and overseas visitors who interact with DEC do so as a direct result of their recreational access through and use of lands and waters managed by the Department. The provision of sustainable and high quality nature based recreation opportunities is therefore an important "vehicle" in helping to increase community understanding of and support for biodiversity conservation initiatives.

The intent of the Strategy is to build on the following achievements:

- Provision and management of over 1100 recreation areas across the State, many of which have been redeveloped and improved significantly in the past decade;
- Numerous new facilities, several of which have already become icons of national and international note, such as the Bibbulmun Track and the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk;
- Creation and management of an effective network of regional parks within the greater Perth Metropolitan Region in partnership with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and various local government authorities;
- Introduction and promotion of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People program in WA. This initiative, which was originated by Parks Victoria, is designed to encourage people to get out and enjoy themselves in parks and promotes the physical, mental and social benefits of spending time in nature.
- Development of a comprehensive policy statement and guidelines to guide recreation, tourism and visitor services;
- Preparation of management plans for marine and terrestrial parks, reserves and other protected areas;
- Development and implementation of effective public participation and feedback processes;
- A highly successful community involvement (volunteer) program that numbers some 4,000 active volunteers who collectively contributed 469,000 hours of work in 2005-06;
- Development of a highly effective partnership with WA's tertiary institutions who undertake environmental, social and economic research studies associated with managing the community's use and enjoyment of natural areas;
- Innovative field-based activity programs for visitors to DEC-managed parks and State forest areas, such as Nearer to Nature and The Hills Forest *Go Bush* program;
- Informative, attractive and keenly sought-after visitor publications;
- Growing from an initial 2.5 million to nearly 12 million visits to DEC-managed areas since 1985;
- Support for various major recreation events such as Rally Australia, the Avon Descent and the Bibbulmun Walk;
- Development of joint management arrangements to work with Aboriginal communities to help manage 'country';
- Establishment and maintenance of effective relationships with national recreational ethics and environmental care initiatives such as Leave No Trace and special interest groups such as the WA Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs and Track Care WA;
- A Statewide visitor data collection and visitor satisfaction survey program;
- Development of a web-based Recreation and Tourism Information System (RATIS) that is accessible to all of the Department's regions and districts;
- Effective partnerships with the commercial tourism sector including over 370 commercial tour operators who now operate on the public conservation and forest estate;
- Revenue-generating programs largely based on the 'user pays' principle;
- Major commercial leases involving both a financial return and the management of visitor facilities and services;
- Design and construction standards for departmental signs, recreational structures and facilities which have subsequently been widely adopted by other State and local authorities;
- Development of accredited in-service training programs in recreation planning and management, visitor communications and interpretation, visitor risk management and project management, and the training of Department staff in these subject areas.

In addition, two of our protected areas (Shark Bay and Purnululu National Park) have been designated as World Heritage Areas. Cape Range National Park and the Ningaloo Marine Park are in the process of being nominated for WHA status while another park (Fitzgerald River National Park) forms part of the UNESCO International Biosphere Reserve system. The Department has also received various State, national and international awards for its nature based recreation and tourism facilities and services in recent years and several PVS staff have been singled out for recognition at a local, State and national level.

A VISION FOR RECREATION AND TOURISM

The parks, reserves and forests managed by DEC provide immense pleasure to many people. They also generate wealth through commercial recreation and tourism ventures. The Department retains all of its recreation and tourism income, a financial arrangement that enhances the Department's recreation and tourism programs. This situation can be further improved by the Department entering into partnerships with the community and industry. Not only does this contribute resources, but it can also assist in developing additional recreation and tourism services and facilities. In particular, nature-based tourism is an exciting industry that has the potential to grow and contribute to managing the estate it uses.

In seeking new ways to achieve its objectives, DEC is constantly on the lookout for ways to improve its productivity and effectiveness, while being more accountable to its partners, the Government and Western Australians; in the way it uses its resources.

The Parks and Visitor Services Strategy describes a number of key focus areas or basic principles embodied in the Department's approach to managing nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities, services and facilities on the public conservation and forest estate. These focus areas, the accompanying strategic actions and performance indicators will help to sustain the environment, meet customer needs and expectations and enhance the visitor's experience.

The success of this Strategy, however, depends on it being owned and 'driven' by the Department's regions, districts and branches and, in particular, on their ability to translate the principles into clearly defined objectives and strategic plans that deliver opportunities, services and facilities that enable DEC to meet its objectives.

Experience has shown that, if applied correctly, the principles on which this Strategy is based will ensure that the public not only enjoy and appreciate the natural environment but also help to manage and protect it. The following pages outline how this can be achieved.

FOCUS 1: ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

Natural ecosystems vary in their ability to accommodate human use. Some environments are durable and can withstand extensive use; others are extremely sensitive to human activity and disturbance. The challenge facing nature-based recreation planners and managers is to control the type, scale, intensity, duration and frequency of human activity in ways that maintain the integrity and stability of the environment.

Each recreation opportunity and each developed tourism site has to be evaluated to determine its compatibility with DEC's conservation objectives. Acceptable levels of environmental change that can be sustained within a given ecosystem need to be identified.

DEC's ability to meet these challenges depends on its knowledge and understanding of the natural environment and how the various ecosystems respond to development and human use over time. Before any new nature-based recreation or tourism ventures can be planned or developed, it is imperative to understand the natural environment; all new recreation developments and visitor facilities must recognise the need to manage for ecological sustainability. Failure to do so risks losing the attractions and features on which nature-based recreation and tourism depend. DEC's aim is to ensure that all of its recreation areas, facilities and services are planned, developed and managed so as to maintain in perpetuity or enhance the status of Western Australia's natural environment.

This can be achieved by:

- Evaluating recreation and tourism opportunities in terms of their compatibility with conservation and other management objectives.

- Establishing management guidelines that recognise both the recreation and tourism potential and limits of available human, financial and ecological resources.
- Training DEC staff and private tour operators in the principles of sustained management.
- Assessing and planning recreation and tourism activities and facilities to minimise their impacts on nature conservation and aesthetic landscape values.
- Implementing new developments according to approved management plans.
- Informing the public on how the Department's Parks and Visitor Services program and associated services contribute to nature conservation and other management objectives.
- Identifying acceptable levels of environmental change that can be sustained within a given ecosystem and taking direct action.

The effect recreation and tourism activities, services and facilities have on natural values can be measured by the:

- Identification of changes to flora, fauna, soils and other physical resource conditions over time in recreation areas;
- Nature and content of public comments about the condition of DEC's recreation areas, facilities and services and their aesthetic impacts.

FOCUS 2: SENSE OF PLACE

Every natural environment has its own special characteristics or qualities that set it apart from other areas and make it distinctive. This is commonly referred to as a 'sense of place'. Western Australia's diverse natural landscapes and climates, along with its indigenous and non-indigenous culture, make this State an interesting place in which to enjoy leisure.

Unfortunately, a tendency to copy and import both physical and social settings and experiences is often at the expense of the local environment and culture. To maintain its qualities, each area's environmental and cultural attributes need to be identified; facilities, services and activities need to be designed to enable an area's distinctive attributes to be retained.

It is important in planning, developing and managing nature-based recreation and tourism services and facilities that those inherent qualities that are distinctive and contribute at a local scale to Western Australia's attractiveness as a recreation and tourism destination are recognised and respected. The Department's aim is to develop a management ethos that recognises, protects and promotes those inherent distinctive qualities and cultural attributes.

This can be achieved by:

- Establishing and maintaining a research program to identify, describe and assess an area's unique environmental and cultural qualities.
- Instructing DEC staff, commercial operators and visitors on uniqueness and sense of place: what it is and how to assess, promote and protect it.
- Assessing those natural and cultural attributes that contribute to an area's sense of place before developing recreation and tourism services and facilities or undertaking management work.
- Involving the local community in assessing, planning and managing development to ensure that local history and cultural aspects are incorporated, maintained or enhanced.
- Designing facilities, activities and management actions that take into account and retain an area's distinctive social, cultural, physical and natural attributes.
- Recognising and retaining regional or local characteristics when providing recreation and tourism facilities and services.

The success in recognising, protecting and promoting an area's unique natural and cultural attributes can be measured by the:

- Number of protected areas assessed as having unique qualities or attributes and the recognition and promotion of those qualities or attributes to the wider community;
- Identification of any adverse changes to and/or loss of distinctive natural and cultural attributes.

FOCUS 3: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

DEC is concerned with satisfying customer needs and desires for well-managed nature-based recreation opportunities. In all the Department's actions, customer satisfaction must be a prime aim and should receive the same degree of emphasis as good land management. The public who take their recreation on the public conservation and forest estate will expect services that are timely, responsive and appropriate. This service can best be achieved by listening to and communicating with the public and by identifying and matching community needs with sustainable recreation resource opportunities. Community awareness, understanding and support are vital to conserving and protecting natural areas. Such support can only be achieved by working with the public and developing an understanding and empathy for their needs. DEC will endeavor to research public patterns of use, preferences and expectations and use this information when evaluating, planning and managing new or improved recreation opportunities. In short, the Department's aim is to deliver nature-based recreation and tourism services that achieve a high level of visitor satisfaction.

This can be achieved by:

- Undertaking research to measure and monitor public needs, perceptions, expectations, attitudes and behavior.
- Adopting a customer focus for all operations and provide customer service training for staff and volunteers interacting with the public.
- Using research data to help develop policy and plan and design sites.
- Training staff to collect, analyse and use social research information.
- Giving priority to providing public information, security and safety.
- Providing facilities and services that seek to satisfy customer requirements and are based on ecologically sustainable practices.
- Monitoring and evaluating public satisfaction and promptly investigating and addressing any dissatisfaction.

Public satisfaction with DEC's recreation and tourism services can be measured by the:

- Increase in visitors to and use of recreation areas, services and programs;
- Increased number of letters of appreciation from visitors and conversely, reduced level of complaints about DEC recreation areas, services and programs;
- Increase in the number of return or repeat visitors to DEC-managed areas;
- Responses to visitor satisfaction surveys.

FOCUS 4: ENRICHING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Technology and an increasingly urbanised society have distanced many people from the natural environment. Many people living in cities want to be put back in touch with nature and to develop an awareness and understanding of the natural environment and ecological processes. Nature-based recreation and tourism activities and stories about the natural and cultural environment are powerful vehicles in developing public awareness, appreciation, enjoyment and support for conservation management. Memorable personal experiences enrich the lives of visitors to natural areas, help

develop relationships between the visitor and the natural environment and enable DEC to gain support for its natural resource management program. DEC also enhances visitor experiences by effectively managing commercial and non-profit organisations and by contributing scientific and other specialist information to those providers. It is the Department's aim to enrich visitor experiences of and develop their relationships with Western Australia's natural and cultural values.

This can be achieved by:

- Preparing and implementing visitor communication plans for DEC recreation areas that incorporate personal (public contact and activity programs) and static or non-personal interpretation techniques (signs, displays, productions and facilities) to reach the widest audience.
- Training DEC staff, volunteers and private sector guides and operators to communicate with visitors and interpret recreation areas, and provide scientific and other information that adds to the value of the visitor experience.
- Promoting and conducting interpretive activity programs in major recreation areas with significant visitor numbers and where a demonstrated desire for such programs exists.
- Monitoring and evaluating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions of visitors to determine the effect communication has on enriching their experience, developing environmental knowledge and skills, minimising visitor impact and increasing support for DEC and its management objectives.

Value-added experiences and appreciation of the natural and cultural environment can be measured by the:

- Percentage of DEC-managed recreation areas which are interpreted for visitors;
- Increase in the number of participants in DEC visitor activity programs and accredited guided activities for visitors and tourists;
- Number of favorable comments or letters of appreciation from people who participate in DEC visitor activity programs;
- Number of tour operators given training and information by DEC.

FOCUS 5: SPECTRUM OF OPPORTUNITIES

Western Australia's national parks, nature reserves, marine reserves, public forest lands and wildlife provide a diverse range of opportunities for experiencing nature, culture and the outdoors. These opportunities range from remote and rugged wilderness areas that remain largely unknown and unexplored to the majority of the traveling public, through to intensively managed and heavily used parks and recreation areas. DEC needs to maintain this wide spectrum of recreation and tourism opportunities and experiences, and avoid pressures to promote, upgrade access and develop all sites to the same degree. Nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities will vary from site to site depending on conservation and land management requirements and the characteristics and proposed uses of each area as identified in area management plans. DEC's aim is to provide and sustain a range of nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities and experiences that are consistent with conservation and land management objectives.

This can be achieved by:

- Maintaining an up to date directory of nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities and experiences.
- Developing a framework for classifying recreation opportunities and experiences that are compatible with other conservation and land management requirements.
- Planning to provide the maximum range of suitable recreation and tourism opportunities in each region through regional and/or 'grouped' area management plans.

- Investigating the potential to source external funds and develop partnerships with other organisations to provide new and enhance existing experiences.
- Prescribing license conditions for commercial operations to ensure high standards and quality experiences and, where appropriate, provide tour operator training.
- Marketing new and existing experiences and opportunities where appropriate.
- Seeking to complement recreation and tourism opportunities offered in areas outside the public conservation and forest estate.

Diversity of opportunity and experience in relation to DEC's provision and management of Parks and Visitor Services can be measured by the:

- Inclusion and implementation of suitable zoning schemes in published area and regional management plans.
- Number of different types of nature-based recreation and tourism experiences provided on the DEC-managed estate;
- Number of different recreational groups and special interests catered for;
- Number of nature-based visitor experiences sought by the public that DEC is unable to provide.

FOCUS 6: QUALITY

Quality is one of DEC's most important Parks and Visitor Services objectives, whether it is in developing and maintaining facilities or in providing visitor services and programs. The factors that determine the quality of a particular recreational facility, service or experience vary widely and are difficult to measure. Nevertheless, the Department needs to continually seek to understand customer needs, perceptions, expectations and attitudes and provide high-quality nature-based recreation and tourism services. The Department's aim is to provide and maintain nature-based recreation areas, facilities, programs and services to a consistently high standard.

This can be achieved by:

- Planning, providing and maintaining quality visitor services and facilities throughout the public conservation and forest estate.
- Seeking regular public feedback regarding the standard of DEC facilities, services and programs.
- Training staff involved in the planning and management of Parks and Visitor Services and providing suitable training for others involved in delivering services or constructing and maintaining facilities on the public conservation and forest estate.
- Providing clearly defined standards for visitor services and facilities.
- Adopting a strategic asset management approach and monitoring the longevity of facilities.
- Evaluating services, facilities and visitor information to ensure they comply with set standards and meet public expectations and needs.
- Encouraging and assisting staff to liaise and network with other organisations providing recreation and tourism facilities and services to keep up to date with advances in the industry.

The standard of DEC's recreation areas, facilities and services can be measured by the:

- Level of visitor satisfaction with facilities and services as determined from periodic surveys;
- Comparison with similar facilities and services in protected areas outside WA and in other areas of management such as local government reserves.
- Increased number of recorded visits to particular areas and to the public conservation and forest estate in general;
- Less requests for improved services or changes to recreation areas via user surveys;

- Increase in the number of return visitors;
- Increased number of letters of appreciation received for the way in which DEC manages and maintains WA's parks and reserves and, conversely reduced levels of complaints about DEC managed recreation areas, services and programs;
- Awards presented in recognition of excellence.

FOCUS 7: PLANNING

Planning is essential if DEC is to continue to provide quality recreation and tourism opportunities on the public conservation and forest estate. Planning is the glue that combines values, constraints and opportunities into a workable solution. It ensures that decisions are made with due regard to:

- legislation (e.g. the CALM Act) and government directives (e.g. 'Protecting Our Old Growth Forests' policy);
- Departmental policies and guidelines (e.g. the 13 other focuses in this Recreation and Tourism Strategy);
- ecological and cultural values;
- the expectations of Traditional Owners and key stakeholders (e.g. visitors, local communities, advisory committees, DEC staff, other government agencies; and
- on going resourcing requirements.

Planning can take place at many levels, from regional management plans to site-specific plans for a recreation area. The components of successful planning remain the same however - there needs to be a clear understanding of what is to be achieved, the key stakeholders are involved, and all views and information are considered in developing the plan.

This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring that development of new services and facilities are consistent with legislation, government and departmental policies and guidelines, and statutory management plans;
- Involving traditional owners and key stakeholders at the relevant levels of planning, and providing feedback to those that have been involved;
- Ensuring that planning decisions are made using the most up-to-date knowledge, and consider the key values of the area/site;
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of plans where appropriate.

Successful planning for providing recreation and tourism services and facilities can be measured by the:

- Level of customer satisfaction of new recreation and tourism facilities and services;
- Level of community involvement in the preparation and implementation of management plan recommendations.

FOCUS 8: PROTECTING HERITAGE VALUES

Western Australia has a rich cultural heritage that is recognised as an important component of the nature-based tourism industry. Many visitors come here in search of an 'outback adventure' or to experience something of Aboriginal culture. Heritage may comprise a blend of natural and social resources, historical features, artifacts, anthropological sites and contemporary cultural practices and features. Where any of these features occur on the public conservation and forest estate, they will be protected to retain valuable records of how current and previous generations, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have used the land and its resources. Land and conservation managers will be encouraged to understand and appreciate cultural heritage features and to enhance public enjoyment

of them. It is the Department's basic aim to protect and manage features of cultural value so that the public can enjoy and appreciate them.

This can be achieved by:

- Developing and implementing a DEC policy to protect and manage cultural heritage values.
- Liaising with Aboriginal communities and organisations to identify and seek to address impacts that proposed operations may have on places of cultural significance.
- Continuing to develop predictive site-models that identify and avoid cultural sites in field operations.
- Developing a register of non-Aboriginal cultural sites located on the public conservation and forest estate to complement the register of Aboriginal sites held by the Department of Indigenous Affairs.
- Considering cultural heritage values when preparing management plans and operational procedures.
- Liaising with the Department of Indigenous Affairs, Heritage Council of WA, the Australian Heritage Council and the WA Museum in regard to protecting and managing heritage values.
- Applying the principles embodied in the Burra Charter.
- Applying for grants to research, manage, protect, enhance and interpret Western Australian cultural heritage information and features.
- Where appropriate, and with the consent of traditional custodians, passing on knowledge of Aboriginal cultural values on the public conservation and forest estate to other staff, land users, visitors and the tourism industry.
- Developing partnerships with local interest groups to assist in the management and interpretation of heritage values.
- Where appropriate, encouraging and training Aboriginal people to prepare and deliver educational and interpretive cultural programs and materials dealing with Aboriginal heritage values.

The protection and management of physical and social features of cultural value on the public conservation and forest estate can be measured by the:

- Number of known significant cultural areas or places on the public conservation and forest estate with custodian consent for which steps have been taken to improve visitor understanding and appreciation;
- Reduced incidence of damage or interference to cultural sites;
- Increase in the number of Aboriginal people employed on the public conservation and forest estate;
- Level of visitor awareness, recognition and support as to an area's unique natural and cultural attributes as determined from periodic surveys.

FOCUS 9: INNOVATION

The needs, preferences and expectations of the recreation-seeking public are as dynamic and varied as the natural environment itself. The planning of programs and services for nature-based recreation and tourism must be forward-looking and capable of being modified, but without compromising conservation principles. While DEC is wary of short-term fashion and fads in regard to recreation and tourism services and facilities, the Department welcomes the opportunity to be creative, flexible and innovative as it responds to change. Projects such as the award winning Tree Top Walk at the Valley of the Giants and the internationally acclaimed Bibbulmun Track are testimony to the Department's endeavors in this regard.

DEC's aim is to continue to develop a world class park system, one which is not only based on sound conservation principles but is also forward-looking, innovative and responsive to changing customer needs.

This can be achieved by:

- Encouraging an innovative corporate culture.
- Developing an environment that fosters creativity through staff participation, information sharing, analysis of visitor needs, research and development, feedback and training.
- Recognising and rewarding staff and DEC's nature-based tourism partners for their efforts and initiative in helping to plan and maintain a world class parks system.
- Seeking, recognising and rewarding expertise, knowledge and skills in managing nature-based recreation and tourism facilities and services.
- Sharing information internally and with other agencies, organisations and community groups.
- Encouraging staff to participate in study tours, conferences and training schemes where new and innovative ideas can be shared.

DEC's response to changing visitor needs can be measured by the:

- Feedback obtained from periodic visitor satisfaction surveys;
- Number of technical innovations introduced that improve delivery of recreation services and facilities;
- Number of new or different activity programs introduced and the public's support of them;
- Number of visitors who appreciate DEC's positive response to their needs.
- Recognition through tourism or other awards.

FOCUS 10: EQUITY

The concept of "equity" is part and parcel of the Australian ethos of ensuring a "fair go" for everyone and is enshrined in Commonwealth and state legislation as well as Departmental policies and guidelines. Essentially these laws, policies and guidelines make it illegal to discriminate against anyone on the basis of their race, nationality, age, gender, religion, marital status or level of ability/disability.

In providing nature-based recreation and tourism facilities and services, the Department is committed to providing equity of opportunity for the recreation-seeking public on DEC-managed areas. This can best be achieved by allowing the community to access and participate in the widest range of nature-based activities on the public conservation and forest estate, providing these pursuits do not:

- significantly diminish conservation and cultural heritage values;
- impair other forms of use and/or the enjoyment of other users to an unreasonable extent.

Priority use may be allocated to specialised pursuits, events or specific user groups at sites or times that are suited to those activities. Both the costs and benefits associated with various uses must be evaluated when considering equity. DEC will not provide for activities on the conservation and forest estate that are not consistent with the purpose of vesting and which are better suited to other land tenures. The Department's aim is to provide a range of nature-based recreation opportunities compatible with conservation and land management objectives and economically feasible.

This can be achieved by:

- Incorporating equity considerations into planning and decision-making processes involving community, commercial and conservation interests that affect the access and use of natural areas.
- Liaising with individuals and groups with special needs such as people with disabilities or specialist recreation groups and providing suitable nature-based recreation opportunities and facilities consistent with conservation and other land management objectives.
- Seeking to ensure, wherever possible, that nature-based tourism activities benefit local communities and contribute to natural and economic resource management and conservation.
- Using revenue raised from visitor fees, commercial ventures, leases and other sources to manage natural areas and, where appropriate, to allow for increased participation by the private sector in providing nature-based recreation and tourism services and facilities.
- Liaising with other recreation providers to ensure that equity exists across the range of different land tenures (e.g. private, State and local government).

The Department's response to the needs of particular groups can be measured by the:

- Involvement or participation of interest groups in planning and managing DEC recreation areas;
- The broadest possible cultural and demographic use of recreation areas as identified through visitor satisfaction surveys;
- Assessment of feedback from user groups, such as commercial operators, local communities, people with disabilities, and other interest groups with special leisure needs;
- Number of special requests from groups or individuals that have been implemented or resolved.

FOCUS 11: PARTNERSHIPS

Business and the community can help DEC achieve key aims. The Department needs partnerships to provide recreational facilities, visitor services and programs. Possible partners include recreation groups, private and public organisations, community groups and indigenous organisations.

This can be achieved by:

- Involving more volunteers and groups in the management of parks and visitor services and providing them with appropriate training and recognition.
- Formalising relationships and increasing contact with user groups and recreation associations such as the Friends of the Bibbulmun Track, the Climbers Association of WA, the Rogaining Association, Track Care WA and the WA 4WD Association.
- Developing joint ventures with Aboriginal corporations and other indigenous and community groups.
- Providing a clear role and recognition for advisory committees.
- Promoting opportunities for other organisations to offer services and facilities.
- Forging relationships with other government agencies involved in recreation or tourism or which have resources that can assist in planning and development or otherwise be used on the estate managed by the Department (e.g. Tourism WA and the Department of Justice).
- Training commercial tour operators and volunteers to deliver recreation and tourism services.
- Seeking DEC membership and participation in appropriate bodies (e.g. Australian Cave and Karst Management Association, regional tourism associations).
- Training Department personnel to manage commercial leases and licenses or employing specialists to do so in conjunction with field staff.
- Continuing to work with WA's major tertiary institutions in undertaking research into the environmental, social and economic aspects of providing and managing for human use and enjoyment of natural areas and actively supporting the CRC for Sustainable Tourism.
- Recognising our many partners and reporting successes;

- Continuing to identify and provide opportunities for partners in innovative, contemporary fields such as the Healthy Parks Healthy People initiative.

Support for DEC's Parks and Visitor Services program can be measured by the:

- Number of volunteer hours;
- Number of registered DEC volunteers and Bush Rangers;
- Success of new volunteer projects;
- Number of established DEC 'Advisory Committees' and 'Friends Groups';
- Number of external groups or committees with which the Department has regular contact or representation;
- Number of joint ventures established.

The Department also seeks to broaden the financial resource base for delivering recreation and tourism opportunities, facilities and services by:

- Providing a directory of targeted, client focused opportunities for commercial interests to help provide services and facilities.
- Asking visitors to contribute to the cost of providing and maintaining facilities and services wherever appropriate and equitable (i.e. adoption of the "user pays" principle).
- Developing leasing and licensing partnerships that guarantee an economic return for the right to use the public conservation and forest estate for commercial gain.
- Attracting private capital to develop facilities and services, and encouraging local community financial support as a priority wherever possible.
- Seeking sponsorship for routine activities.
- Further developing DEC as one of the primary providers of opportunities for nature-based tourism and developing more market opportunities (e.g. merchandising).
- Actively marketing DEC and joint venture products, services and skills.
- Ensuring an equitable return for DEC and joint venture products, services and skills.
- Seeking grants and other forms of sponsorship according to corporate priorities and needs.

The Department's endeavors in attracting financial support for its Parks and Visitor Services program can be measured by the:

- Percentage of the Department's budget derived from partnerships, sponsorships, grants or other sources of external funding;
- Number of commercial leases and licenses issued and the net return from these;
- Percentage of visitors to the public conservation and forest estate who pay entry fees;
- Increase in revenue per visit.

FOCUS 12: STAFF SKILLS & EXPERTISE

Resources for implementing Parks and Visitor Services priorities will always be finite, while new opportunities and ideas for visitor facilities, services and activities are, seemingly, infinite. The Department's most important resource is its staff, in which resides a vast body of knowledge and experience that is constantly expanding. Core staff resources can be augmented by employing seasonal workers and contractors and by involving volunteers, adjoining landowners or commercial interests. However, the challenge of planning, managing and maintaining a world class parks system and associated services will largely depend on the skills, knowledge and experience of the Department's staff, who will be required to provide leadership and standards for the industry. The Department's aim in this regard is to provide adequate human resources to implement DEC's Parks and Visitor Services program and provide consistently high quality services and leadership.

This can be achieved by:

- Auditing DEC staff skills and experience in nature-based recreation and tourism and assessing against Parks and Visitor Services priorities.
- Developing a training program based on a needs analysis and the staff audit.
- Providing opportunities for exchanges and work experience where this can benefit staff development and work performance.
- Developing guidelines for recruiting or contracting specialist skills that cannot be found within existing DEC staff resources.
- Where appropriate, looking for opportunities to augment core staff numbers with seasonal or contract workers, and recognising the potential of volunteers, neighbours and commercial partners to help deliver the Parks and Visitor Services priorities and programs.
- Recognising and rewarding staff for their efforts and initiatives in delivering Parks and Visitor Services objectives.
- Seeking appropriate recognition and reward for DEC's expertise, knowledge and skills.
- Ensuring DEC remains a preferred employer amongst recreation and land management professionals.
- Ensuring DEC provides a safe working environment that is responsive to equal employment opportunities for all personnel.

The ability of DEC's staff to meet the Output's planned priorities can be measured by the:

- Percentage of the Parks and Visitor Services budget spent on training and development;
- Percentage of Parks and Visitor Services staff pursuing further education;
- Number of active volunteers who assist DEC staff in the delivery, management and maintenance of sustainable Parks and Visitor Services opportunities;
- Public recognition of DEC recreation and tourism achievements (e.g. positive media reports or nominations and awards won).

FOCUS 13: VISITOR SAFETY

Providing nature-based recreation and tourism services and facilities in natural areas carries with it some significant responsibilities. Many outdoor environments that attract the public are also potentially dangerous. As a provider and manager of recreational opportunities, DEC has both a moral and legal responsibility to consider the personal safety and welfare of staff and visitors to lands and waters it manages. The Department's aim is to develop and implement recreation and tourism programs, services and facilities that minimise the risk of accidents and injury to people enjoying themselves on the public conservation and forest estate. In doing so, the Department will seek to reduce the potential for personal injury and property damage in a way that does not diminish visitor use or enjoyment of an area.

This can be achieved by:

- Preparing a policy and guidelines on visitor risk management on the public conservation and forest estate and ensuring that Department staff involved in the Parks and Visitor Services program are aware of this policy.
- Developing and maintaining an up-to-date register of DEC managed recreation and tourism assets as a basis for preparing and implementing recreation site and facility maintenance programs.
- Ensuring DEC operations staff, commercial operators and community support groups are trained in visitor risk management principles and procedures.
- Maintaining an up to date incident reporting system throughout the Department and ensuring DEC staff are familiar with reporting forms and procedures.

- Ensuring DEC recreation facility developments comply with relevant design standards and specifications where applicable.
- Carrying out periodic safety audits of DEC recreation areas and facilities.
- Informing visitors to Department-managed areas of risks and ways of avoiding them through brochures, signs and displays and other educational means.
- Promptly investigating reported visitor accidents and injuries on the public conservation and forest estate and rectifying any identified safety problems as soon as possible.

Success in implementing visitor safety measures can be measured by the:

- Decrease in the number and type of recorded accidents or injuries to visitors enjoying themselves on the public conservation and forest estate (per 100,000 visits or similar unit);
- Decrease in the number of claims lodged against the Department for negligence or otherwise failing in its duty of care to visitors that either results in damages being awarded or an out-of-court settlement being reached;
- Extent to which the Department is able to minimise its public liability insurance premiums by adopting prudent visitor risk management practices and procedures;
- Comparison with other protected area agencies elsewhere.

FOCUS 14: ACCOUNTABILITY

DEC's recreation and tourism services and facilities are characterised by responsiveness and accountability to all stakeholders. Open, participatory planning processes increase accountability and confidence that DEC is responsive to community expectations. The Department's aim is to maintain accountability to the State Government and the people of Western Australia by implementing the Parks and Visitor Services program on time and within budget.

This can be achieved by:

- Determining annual priorities for managing visitor services and facilities that, in so far as practicable, reflect community needs and expectations while complying with legislative requirements and approved management plans.
- Preparing strategic operations plans that describe the steps to be taken toward achieving Parks and Visitor Services program objectives, and including a works program and a guide to monitor the implementation of these plans.
- Publishing annual priorities for managing recreation and tourism programs, services and facilities and details of program expenditure in Treasury Program Statements and ensuring regional/district strategic operations plans are consistent with these planned achievements.
- Where appropriate, advertising opportunities for the public to be involved in planning and managing recreation and tourism services and facilities.
- Regularly reviewing progress towards implementing this Strategy and reporting that progress to the Conservation Commission of Western Australia and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority.
- Operating local revenue-generating areas according to business plans.
- Providing regular briefings and reports to relevant advisory committees on implementing management plan recommendations and Parks and Visitor Services program priorities.
- Providing information on implementing this Strategy for DEC's Annual Report.

The Department's actions in meeting its Parks and Visitor Services objectives can be measured by the:

- Evaluation of planned achievements against actual achievements;
- Evaluation of expenditure against estimated budget.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

It is the duty of DEC staff to develop recreation and tourism opportunities, facilities and services based on the guidelines outlined in this Strategy. It is they who must keep to annual schedules and targets, and ultimately realise the Department's vision for managing nature-based recreation, tourism and visitor services. Everything depends on the continuing efforts of Regional, District and specialist branch staff.

The Department's Corporate Executive will use the Strategy to help determine priorities for allocating staff and financial resources. Competing demands will always exist for these scarce resources, so the challenge for Parks and Visitor Services leaders is to ensure that nature-based recreation and tourism achievements and priorities are recognised and that those achievements are based on this Strategy.

DEC will assess its effectiveness and efficiency in managing recreation and tourism programs, services and facilities. Key performance indicators are already established for the Parks and Visitor Services program and are measured each year and reported in the Department's Annual Report. The process of setting priorities and evaluating performance annually will help ensure this Strategy remains relevant to both DEC and the leisure-seeking public.

RAFT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

APPLICATION / PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ORGANISED NON-COMMERCIAL EDUCATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

If you are intending to conduct an organised, non-commercial educational or leisure activity on lands and waters managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), you will need to complete this application form and submit it to the local DEC Region or District where you wish to conduct this activity. Where approval is sought to conduct an activity within a Public Drinking Water Source Area, this application will also be referred by DEC to the Department of Water and Water Corporation for their review. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of your application. To avoid delays in processing, please ensure that all details are correct, legible and unambiguous. This application needs to be received by DEC a minimum of 8 weeks prior to your activity being conducted. Please attach any relevant maps, brochures and itineraries.

APPLICANT PARTICULARS

NAME OF GROUP/ORGANISATION

--

CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS APPLICATION

Surname		First Name	
Address			
		Postcode	
Phone (W)		(H)	
E-mail		Fax	
Position in Group or Organisation			

DETAILS OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT

Name of activity or event (where applicable)	
Date and time of activity or event (i.e. period of approval sought)	

Please describe the activities proposed, locations, routes, camping sites, etc.
Note: Please attach relevant brochures, maps and itineraries.

DETAILS OF ACTIVITY LEADERS, ASSISTANTS OR INSTRUCTORS (If Applicable)

Surname	Initials	Role	Qualifications/Experience

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS, SPECTATORS AND RELATED DETAILS

To assist our planning, we would like to know the numbers of people you anticipate will participate in the organised activity or event.

Number of participants		Number of officials	
Number of support vehicles		Number of spectators expected	
Will the media be involved?			

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Please list any special equipment, facilities or potentially hazardous materials required to conduct the proposed activity or event:

Will portable toilets and/or showers be used? If so, what is the proposed method of effluent and waste water disposal?

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Indicate what steps have been taken to ensure the well being of your members or participants (i.e. first aid kit, first aid training, fire extinguisher, life jackets, HF radio, etc).

INDEMNITY

We:

--

(Full name of Organisation)

do hereby agree to indemnify and keep indemnified the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Environment and Conservation ("the CEO") and, where appropriate, the Department of Water and Water Corporation from and against any claim, demand, action, suit or proceeding that may be made or brought against the CEO in respect of personal injury to, or death of, any person whomsoever, or loss or damage to any property whatsoever, and also from any costs or expense that may be incurred with any such claim, demand, action, suit or proceeding arising from this visit or activity.

PUBLIC RISK INSURANCE

Name of Insurer			
Policy Number			
Amount of Coverage		Expiry Date	

CERTIFICATION

I:

--

(Full Name)

certify that to the best of my knowledge the information provided within this application is true and correct in every detail. The group or organisation that I represent hereby agrees to abide by the conditions of approval as specified elsewhere in this application form.

Signed		Date	
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CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This application will need to be consistent with the conditions as outlined below:

1. General

- Approved activities or events must comply with the CALM Act, Bushfires Act, *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*, Wildlife Conservation Act and Regulations, and Marine Act and Regulations.
- When operating within a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA), groups or organisations must also comply with the Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage Act, the Country Areas Water Supply Act and associated by-laws.
- This approval is subject to any necessary permission being obtained from other authorities as required (e.g. local government, Water Corporation, Department of Water, WA Police, Main Roads WA, Department for Planning and Infrastructure, Western Power). All additional conditions imposed by these agencies must be adhered to.
- The DEC District Manager/Marine Park Manager is to be notified immediately of any alteration to the nature and timing of the activities to be undertaken.
- The DEC District Manager or his/her delegate has full on-site control, allowing for the alteration of activities if the need arises.
- Groups or organisations will not have exclusive use of any area or facility, unless otherwise specified.
- The group or organisation shall not represent themselves as an agent of DEC or the CEO, or in any way purport to act for or on behalf of DEC or the CEO in conducting the permitted activity or event.

- Any commercial passenger vehicle (e.g. bus or coach) or charter vessel used on DEC-managed lands and waters must be licensed by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) and comply with relevant DPI conditions.
- All refuse is to be removed unless bins are provided.
- Firearms, snares, traps and bait are not to be carried on DEC-managed lands and waters unless a licence is obtained. Licences are issued only for scientific purposes. Marron licences and other recreational fishing licences may be obtained from Fisheries WA. It should be noted that marroning is prohibited in PDWSAs proclaimed under the Metropolitan Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage Act and may be prohibited in PDWSAs proclaimed under the Country Areas Water Supply Act.
- Domestic pets are not permitted in national or conservation parks and nature reserves, except in designated areas.
- No permanent or semi-permanent facilities or structures are to be erected without written approval.
- DEC will endeavour to keep nominated routes and/or facilities available but alterations may have to be made during a permit due to unforeseen circumstances.
- The group or organisation must pay park entry and camping fees where applicable.
- Permission to conduct an organised activity or event cannot be transferred from one group or organisation to another.

2. Safety

- Where applicable, the group or organisation shall:
 - provide appropriate safety equipment;
 - employ and use only experienced and competent guides/instructors.

It is the organiser's sole responsibility to appropriately advise and caution participants about the potential hazards likely to be encountered on DEC-managed lands.

3. Liability

- Unless otherwise specified in this application, the group or organisation shall at all times during the currency of this permit maintain a policy of public liability insurance for a sum of not less than \$2 million.
- The applicant must sign the indemnity clause on this form.

4. Reporting

- The group or organisation shall advise the District or Regional Manager as soon as practicable of any problems encountered in conducting the approved activity/event or of any personal injuries or damage to property sustained as a consequence of undertaking the activity/event.

5. Other Conditions to be observed

OFFICE USE ONLY

Permission is granted to conduct the activity/event nominated in this application subject to the above-mentioned conditions of approval.

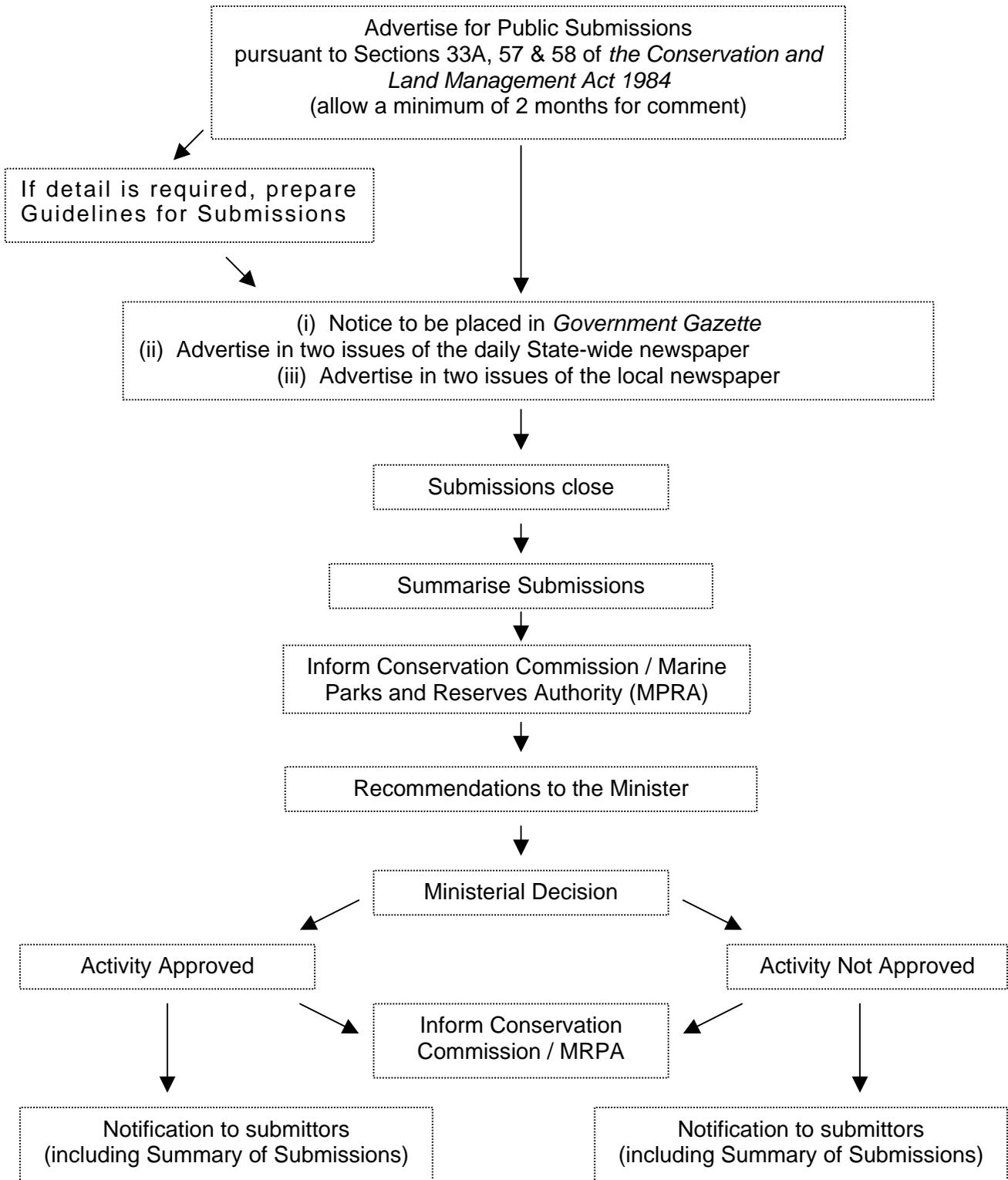
Signed for the Director General

Date	
------	--

DEC CONTACT

Name			
Office			
Phone		Fax	E-mail
After Hours			

COMPATIBLE OPERATIONS



EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST PROCESS

Prepare Guidelines for Submission including Assessment Process and Methodology and Probity Guidelines

- (i) Involve District/Region
- (ii) Involve all relevant Department branches
- (iii) Involve Tourism WA
- (iv) Involve all other relevant organisations

Advertisement

(allow a minimum of 4-6 weeks for response)

advertisement briefly describes opportunity and directs interested parties to obtain Guidelines for Submissions

- (i) Advertise in the daily State-wide newspaper
- (ii) Advertise in the local newspaper
- (iii) Post on NatureBase Website
- (iv) Email to DEC tourism stakeholder database

Guidelines for Submissions and a copy of the advertisement to be sent to:

- (i) Current operators of the opportunity (if applicable)
- (ii) Organisations involved in the opportunity (e.g. Tourism WA, local shire)
- (iii) Anyone on file who has previously expressed interest in the opportunity – check files thoroughly
- (iv) Those who respond to the advertisement (copy of the advertisement not required)

Submissions close

Inform Applicants/Proponents of acceptance of submissions and process

Assess/Analyse Submissions

Consideration by Director of Parks and Visitor Services

Refer to Conservation Commission or Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (if applicable) for Endorsement

Refer to Minister for Approval

Applicant/Proponent Approved

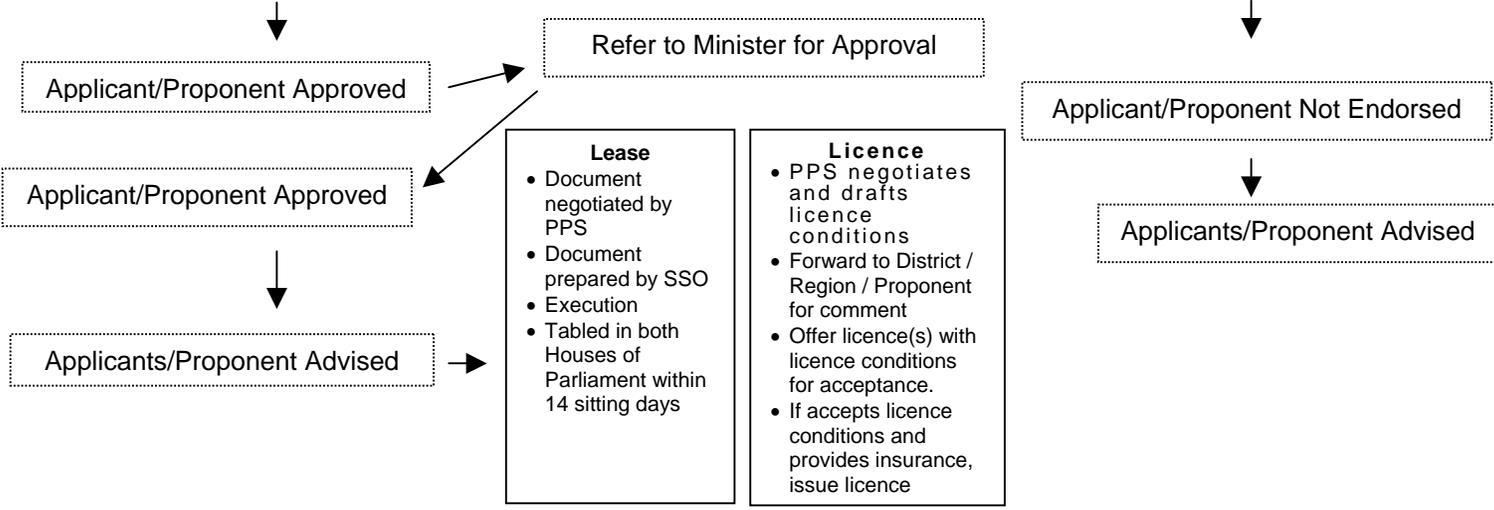
Applicant/Proponent Not Endorsed

Applicant/Proponent Approved

Applicants/Proponent Advised

Applicants/Proponent Advised

- | Lease | Licence |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document negotiated by PPS • Document prepared by SSO • Execution • Tabled in both Houses of Parliament within 14 sitting days | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS negotiates and drafts licence conditions • Forward to District / Region / Proponent for comment • Offer licence(s) with licence conditions for acceptance. • If accepts licence conditions and provides insurance, issue licence |



APPENDIX 4 - A GUIDE TO THE PROVISION OF RECREATION ACTIVITIES ON LANDS AND WATERS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

This table provides a quick guide only and is not a substitute for the Policy Guidelines, which include the many qualifications and conditions which apply to recreation activities.

Key: No permission required - ✓ Permission required (see note 1) - P Not permitted (see note 2) - X

Recreation Activity	Nature reserve, marine nature reserve	National park, conservation park	Marine park, marine management area	CALM Act section 5(1)(g) & (h) reserve	State forest, timber reserve	Surrendered pastoral lease land	Approval mechanism
Bushwalking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Organised orienteering, rogaining, etc	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority for organised event, CALM Regulations, reg 50
Rockclimbing	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Adherence to CAWA Climbing Ethics. Management Plan may provide guidance.
Abseiling	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority except in a CALM Regs designated area, regs 6 and 33
Caving and cave diving	X	P	P	P	P	P	CALM Regs cave permit or entry fee, reg 49
Sandboarding	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority, reg 32
Horse riding, camels, llamas	X (see note 3)	P	P	P	P	P	CALM Regs designated area, regs 6 and 17
Dogs (see note 4)	X	P	P (see note 5)	P	P	P	CALM Regs designated area, reg 6 and 16
Cats	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
Non-indigenous animals other than horses, dogs and cats	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority, reg 15
Shooting (see note 6)	X	X	X	X	X	X	Permissible on a DEC shooting range (by way of a lease)
Hunting	X	X	X	X	X	X	Director General may approve non-recreational hunting for management purposes. Hunting by indigenous people is not dealt with in the Policy Guidelines.

Key: No permission required - ✓

Permission required (see note 1) - P

Not permitted (see note 2) - X

Recreation Activity	Nature reserve, marine nature reserve	National park, conservation park	Marine park, marine management area	CALM Act section 5(1)(g) & (h) reserve	State forest, timber reserve	Surrendered pastoral lease land	Approval mechanism
Fossicking	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority, reg 31
Cycling other than on a public road (see notes 7 and 8) or cycle path	X	P	P	P	P	P	CALM Regs designated area, regs 6 and 51A
Picnics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Barbecues and campfires in authorised fireplaces (DEC constructed)	P (see note 9)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Permission subject to Bush Fires Act and/or any direction by DEC staff to extinguish fire.
Fires other than in an authorised fireplace	X	X	X	X	X	X	Fires may be permitted when associated with approved remote camping areas.
Camping	P (see note 9)	P	P	P	P	P	(a) campsites with facilities-signage (b) remote camping-designation of area under reg 6 or lawful authority
Nature Study / appreciation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Non-commercial filming	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Wildlife feeding	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority, reg 10, signage at Monkey Mia
Scenic driving on public roads (see note 7)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Organised social vehicle rallies – on public roads (see note 7)	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Encouraged to contact DEC offices and use application form for organised, non-commercial activities.
Competitive car rallies / other motor sports events	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority reg 105
Off-road vehicles	X	P	P	P	P	✓	Designated and signposted areas, regs 51, 52
Land yachting	X	P	P	P	P	P	Regional / District Manager

Key: No permission required - ✓

Permission required (see note 1) - P

Not permitted (see note 2) - X

Recreation Activity	Nature reserve, marine nature reserve	National park, conservation park	Marine park, marine management area	CALM Act section 5(1)(g) & (h) reserve	State forest, timber reserve	Surrendered pastoral lease land	Approval mechanism
Boating, canoeing (see note 10)	P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Boating may be controlled by a CALM Regs restricted area notice. Lawful authority required for boating on a nature reserve except in CALM Regs designated ('vessels allowed') area, regs 6 and 61A
Swimming, snorkelling and diving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Signage of "no swimming" areas – Regional / District Manager
Recreational fishing and collecting	✓ - nature reserves, X - marine nature reserves	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Subject to restricted area notices ('no fishing'), regs 5 and 9 and to CALM Act Section 62 Sanctuary Zones ('no fishing') for marine parks only
Aircraft landing (see note 11)	P	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority except on a DEC managed airstrip
Hang-gliding and paragliding – non organised	X	P	P	P	P	P	Regional / District Manager
Organised hang-gliding / paragliding	X	P	P	P	P	P	Lawful authority reg 105
Motorised model aircraft	X	X	P	P	P	P	Signage
Non-motorised model aircraft	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-

Notes for Table:

1. 'Permission required'

Permission for these activities can be by way of:

- (i) 'Designated areas' under regulation 6 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002* (CALM Regulations) where the activity is allowable, e.g. dogs, horse riding;
- (ii) Conversely, areas where certain activities are not subject to a 'restricted area' under regulation 5 of the CALM Regulations e.g. areas not subject to a 'restricted area' fishing notice;
- (iii) 'Lawful authority' under regulation 4 and the specified regulation of the CALM Regulations, e.g. abseiling reg 33. Can also be applied in the absence of a 'designated area' notice;
- (iv) Signposting as required under the CALM Regulations, e.g. camping, off-road vehicles;
- (v) Approval by the Regional Manager or District Manager of DEC, not linked to the CALM Regulations.

2. 'Not permitted'

Most activities listed as 'not permitted' can be allowed in exceptional circumstances by a written 'lawful authority' as per regulation 4 of the CALM Regulations, e.g. use of firearms and (unlawful) taking of non-indigenous animals in feral animal control.

- 3 Horse riding on nature reserves – exceptions may apply as per the Policy Guidelines, e.g. existing arrangements for riding on firebreaks.
- 4 Dogs – For all DEC managed lands, guide dogs are permitted and trained dogs for feral animal control and rescue may be permitted.
- 5 Dogs are permitted in a marine park or marine management area without permission if they are travelling in, and remain in, a vessel.
- 6 Shooting – Free range shooting is not permitted on any DEC-managed lands. Recreational / sport shooting will be allowed in leased areas for shooting ranges (see section 2.8.1 of Policy Guidelines).
- 7 Public roads – are dedicated roads managed by Main Roads WA or local government; and DEC managed roads open to the public.
- 8 Cycling – No access to roads included in a regulation 5 'restricted area' ('no cycles').
- 9 Use of any existing barbecue and camping facilities on nature reserves may be permitted, with any camping to be in accord with a management plan.
- 10 Boating – Includes high speed vessels and personalised motor craft e.g. jetskis. Boating may be subject to a regulation 5 'restricted area' notice or a reg 6 'designated area' (allowed) notice for vessels on nature reserves only.
- 11 Aircraft – Management of aircraft access to airspace is not appropriate under the CALM Regulations 2002.