

Parks & Visitor Services Workshop

Summary list of issues raised and subsequent discussion

The following issues were raised after the morning presentations by the Director of Parks and the subsequent group discussion session on day one of the workshop. At the conclusion of this latter session, participants were each given three 'votes' and asked to nominate those issues they were most interested in discussing further. In descending order of importance, the issues that attracted greatest interest were as follows:

- ◆ Role of Rangers changing. Duties are different around the State. Have a role to play in the integration of PVS / NC on the ground. (42)
- ◆ Output budgets – Need to move away from 'historical based budgets' towards 'works program driven budgets' to reflect actual priorities. (38)
- ◆ Community education across Outputs. How? (31)
- ◆ Remote areas – Difficult to obtain / provide suitable training for staff, leads to parity issues in staff development opportunities between regions. (28)
- ◆ Large number of planning schemes / systems (internal / external) around the state. How can DCLM provide input, and how do we ensure that we can 'live with the results' of other agencies plans? Do we need Departmental coordination? (at a Regional or central level?) (25)
- ◆ Leadership in the integration between Outputs.
 - How can it be achieved?
 - Should / can PVS be the driver? (21)
- ◆ Management Planning. Staff are largely based in Perth. Issue of lack of local knowledge. Should they be based in Region / District? (21)
- ◆ Should there be a PVS output? Problem of 'silo-ing'. Current structure may not conducive to integration between Outputs. (20)
- ◆ Trails. Need to have a coordinated approach across State / Regions for provision and management of all types of trails. (18)
- ◆ Park Councils and Advisory Committees. Need to integrate into existing management structures / roles of committees, etc. (17)

- ◆ Dedicated resources to PVS research.
 - How do we get resources?
 - How do we determine research priorities?
 - Dissemination of information. (11)
- ◆ Existing SPA process (auditing, accountability, etc.)
 - What works?
 - What needs to be improved? (10)
- ◆ Trainee Management. Need to develop a Departmental Strategy to ensure consistency around the State. (7)

At the conclusion of the general forum, the workshop participants were divided into smaller discussion groups, assigned two of the top ranking issues and asked to come up with suggested recommendations and/or actions that should be undertaken. The results of these smaller workshop discussions were then presented to the larger forum and are briefly summarised in the following notes.

Changing Role of Rangers

- a) The Role of a Ranger in relation to
 - Parks and Visitor Services Division
 - Region
 - District
 Where do they fit?
- b) Generalist vs. Specialist?
 - Isolated vs. Well resourced
 - Ability to be the glue
 - Project management
 - Implementers or managers
- c) Call everyone a Ranger
 - Marketing and Departmental goodwill
 - Public recognition

Action:

Once new Ranger structure has been sorted look at where Rangers fit in the PVS program, in Regional and District structures, and their interrelationships with PVS and NC programs.

Output Budgets

- ◆ Question the fire model which demands some district's employ staff that their budgets can't afford.
- ◆ Addressing the problem of operational budgets not sufficient to cover actual costs of running the district / region / branch / division.
- ◆ Abolish historical based budget allocations
- ◆ Produce a negotiated, prioritised and costed works program as per the SPA process agreed to PRIOR to commencement of financial year (ie zero based budgeting).
- ◆ Ensure recurrent funding occurs in a 3 year strategic planning framework.

Community Education across Outputs

- ◆ Ensure the communications model of DCLM is integrated into the structure and financial system so as to implement community education and other communication strategies.
- ◆ Establish a working group to identify values of communication strategies (especially community education) and to develop an integrated model across DCLM outputs
- ◆ Review / revise Policy 25 "Community education and interpretation" to align with corporate plan and output / purchaser / provider model with communication strategies as activities to include – community education, interpretation, community involvement, information, advisory and liaison services.

Clarification of issue

- Its all about nature conservation
- Variety of approaches but lack of coordination and integration
 - Nearer to Nature
 - Eco Education (schools only)
 - Park Activities Programs
 - Special events
 - Requests (responding to)
- Meeting market demand of DCLM mission?
Core business? Even if there is NOT a demand.
- Social research required – people focus
- Lack of staff and resources

How the Department responds to outside planning issues

- Great variety of plans and issues that we are asked to respond to.
- These plans can be district or region specific, inter-regional or statewide.
- Response method is dependant on type of plan, and we really need the hierarchy of the various types of plans documented. This documentation should include who is responsible for coordinating the response, and who should input to the response.
- Regional and District responses should be coordinated by relevant managers rather than planning officers. Statewide responses need coordinating at a statewide level.
- Detection of the need to respond to plans is on an ad hoc basis.
- Perhaps detection of plans could be more structured, particularly at a statewide level.

Planners in the Regions?

- Yes, problems of planners getting sidetracked is outweighed by benefits of the planners being on site.
- Temporary location / short term stays in region is better than fly in, fly out.
- Whether the planner is in or out of the region will not affect the progress of a plan if the other members of the planning team are unable to commit time and resources to the project.

Output Delivery

- Called: Conservation and Visitor Management
- Set Priorities across the output : Need corporate system for prioritising (Decisions / directions by Corporate Executive)
- Establish Criteria - Who?
 - How?
- Set structure according to priorities
- Develop programs using appropriate people

Leadership in the integration between outputs

- Directors to give priorities to Regions / Districts
- Directors to agree on base funding – this must recognise what it costs to do business in an area.
- Recurrent – Includes agreed staffing levels, maintaining assets, vehicles, fixed costs – matched to outcomes. This must form the BASE BUDGET and BE MAINTAINED (ie don't erode by not funding unavoidable increases (vehicle leases, award increases, overheads, and other fixed cost increases eg. power, water, rates, rents, radios, network connections, software upgrades (due to change forced upon us).
- This 'base funding' is for recurrent work only and must address core business / priorities.
- Capital funding should similarly be based on same principle as above (Directors priorities – PVS strategies) and fund all aspects with a recognition that replacement and maintenance will be required and either additional funds provided or a shift in priorities will be needed. Also the need to possibly engage consultant / project officer during capital works project.
- Incentive scheme
 - Set realistic levels and give net revenue to output director for allocation across agency PVS on planning strategies / priorities (Interest CR to PVS program, not to be used for any other purpose or all will lose faith)
 - Anything over target level stays with Cost Centre, who should have their own priorities set and spend.

A general forum of all workshop participants were asked to come up with suggested recommendations and/or actions to provide direction to the Tracks and Trails Unit. The results are briefly summarised in the following notes.

Tracks and Trails

- Majority of existing tracks (walking) are on DCLM land.
- Quality important, rather than quantity. Improve what we already have.
- Change emphasis from walking trails to other types of trails.

- Tracks and Trails unit can fill gaps within DCLM.
- DCLM should lead a consultative group to provide direction and advice on tracks/trails. Identify gaps and opportunities.
- Outdoor recreation vs. tracks and trails – Should DCLM take leadership in outdoor recreation as well?
- Channel physical activity funding to maintain trails.
- Maintenance must be a consideration in the development of new trails.
- Linkages between Nature Conservation / PVS, etc.
 - provide information on impacts on trails, etc.
 - provide packaged information.
- Provide centralised 'port of call' for volunteers, etc. wanting to assist with tracks / trails maintenance / development - Community ownership.
- Trails SW masterplan work – don't reinvent the wheel.
- Always struggling for maintenance \$\$.
- Audit existing trails (including standards, etc.) before developing new ones (on statewide basis).
- Tracks and trails should be considered as part of outdoor recreation – establish working group within DCLM to engage outdoor recreation groups.
- Dept of Sport and Recreation has 2-3 FTE's in recreation – apply 'Coastcare' model, with DSR's position hosted by DCLM in Regional Centres.
- Need to establish / maintain standards – either upgrade or close down
- Blackwood District – joined steering group with local agencies to look at tracks and trails.
- Link State and Federal funding for development of physical activity / tracks, etc.
- DCLM 'Corporate Culture' concentrates on 'hard science' – need to expand to include behavioural sciences.
- Partnerships between other agencies (DSR, Healthways, etc.) – May need to develop a 'user pays' system to help fund maintenance of major trails.
- Rationalise existing tracks and trails to ensure adequate maintenance.

- DCLM are the leading authority over its own lands, and its tracks and trails - establish partnership for other areas.
 - Need to consider 'intent' rather than facility / activity – trails are not an end in itself, but should be a pathway to other 'ends'.
 - Set up steering group – input from Regions to help define Tracks and Trails unit.
 - Need to consider internal relationships – involve NC Division.
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Research forum participants were asked for recommendations and/or actions for the successful management of research outcomes. The results are briefly summarised in the following notes.

Research Projects

- Project emailed direct to Regions / Districts. Notification process to Kensington.
- Scope to broaden project topics.
- Extension of Matt's project – social survey of users (another student project?).
- Resources (financial) to support projects.
- Strategic Plan – linking projects
- DCLM agreed project list to put up for CRC funding 2003.
- Ensure accommodation available near study site (or District / Region office).