

# **PROPOSED COMMERCIAL TOURISM OPERATIONS AT THE WHARNCLIFFE MILL WITHIN BRAMLEY NATIONAL PARK**

## **COMPATIBLE OPERATIONS NOTICE GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION**



**CLOSING DATE: 3:00 PM (WST) Friday 18 February 2011**

Enquiries to: Rod Quartermain, A/Manager, Policy, Research and  
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Department of  
**Environment and Conservation**

*Our environment, our future*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) seeks public comment on the proposal to allow commercial tourism activities and commercial accommodation developments at Wharncliffe Mill within Bramley National Park.

The Department is responsible for leasing and licensing all commercial activities on DEC-managed land. The activities permitted on any area of DEC-managed land depends on the reserve purposes and the management plan for that area.

Because no current management plan exists for Bramley National Park, DEC invites public submissions on whether commercial tourism operations are considered compatible with the purposes of the park, specifically at the Wharncliffe Mill site and surrounding areas. A draft management plan, Leeuwin-Naturaliste Capes Area Parks and Reserves, which also refers to this area, has also been released for comment. This compatible operations process relates only to a proposal to advertise for expressions of interest to lease the Wharncliffe Mill site and allow appropriate commercial tourism activities at the site and in the immediate vicinity.

The purpose of national parks is to fulfill so much of the demand for recreation by members of the public as is consistent with the proper maintenance and restoration of the natural environment, the protection of indigenous flora and fauna and the preservation of any feature of archaeological, historic or scientific interest in accordance with Section 56(1)(c) of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*.

## 2. BACKGROUND

As stated above, there is no current management plan for Bramley National Park. Thus, in accordance with the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* [Section 33(3)], only 'compatible operations' may be carried out within the park. 'Compatible operations' are either:

- 'necessary operations' meaning those that are necessary for the preservation or protection of persons, property, land, waters, flora and fauna, or for the preparation of a management plan; and
- operations approved by the Minister for Environment as being in his or her opinion compatible with the purposes for which the park or management area is managed under the Act.

In accordance with the Act, before any proposed operation is approved by the Minister for Environment as a 'compatible operation', the matter must be publicly notified by DEC and the public given an opportunity to comment on the proposal.

Wharncliffe Mill is situated in the Bramley National Park, five minutes from Margaret River and was originally a pine sawmill, which started in the early 1970s and ceased operations in 1987. The Old Mill contains bunkhouse rooms to sleep up to 42 people as well as a kitchen and a large open eating/gathering area. There are a number of adjacent camping areas, an ablution block and a classroom/activity centre that was built in 2004. The area has a number of walk trails surrounding the site that could be used commercially for bushwalking and other nature-based activities that

encourage the appreciation and understanding of the environmental and cultural values of the area.

The site's existing infrastructure and designated campsites have the potential for further development of budget dormitory, camp and caravan style accommodation. The site's close proximity to Margaret River allows for national park accommodation with easy access to the town and surrounding attractions.

The site is currently used to present DEC's EcoEducation program and this program may provide opportunities in the site's future development.

### **3. ABORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT**

There is a strong interest by Aboriginal people in being involved in the management of the conservation estate and to strengthen cultural ties to the land. Working together with Aboriginal people to care for the land will be beneficial to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, as well as enriching cross-cultural awareness.

DEC and the Conservation Commission of Western Australia acknowledge the aspirations of Aboriginal people to obtain native title over their traditional lands and waters under the provisions of the *Native Title Act 1993*. The Department acknowledges that native title rights and interests may be found to exist, except where they have been legally extinguished under Australian law.

### **4. THE PROPOSED COMMERCIAL TOURISM OPERATIONS**

Commercial tourism operations offer a wide range of services to visitors to natural areas. Nature-based tourism activities include bushwalking, accommodation, nature appreciation and natural and cultural education.

DEC enters into commercial arrangements to help meet the rising demand for high quality recreation and tourism services on the lands it manages, while at the same time ensuring that the financial contributions from tourism assist with the costs of managing the natural environment.

DEC has the power to issue leases in national parks pursuant to Section 100 of the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* for a term not exceeding 21 years, however may include an option to renew for a further term or terms not exceeding, in aggregate, 21 years.

Commercial operations such as coach, safari or other types of tours on DEC-managed land can operate under a commercial operations licence issued under Part 7 of the *Conservation and Land Management Regulations 2002*. Operators are required to abide by licence conditions that aim to conserve the values of the DEC-managed estate and encourage environmentally sustainable practices. Under the regulations, licences can be issued for the sale of goods or services, or to undertake an activity for a commercial purpose on an area of DEC-managed land for a period not exceeding five (5) years, and may be renewed for a further period not exceeding five (5) years. In this manner, licensing of operations allows for access to DEC-managed land to be controlled, thereby limiting visitor impacts on the natural values of the area.

## 5. MAKING A SUBMISSION

Submissions on the proposal are welcome for a two (2) month period (following publication of the Compatible Operations Notice in the Government Gazette on Friday 10 December 2010).

**Submissions close 3:00 PM (WST) Friday 18 February 2011**

To ensure your submission is as effective as possible:

- (a) make it clear and concise;
- (b) describe each subject or issue you wish and discuss briefly;
- (c) say whether you agree or disagree with the proposed compatible operation (eco-tourism development);
- (d) suggest alternative options and approaches to deal with the issues with which you may disagree.

Each submission is important, but those that give reasons for concerns or give support where appropriate and offer information and constructive suggestions are more useful.

Prior to the summary and analysis of submissions, consultation with the Conservation Commission of Western Australia will occur following which an analysis and summary of the submissions will be forwarded to the Minister for Environment for consideration. If a submission is marked "CONFIDENTIAL" the author will remain anonymous.

Written submissions should be clearly titled "**COMPATIBLE OPERATIONS NOTICE – WHARNCLIFFE MILL, BRAMLEY NATIONAL PARK**" and sent to:

Director General  
Department of Environment and Conservation  
Locked Bag 104  
Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983  
*Attention: A/Manager, Policy, Research and Tourism Branch*

For any enquires please contact Rod Quartermain, A/Manager, Policy, Research and Tourism Branch, on

(08) 9334 0562 or email: [rod.quartermain@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:rod.quartermain@dec.wa.gov.au)

