



#### 9.4.4 OCEAN BEACH BOAT LAUNCHING AREA

<b>File Ref:</b>	A3108
<b>Applicant / Proponent:</b>	Department for Planning & Infrastructure
<b>Subject Land / Locality:</b>	Ocean Beach Recreation Reserve 24913
<b>Disclosure of Officer Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Date:</b>	13 May 2008
<b>Author:</b>	Dale Stewart, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Authorising Officer:</b>	Dale Stewart, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Attachments:</b>	YES – draft signage and plan

#### Summary:

The Department for Planning & Infrastructure (DPI) has suggested signage and a new management approach for Councils consideration following a meeting with interested parties concerned about the possibility of conflict between swimmers and motorised boats.

#### Background:

There has been concern by the Surf Club in particular with possible conflict causing injury or indeed death for many years. There has been several reported near issues over the past 20-30 years but no reported injuries or fatalities relating to boating and swimming / surfer conflict.

With greater incidence of jet skis and personal powered (motor) water craft the fear that an incident could occur has also increased.

The main outward tide / rip at the beach occur abutting the rocks (the channel) where boaters launch their boat. This also happens to be the main channel that surfers like to head out with (for ease and speed). Swimmers and snorkelers do occasionally use the rip for swimming / training but it is the authors view that due to the severity of this tide that this practice should absolutely be discouraged (as suggested in the signage). This complements the use of the channel for boating but still leaves the room for conflict between surfers and boaters. To some extent this is mitigated due to the additional visibility of someone on a surfboard to a 'boater'. This probably constitutes an acceptable risk to DPI and Council given;

- the signage and guidance channel markers proposed;
- the fact that there has been no reported accidents over the years;
- the fact that operators of 4.5hp powered boats must now have a Recreational Skippers Ticket (RST); and
- The near side (south) swimming flag is generally at least 30-50m from the rocks.

#### Comment:

A meeting of main user groups was called by the CEO following the matter being raised by the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club. Groups at the meeting on Thursday 20 March 2008 include representatives from;

- Marine Safety Meeting Branch of DPI
- Shire President and CEO of Denmark Shire Council
- Denmark Surf Life Saving Club
- Denmark Sea Rescue
- Denmark Boating & Angling Club
- Mike Neunuebel, Surfing Instructor / Lessons
- FESA Volunteer Marine Rescue Service

Following the meeting there was a conclusion and consensus that DPI Marine Safety Branch would come back with a suggested raft of improvements to the current situation. This included;

- Installing new guidance posts on the coast above the existing pine posts being the areas where vehicles cannot proceed past on the beach.
- Installing new clear signage educating and warning users of the dangers (refer below draft signage).
- Gazetting a boating channel 30m north from the rocks (the main outward tide / rip channel),
- Gazetting a boating prohibited area (jet skis and all powered boats prohibited with the exception of marine rescue or authorised life saving club activities).
- The fact that as from 1 April all powered boats / Jet Ski operators is required to be operated / managed by a licensed Recreational Skippers Ticket holder (RST).

Proposed Signage for Ocean Beach Boat Launching Area;

OCEAN BEACH

**BOATING PROHIBITED AREA**

**THE AREA MARKED TO THE LEFT OF THE YELLOW PAINTED POSTS IS A BOATING PROHIBITED AREA**

Under section 10 A (a) of the *Navigable Waters Regulations 1958*  
All boating activity including jet ski's is prohibited to 250 metres East, then 320 Metres North as shown in diagram.

**BOAT LAUNCHING AREA**

No vessels are to be launched within the boating prohibited area as displayed in the diagram.

**Penalty: \$500**

Skippers are to use the guidance posts onshore when launching vessels and Must stay within the gazetted boat launching channel for a distance of 250 m before Changing direction. An 8 knot speed limit is to be adhered to within this channel.

**The speed limit within the channel is 8 knots.**

**BOARD USERS**

Must give way to vessels entering and departing the boat launch channel at all times.

**[DIVING, SNORKELLING OR SWIMMING IS NOT RECOMMENDED WITHIN THIS CHANNEL DUE TO VESSEL TRAFFIC, UNDERWATER HAZARDS AND STRONG TIDES](#)**



### Consultation:

Geoff Finlay, Tony Fitzpatrick, Maggie Brennan, David Harrod of the DPI Marine Safety Branch have contributed and developed the signage and proposed boating gazetted / prohibited areas.

Representatives from the main user Groups at Ocean Beach as earlier mentioned were in attendance at the workshop. It is fair to say that the representatives of the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club has reservations about the proposed solution and that Club would prefer a banning of boat launching from that site if only during the months from December to February (busiest swimming / beach times).

Additional / final consultation is proposed through invite to nominated groups and general advertisements inviting comment.

### Statutory Obligations:

The marine environment as far as boats and jet skis (motorised) is concerned is the sole responsibility of the DPI Marine Branch.

Holding a Recreational Skippers Ticket is compulsory for anyone operating a jet ski or boat with 4.5hp from 1/4/08 whereas it wasn't prior. Under these rules the driver of a power boat must travel at less than 8kn if within 45m of a person in the water (includes a surf boarder).

Council is the vested owner of the land and through its Property Local Law can prohibit the driving of vehicles upon that beach (i.e. stop boat launching and retrieval).

The Council has delegated the authority for beach management and in particular swimming safety to the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club which employs (through Council) life savers during parts of the year). At these times safe / patrolled swimming flags are erected by that club. These flags are normally away from the rocks/rip by some 50m.

**Policy Implications:**

Coastal Management Strategy.

**Budget / Financial Implications:**

There are no known financial implications upon the Councils current Budget or Plan for the Future other than perhaps assisting with the cost of appropriate signage.

**Strategic Implications:**

Denmark is iconic for a number of things to different people. One of these elements is its fishing. If Denmark did not have access to an Ocean Launching Boat Facility due to social reasons (conflict between users) and or environmental reasons, the economic and social impact would be of significant concern from a strategic perspective.

**Sustainability Implications:**

➤ **Environmental:**

There are no known environmental considerations relating to the report or officer recommendation. The banning of vehicles for the small section of beach proposed (some 30m) would possibly have a small beneficial environmental impact but this is counted by the negative social benefits and the fact that this activity has occurred there for many years.

➤ **Economic:**

There are potentially significant economic considerations if the banning of boat launching from Ocean Beach was proposed without a replacement site of equal or better safety / amenity. The only other identified possible site for a future ocean launch is an area identified by a member of the Surf Club is around from McGearys Rock. This site has not been identified as acceptable in any past surveys and would necessitate large investment of resource and involve possible degradation of the environment to make suitable with its steep grade.

➤ **Social:**

There are significant social considerations relating to the report or officer recommendation. If the Council proposed banning of vehicles (boat launching) from this site it would have an adverse impact on sea rescue, the boating and angling club (their clubrooms about the site) as well as the boating fraternity that utilise this ocean going launch area. The nearest other ocean launch area is some 30km away at Parry's Beach.

**Voting Requirements:**

Simple majority.

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

ITEM 9.4.4

That Council;

1. Support the retention of boat launching at Ocean Beach, Denmark and the proposed signage, gazetted boating channel (subject to a suggested speed limit of 5 knots) and boating prohibited area as submitted by the Department for Planning & Infrastructure and invite comments from the listed specific interest groups as well as a general advertisement in the Denmark Bulletin with submissions closing within 21 days following publication prior to adopting a final Council position and recommendation to that Department. Specific interest groups to be invited to make comment include;
  - a. Denmark Sea Rescue
  - b. Denmark Boating & Angling Club
  - c. Denmark Surf Life Saving Club
  - d. Mike Neunuebel, Surfing Instructor / Lessons
  - e. FESA Volunteer Marine Rescue Service
  - f. South Coast Management Group.
2. Include for consideration in the next review of its Strategic Plan support of the Government in the next 10 year planning horizon for a suitable safe Ocean Boat Launching Facility for Denmark to eventually replace the current access at Ocean Beach.

## ALTERNATE OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

ITEM 9.4.4

That Council;

1. Support the retention of boat launching at Ocean Beach, Denmark and the proposed signage (noting the graphic on the sign to be altered to reflect the correct proposed 30m channel width scale), gazetted boating channel and boating prohibited area as submitted by the Department for Planning & Infrastructure and invite comments from the listed specific interest groups as well as a general advertisement in the Denmark Bulletin with submissions closing within 21 days following publication prior to adopting a final Council position and recommendation to that Department. Specific interest groups to be invited to make comment include;
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2. Include for consideration in the next review of its Strategic Plan support of the Government in the next 10 year planning horizon for a suitable safe Ocean Boat Launching Facility for Denmark to eventually replace the current access at Ocean Beach.

7.49pm – The Director of Infrastructure Services returned to the meeting.

**COUNCIL DECISION**

ITEM 9.4.4

MOVED: CR SYME

SECONDED: CR RICHARDSON-NEWTON

That Council;

1. Support the retention of boat launching at Ocean Beach, Denmark and the proposed signage (noting the graphic on the sign to be altered to reflect the correct proposed 30m channel width scale at the beach), gazetted boating channel and boating prohibited area as submitted by the Department for Planning & Infrastructure and invite comments from the listed specific interest groups as well as a general advertisement in the Denmark Bulletin with submissions closing within 21 days following publication prior to adopting a final Council position and recommendation to that Department. Specific interest groups to be invited to make comment include;
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2. Include for consideration in the next review of its Strategic Plan support of the Government in the next 10 year planning horizon for a suitable safe Ocean Boat Launching Facility for Denmark.

CARRIED: 10/0

Res: 190508

**REASON FOR CHANGE**

*Council considered the 30 metre channel width should commence at the beach and delete the words after "Denmark" in Part 2 of the Alternate Officer Recommendation.*



### 9.5.5 OCEAN BEACH BOAT LAUNCHING AREA SIGNAGE

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<b>Disclosure of Officer Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Date:</b>	13 August 2008
<b>Author:</b>	Dale Stewart, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Authorising Officer:</b>	Dale Stewart, Chief Executive Officer
<b>Attachments:</b>	No

#### Summary:

Advertising has concluded with respect to the draft Department of Planning & Infrastructure (DPI) and Council supported changes to management and operation of boating at Ocean Beach. This report assesses submissions and makes recommendation to advise DPI of a final position.

#### Background:

The Department for Planning & Infrastructure (DPI) has suggested signage and a new management approach for Councils consideration following a meeting with interested parties concerned about the possibility of conflict between swimmers and motorised boats.

There has been concern by the Surf Club in particular with possible conflict causing injury or indeed death for many years. There has been several reported near issues over the past 20-30 years but no reported injuries or fatalities relating to boating and swimming / surfer conflict.

With greater incidence of jet skis and personal powered (motor) water craft the fear that an incident could occur has also increased.

The main outward tide / rip at the beach occur abutting the rocks (the channel) where boaters launch their boat. This also happens to be the main channel that surfers like to head out with (for ease and speed). Swimmers and snorkelers do occasionally use the rip for swimming / training but it is the authors view that due to the severity of this tide that this practice should absolutely be discouraged (as suggested in the signage). This complements the use of the channel for boating but still leaves the room for conflict between surfers and boaters. To some extent this is mitigated due to the additional visibility of someone on a surfboard to a 'boater'. This probably constitutes an acceptable risk to DPI and Council given;

- the signage and guidance channel markers proposed;
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- The near side (south) swimming flag is generally at least 30-50m from the rocks.

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**BOARD USERS**

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Council at its meeting of 27 May 2008 (resolution 190508) resolved as follows;

*"That Council;*

1. *Support the retention of boat launching at Ocean Beach, Denmark and the proposed signage (noting the graphic on the sign to be altered to reflect the correct proposed 30m channel width scale at the beach), gazetted boating channel and boating prohibited area as submitted by the Department for Planning & Infrastructure and invite comments from the listed specific interest groups as well as a general advertisement in the Denmark Bulletin with submissions closing within 21 days following publication prior to adopting a final Council position and recommendation to that Department. Specific interest groups to be invited to make comment include;
 
  - a. *Denmark Sea Rescue*
  - b. *Denmark Boating & Angling Club*
  - c. *Denmark Surf Life Saving Club*
  - d. *Mike Neunuebel, Surfing Instructor / Lessons*
  - e. *FESA Volunteer Marine Rescue Service*
  - f. *South Coast Management Group.**
2. *Include for consideration in the next review of its Strategic Plan support of the Government in the next 10 year planning horizon for a suitable safe Ocean Boat Launching Facility for Denmark."*

**Comment:**

As detailed under consultation.

**Consultation:**

Geoff Finlay, Tony Fitzpatrick, Maggie Brennan, David Harrod of the DPI Marine Safety Branch have contributed and developed the signage and proposed boating gazetted / prohibited areas.

Representatives from the main user Groups at Ocean Beach as earlier mentioned were in attendance at the workshop. It is fair to say that the representatives of the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club has reservations about the proposed solution and that Club would prefer a banning of boat launching from that site if only during the months from December to February (busiest swimming / beach times).

Additional / final consultation occurred through invitation to nominated groups as follows;

- i. Denmark Sea Rescue
- ii. Denmark Boating & Angling Club
- iii. Denmark Surf Life Saving Club
- iv. Mike Neunuebel, Surfing Instructor / Lessons
- v. FESA Volunteer Marine Rescue Service
- vi. South Coast Management Group.

and general advertisements inviting comment which closed on the 7 July 2008.

Submissions received included the following;

**South Coast Management Group (received 11 July)**

*“As a regional coastal management group we support the development of site plans, the establishment of working groups, and high levels of stakeholder consultation, for localised coastal areas, where multiple activities and differing level of environmental and user values are in place , to ensure the best outcomes long term for the natural environment and all stakeholders.”*

Officer comment: Supported - Councils consultation and submission period gave effect to this.

**Denmark Sea Rescue Group (DSRG)**

*In relation to alternative sea going boat launching facilities proposed in the 10 year strategic planning approach, the DSRG has “...serious reservations. The current facilities are wonderfully self limiting whereby heavy sea conditions have to be good for safe launch and retrieval. If facilities are improved that allow greater all weather ocean access, then it would mean boats could be launched safely then travel into unsafe sea conditions, potentially end harming emergency response personal.”*

Officer comment: these concerns can be addressed regarding the planning that would need to occur with DPI and others if this proposal came closer to reality. A lot of development work would be required prior to Council initiating discussion on a possible permanent all weather ocean launch facility.

*DSRG “agree in principal with the proposal to adopt the DPI ideas of signage and delineation of differing zones.” “They are supportive of the proposed 8kn speed rather than the 5kn speed and conducted ocean going test on swells of at up to 3m to determine that 8kn would be preferable as a maximum speed. They would like to see;*

- 1. That the 30 metre channel width is measured from the rocks off the beach rather than from the corner of the beach. There has been discussion indicating desire for the channel width to be re-set at 50m (as per DPI original proposal) however, DSRG would accept the 30m channel on the proviso that the surf club are required not to install their safe swimming flags within 20m of the north edge of this channel, allowing a safety buffer zone;*
- 2. “lead-in” posts installed that would make it less likely for visiting boaters and locals to stray into the proposed boating restricted zone; and*
- 3. An additional sign at the start of the beach access track indicating safe swell size for launch (i.e. less than 2.5m swell) – for current swell conditions refer [www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/19142.asp](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au/imarine/19142.asp) .”*

Officer comment: All three suggestions are supported by the officer unchanged.

**Resident and surfer**

*“Law of the sea: Power gives way to sail. Protection of surfers many who are primary and high school students. Suggested signage words to be added ‘Caution - This*

*Channel is a multi-use area. Please be aware of other users at all time's e.g. diving snorkelling, boating, surfing, swimming. It is important to recognise the channel as a share usage area.” In essence the resident asked that the wording requiring board users to give way to vessels entering or returning be removed and replaced.*

Officer comment: The suggested signage adequately deals with these concerns. To remove the advice to board users that they must share as opposed to must give way ignores that fact that boaters must keep clear of people in the water and if the board rider chooses not to then the boater cannot safely (for the board rider) return to the land (retrieval point). Not supported.

**Resident and surfer**

*Proposed signage words to replace the wording requiring board users to give way to vessels entering or returning, “Caution this channel is a multi-use area. Please be courteous and consider the safety of yourself and others. Power boat users - use minimum speeds and give way to swimmers and surfers and unpowered craft. Access road and boat launching area to be kept clear for emergency access at all times. All users please be aware that strong rips are often present and conditions may change rapidly to make the area unsafe.*

Officer comment: Some of the suggested signage words are supported (e.g. keeping the access road clear, but the changes are in the opinion of the officer already adequately dealt with by the signage or by legislation.

**Resident and surfer**

*Proposed signage changes due to the assertion that maritime law states that power boats must give way to people and board users, as follows;*

*delete*

**‘BOARD USERS**

*Must give way to vessels entering and departing the boat launch channel at all times.’*

*And*

***‘DIVING, SNORKELLING OR SWIMMING IS NOT RECOMMENDED WITHIN THIS CHANNEL DUE TO VESSEL TRAFFIC, UNDERWATER HAZARDS AND STRONG TIDES’***

*And replace with words such as “Caution this channel is a multi-use area. Please be aware of others e.g. swimmers, snorkelers and surfboarders. This is a multi-use area – please take caution.”*

Officer comment: The suggested signage words would in the opinion of the officer contribute to Councils legal defence being compromised in the event of an incident. The author's personal view is that the channel is certainly not recommended for swimming, snorkelling or diving given normal conditions. The sign with some minor changes supports this view. To state that the channel is a share zone or multi use zone diminishes the fact that the channel is generally dangerous to all bar (perhaps to a lesser extent even including) boaters and surfers.

**Resident (since deceased)** received 25 July 2008

*“Firstly, I have noticed that while boats are generally launched from the area designated on the aerial photo, this area is also used by swimmers and surfers. Given that the area is not used frequently for boat launching (that is, boat launching seems to occur mostly on weekends), it seems difficult to justify the exclusion of other water users at all other times. As such, it might be more useful to designate an area where boats (and other aquatic vehicles) are not permitted. A boat exclusion zone would not*

*only assist in the protection of swimmers and surfers, but also dolphins and other aquatic animals.*

*On this basis, I suggest that the zoning be modified to designate a 'boat-free' zone, thereby allowing other uses when boats are not about.*

*If there is to be an effort to control motor vehicles both on the beach and in the water, I suggest that motor vehicles on the beach are in some ways more of a threat to public safety. On this basis, a more substantial barrier preventing motor vehicle access to the rest of Ocean Beach may be required.”*

Officer comment: The suggested change would in the opinion of the officer be difficult to put into practice and not be practical / enforceable.

### **Resident**

*“I do not believe that the DPI recommendations for the “Denmark Ocean Beach Boat Launching Area” that are supported by the Council go far enough.*

*I need to declare an interest as I am a member of Denmark Sea Rescue and Denmark’s DPI appointed Volunteer Marine Safety Officer. I should like the following observations as a long term resident of Denmark, to be considered by Council.*

- 1. Over the last thirty years there has never been a reported (mandatory) boat launching accident at Ocean Beach. Statements from councillors regarding how dangerous it is (boats upside down and props spinning) etc.. Is inflammatory nonsense, intended in my view to attempt a distortion to gain advantage for a personally held standpoint?*
- 2. During the above thirty years there have been fatalities associated with the activities of the surf club.*
- 3. Launching and retrieval of boats with the facilities at Ocean Beach could on occasion be considered as challenging.*
- 4. The proposed channel is at a point where the water is of good depth and where the Ocean Beach “rip” turns seaward often running at above 5 Knots.*
- 5. Surfing WA within their own safety statements require their members to stay clear of “rips”*

*This is taken from “Surfing WA” manual.*

*Learn how to spot a rip and **keep clear of it**. A rip can be recognised by sand coloured or rippled water running out to sea when the water on either side is generally cleaner. The waves may also be larger and breaking further out to sea on both sides of the rip.*

- 6. Surfing WA requires a risk management strategy.*
- 7. Within the last 6 months an incident took place where surfers, one of whom was a senior committee member of Denmark Surf Club, paddled it is said, intentionally into the path of a vessel just launched within the proposed channel. The experienced skipper of that vessel was forced to take avoiding action and coming very close to rocks was of the “voiced” opinion that the vessel and crew had been placed at severe risk by the actions of these surfers. This action shows that there are those who through ignorance are prepared to risk lives in order to make some obscure point. This deed also shows that action by the Shire and DPI must be able to deliver an improved level of community confidence with pace, not being bogged down by an endless bureaucratic carnival.*

*It is for the above reasons that my recommendations would be that the proposed channel should be of 50M wide and not the 30M as suggested. 30M does not give sufficient manoeuvring area to turn or hold off even a 6M boat. The channel should be a swimming/ surfing exclusion zone reserved for boats only. There is no reason given the safety advice of “Surfing WA” that any swimmer, surfer should be within the area of*

*the proposed channel. Indeed given duty of care, encouraging young swimmers and holidaymakers into this rip area by example would to my mind constitute reckless behaviour. Your Councillor G. Ebbet's entirely excellent and practical comments regarding a wave speed limit for boats should be adopted. The rest of the beach 300M from the shore line should be restricted from boat use apart from rescue vessels, in a line from the Western rocks to Dunskey reef. (Jet Skis are not rescue vessels, should use the channel and stay outside the 300M exclusion zone) A single tethered starboard channel marker should be installed at a point 300M from the shore and 50M out from the Western rocks to mark the exclusion zone.*

*The "Surf Club" should be reminded that when operating rescue craft and Jet Skis that there are statutory speed restrictions that apply to water depth, proximity to swimmers in the water and distances from the shore line that are currently being ignored. A notice reminding all should be provided by the DPI. All users of "Surf Life Saving" vessels should have an RST and should be able to be identified by a time/date/RST number register kept in good order by the "Surf Club" administrators, so that in the event of a complaint the skipper of the vessel can be recognized."*

Officer comment: The officer will ensure that a copy of the report is copied to all submitters satisfying some elements of this residents concern. No-one launching a boat from the area can do so without a RST skipper on board and in charge of the vessel and as this is state law should not be required to be stated on a sign.

The concept of a tethered channel marker is supported, but has been canvassed and previously rejected by DPI on the basis of cost (severity of the tide / current where the channel end marker might be desired). The concept of the 50m versus 30m boating channel is supported but not at the expense of pushing the swimming flags and 'safety zone' too far north, given the boating fraternity and DPI is comfortable with a 30m channel.

**Denmark Surf Life Saving Club Inc.**

*"It was the understanding of our delegate from the meeting of 20 March that it was your intent to go away from the meeting and come up with a position in conjunction with DPI. We were of the understanding that once you had a position, interested parties would be able to comment before you adopted your finale position.*

*It appears from your correspondence that you are now only asking for comment on the text of a sign, a very much reduced level of public consultation.*

*Notwithstanding this, we feel it appropriate to comment on the whole issue as safety at Ocean Beach is our core role.*

*The club retains its position that private boat launching at Ocean Beach is an inappropriate mix of beach users.*

*Mixing surfers and boats goes directly against the Australian Coastal Public Safety Guidelines which deems a requirement for a 60 metre separation between power craft and other water users. (Copy attached)*

*Because Council seems to have no corporate memory, let us remind you of your correspondence. Your letter of 03/09/1996 (Your ref PD/VLL) made it a condition of Council's approval for the building of the Boating and Angling Club that the Surf Lifesaving Club supports the development.*

*Council made this condition because it was clear to all that this conflicting use issue would arise. As per our reply, we supported the Sea Rescue Group activities, but indicated we did not support private boat launching at Ocean Beach. Council at that time was pursuing the Parrys Beach boat Launching facility, which subsequently failed. It is disappointing to be in a position of having to write to Council on this issue in 2008,*

*having supported the use of Reserve A24913 for the Sea Rescue Group in 1996, on condition of no private boat launching, and private boat/jet ski launching being the problem in 2008.*

*With the above historical context in mind, it was disappointing to read comments in the Agenda Item 9.4.4 of May 2008.*

*Under the Social Implications section the author wrote that banning private boat launching during patrolled times would have an adverse impact on the Sea Rescue Group, when in fact all discussions and correspondence excludes the Sea Rescue Group from any restrictions, and is in fact supporting of their operations.*

*In the same section the author wrote that it would have an adverse social impact on the Boating and Angling Club because they have clubrooms there, ignoring the fact that Council knew at the approval stage that this was going to be an issue, and as such sort our approval, which we gave with conditions, and then have ignored the conditions.*

*In terms of economic implications, the author asserts there would be potential significant economic implications without giving any facts or figures. We can probably identify 10 regular boats that launch from this site, and another 10 occasional local boats. Add in another 15 out of town occasional boats, and we still struggle to see a significant economic impact.*

*We know that a warm day will give us hundreds of beach goers, with the total for a day being over a thousand. We would have thought that the economic impact of a thousand beach goers was greater than 10 boats.*

*Council, having adopted the recommendations of 9.4.4 has precluded itself from instigating any imaginative solutions that may have addressed most people's requirements. An example would have been for the patrol to close beach access at the top car park at 9am to 5pm, allowing boats on the water to leave through the Boating and Angling track, but not allowing new launching. Most local boaters are on the water well before 9am. This would have catered for local fishermen, whilst solving the Jet Ski problem.*

*Turning to the proposed signage, we think it inappropriate for board users to give way to boats. Power craft give way to unpowered craft under navigational rules. A swimmer/bogey board/surfboard has no power to move out of the path of a boat when they are being taken out to sea in the rip. A boat has higher visual vantage points and the power to manoeuvre. A boat user is a licensed adult whilst more than half of the boardies encountered in the channel would be minors. Where else in society do we put the legal responsibility to avoid an accident on a minor as opposed to a licensed adult? Boardies, who have used this channel for more than 50 years would outnumber boats by 50-1. It is the boats and jet skis increasingly coming into the domain of boardies that is the issue, not the other way around.*

*This club supports the no boating area as shown, and would reject any increase in the width of the proposed boat channel.*

Excerpt from the Australian Coastal Public Safety Guidelines

2.4 Surf and swimming zones

- a) *When operating a powered watercraft at any speed, a distance of 60 m should be kept from all boundaries of a designated surf zone/swimming area.*
  - *A designated surf zone is defined as the area extending 500m out from shore between surf patrol flags or signs.*
  - *A swimming area is defined as the area extending 60m out from shore between signs for swimmers.*

- b) *A powered watercraft should not be operated in these zones or within 60m of either side of the flags or signs marking such zones.”*

Officer comment: The officer does not believe the SLSC solution of a patrol to close or open the access track to new launching is practical or realistic. Council could not readily rely on volunteers to do this and the cost of employing staff to undertake it would be uneconomical. This solution requires human intervention at regular intervals which would be costly and as the club points out – most launches occur prior to 9am in any case.

The signage words that boarders ‘Must give way to vessels entering and departing the boat launch channel at all times’ is meant to achieve the result of advising boarders that they should exit the channel at the time that a boat is leaving or returning – it is not meant to overturn the requirement of a powered boat operator to keep clear of unpowered craft or people in the water. What must be minimised is the circumstance where a boarder or swimmer refuses to depart the channel because ‘they were there first’. The wording of the sign could say something like ‘Where vessels are seeking to enter or access the boat launch channel, boarders, swimmers and snorkelers must vacate the channel to allow this activity to safely occur.’

**Statutory Obligations:**

The marine environment as far as boats and jet skis (motorised) is concerned is the sole responsibility of the DPI Marine Branch.

Holding a Recreational Skippers Ticket is compulsory for anyone operating a jet ski or boat with 4.5hp from 1/4/08 whereas it wasn't prior. Under these rules the driver of a power boat must travel at less than 8kn if within 45m of a person in the water (includes a surf boarder).

Council is the vested owner of the land and through its Property Local Law can prohibit the driving of vehicles upon that beach (i.e. stop boat launching and retrieval).

The Council has delegated the authority for beach management and in particular swimming safety to the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club. Council also employs life savers during parts of the year. At these times safe / patrolled swimming flags are erected by that club. These flags are normally away from the rocks/rip by some 50m.

**Policy Implications:**

- Coastal Management Strategy.
- Community Consultation Policy.
- Consultation Privacy Policy.

**Budget / Financial Implications:**

There are no known financial implications upon the Councils current Budget or Plan for the Future other than perhaps assisting with the cost of appropriate signage.

**Strategic Implications:**

Denmark is iconic for a number of things to different people. One of these elements is its fishing. If Denmark did not have access to an Ocean Launching Boat Facility due to social reasons (conflict between users) and or environmental reasons, the economic and social impact would be of significant concern from a strategic perspective.

**Sustainability Implications:**

➤ **Environmental:**

There are no known environmental considerations relating to the report or officer recommendation. The banning of vehicles for the small section of beach proposed (some 30m) would possibly have a small beneficial environmental impact but this is

counted by the negative social benefits and the fact that this activity has occurred there for many years.

➤ **Economic:**

There are potentially significant economic considerations if the banning of boat launching from Ocean Beach was proposed without a replacement site of equal of better safety / amenity. The only other identified possible site for a future ocean launch is an area identified by a member of the Surf Club is around from McGearys Rock. This site has not been identified as acceptable in any past surveys and would necessitate large investment of resource and involve possible degradation of the environment to make suitable with its steep grade.

➤ **Social:**

There are significant social considerations relating to the report or officer recommendation. If the Council proposed banning of vehicles (boat launching) from this site it would have an adverse impact on sea rescue, the boating and angling club (their clubrooms about the site) as well as the boating fraternity that utilise this ocean going launch area. The nearest other ocean launch area is some 30km away at Parry's Beach.

**Voting Requirements:**

Simple majority.

<b>COUNCIL RESOLUTION &amp; OFFICER RECOMMENDATION</b>	ITEM 9.5.5
MOVED: CR SYME	SECONDED: CR BARROW
<p>That with respect to the proposal of the Department for Planning &amp; Infrastructure to gazette a boating channel and boating prohibited area for Ocean Beach, Denmark, Council following receipt of submissions;</p>	
<p>1. Advise the Department as follows;</p>	
<p>a. That the proposed boat prohibited area, boating launching area and channel and signage is supported subject to the following signage changes;</p>	
<p>i. Noting the graphic on the sign to be altered to reflect the correct proposed 30m channel width scale at the beach (measured from the rocks off the beach rather than from the corner of the beach);</p>	
<p>ii. That the heading 'Board Users' be changed to read <i>'Board users, swimmers and snorkelers'</i> or similar and then words under this heading be changed to state <i>'Where vessels are seeking to enter or access the boat launch channel, boarders, swimmers and snorkelers must vacate the channel to allow this activity to safely occur.'</i>;</p>	
<p>iii. An addition or new sign at the entrance to the launch area, recommending a suggested maximum size of vessel and maximum size of swell (indicatively less than 2.5m swell) for safe launching.</p>	
<p>2. That Council request the Department to consider the installation of;</p>	
<p>i. Appropriate boating 'lead-in' post above the channel on Councils reserve; and</p>	
<p>ii. If practical and able, a tethered channel marker at the eastern juncture of the boating prohibited area and channel entrance.</p>	
<p>3. It responds to the submitters in writing together with a copy of this report.</p>	
CARRIED: 11/1	Res: 470808



## Ocean Beach User Group Meeting 8 Oct 2014

**Location:** Shire of Denmark offices.

**Present:** DoT - Wayne Winchester (Chair), Tony Fitzpatrick, Danial Pell  
Shire of Denmark -Dale Stewart, Cr Ross Thornton, Gregg Harwood  
DSLSC - George Mumford, Sue Dybing, Bernie Wong  
DBAC - Don Smith, Lee Shelly  
VMR - Brent Moore, Robin Burchill

**5.40pm:** Meeting opened by Wayne Winchester who gave an update on:

1. the background to the current issue, namely the recent incident involving a vessel and a surfer.
2. the ideal strategy of long term relocation of the Ocean Beach over beach launching to a dedicated launching facility at a suitable location elsewhere within the Shire of Denmark.
3. the need for signage and education in the interim.
4. the willingness of all stakeholders to accept that it is currently a shared use area and the desire to make it as safe as we can and mitigate risk until the longer term solution is found.

### **Official DOT signage:**

Wayne presented a draft new sign and asked for discussion regarding swimming in the channel area.

Bernie said that the wording needed to be simpler. EG just use boat and other collective terms.

Bernie suggested making the sign for all of the user groups. Change words to "board riders keep clear of boats". Brent supported keeping it short and to the point and made point that boat users should make every attempt to avoid board riders.

Don made the point from a boater's perspective, that once you're coming in through the channel, you are committed.

It was agreed to use the following wording in respect to the notation about board users responsibilities -"board riders must keep clear of vessels"

Bernie raised the issue of the width of the channel and questioned if it should be used at all.

Wayne advised that we are talking about the situation we have now and that options for relocation are being considered separately.

Dale responded the Shire of Denmark and Council will be applying for a DoT grant in Feb 2015 to do feasibility study into long term launching facility options.

Bernie raised that that the status of the authorising body should be mentioned on the sign.

Following discussion around gazettal's of various restricted water areas, Wayne advised that gazettal's for these areas generally result from local authority and community consultation.

George stated that the posts set in the sand are used for the guideline, yet they take up the best swimming and surf spot (outer sand back). Local boaters understand the markers but tourist vessels unfamiliar with the area may come in wider.

Lee questioned whether it should be straight out and parallel to the rocks, which is how they generally come into shore.

Wayne asked about the arc that is required to get vision into the corner from seaward.

Brent suggested you can do it ok within the current alignment of the posts.

Danial/ Dale/ Lee asked if we could take a straight line say 50m off the head land.

Wayne requested an onsite exercise with VMR and DoT to determine the feasibility of this suggestion.

Bernie suggested the northern extremity where the prohibited area extends into the bay should be identified.

Discussion followed and determined it was problematic and therefore impractical.

The question was asked about the use of lead lines. Wayne indicated that lead lines infer safe passage at all times and therefore would not be supported by DoT at this location, but advised that the markers could be made clearer.

Wayne indicated DoT will replace their sign ASAP, hopefully before the lead-up to the summer holidays.

**Other signage:**

VMR signage proposal discussion:

Wayne acknowledged the considerable and considered thought that was put into the suggestions put forward by the VMR and thanked them accordingly.

The general feeling was that there was too much information to all be included.

Dale stated that less signs are better and we need to consolidate and tidy up what is already there.

Wayne advised that DOT had scheduled an Aquatic Use Review for Denmark, which would result in the creation of a printed Boating Guide. This folded DL brochure could be used to disseminate much of the information raised by the User Group and particularly the VMR input.

Sue asked if there was a fatality involving a vessel at Ocean Beach who would be held responsible.

Wayne stated that in the event of a death, a Coronial Enquiry would take place and that would determine responsibility and also make recommendations to mitigate future incidents. Dale added that the liability would be determined by whether the boat driver was negligent in his actions.

Don Smith raised the many risks at Ocean Beach and that it is balancing act to mitigate these. Wayne advised the importance of the Ocean Beach User Group to work together to mitigate and manage these risks, one of which is the transit of vessels through the area.

Wayne drew the Groups attention to the VMR locality sketch and spoke about potential signage corridors for the various activities ie gravel track down to the launch area is primarily for boaters and the paths down from the main carpark are primarily for swimmers and surfers. These corridors may assist in the type and requirement for various signage. The group generally agreed that these corridors were multi use for the various activities and therefore signage probably needed to cover all users at each corridor.

Lee asked if the Shire could do more work on the eroding bank at the turning area at the bottom of the gravel track.

Dale advised that it is done every year, but erosion continues to occur, particularly following winter storms.

Tony indicated the Shire has equipment to drive signs in further, which may be requested for installation of the replacement DoT signage.

Wayne asked if the parking of boat trailers on the beach is acceptable.

Don advised that they should really park in the top carparks and not on the beach.

Lee indicated there is room for at least four trailers on the beach, but all agreed it was not desirable to have cars and trailers parked on the beach. The exemption would be the local surf instructor's equipment trailer.

It was asked if fishing off the rocks near a swimming/surfing/boating area was an issue. The general consensus was, in this case, no.

Wayne suggested that we need general info signs such as “Enjoy our Beach” that indicated it was a shared use area. Draft wording was subsequently discussed.

Wayne stated that DoT would “tidy up” the wording and draft a final proposal to go back to the Group for comment/approval.

Dale indicated that there is an existing “no swimming sign” and that it should also say “dangerous rip/ current”.

Sue said we need two separate signs. The official DoT sign and an “Enjoy our Beach” sign. The Group agreed.

Wayne acknowledged the DSLSC sign audit and noted that little had been done in progressing the recommendations since the audit was completed in 2012. It was agreed that any new signage that came about as a result of the Ocean Beach User Group would be incorporated into the recommendations within the DSLSC Audit document.

Dale indicated that although specific funds had not been set aside within the Shire budget, there were works funds available that could be used to implement the recommendations.

Wayne asked that priority be given to the implementation of the recommendations within the audit, including the additional signage being developed.

**Risk mitigation strategies:**

Wayne then went around the table to each individual group, asking about other things that could reduce risk from their individual group’s perspective.

SLSC stated they educate their younger members and use a variety of methods to get messages out to the wider community. They are also looking at opportunities and methods to capture and inform tourists that visit Ocean Beach. Dale suggested that new visitors will go to the Visitors Centre or the Shire/Tourism website and that this would be a good avenue to provide information.

The BAC is actively engaging with their members and has been looking at using the Chamber of Commerce and Industry “business out of hours” as a further method of spreading information.

VRM is educating their members about the shared use area and have a good working relationship with the DSLSC

The Shire of Denmark, through Ross, stated that if there is another incident, consideration would be given to closure of the over-beach launching facility, if it were to come to Council. Ross suggested that closure for 6 weeks over the busy Christmas holiday season and also possibly at Easter be considered.

Wayne indicated that any closure must exempt emergency access by DoT and the VMR. The Group agreed.

Don advised that the DBAC members do not generally use the over beach launching during peak seasons, but thought needs to be given to tourist expectations. Lee advised that DBAC have 10 boats and VMR have 80 boats registered.

Wayne stated that we should not wait for a serious incident and that we need to be proactive to mitigate risk, and therefore fully supported the Shire initiative.

Wayne sought general feedback/comments from the Group. There was unanimous support from the Group for the Shire of Denmark to progress this initiative.

Dale advised that the Shire would take the closure to Council and go to community consultation.

In general discussion, Ross & Dale advised they will be talking to Bruce Manning from GSDC about the Draft Regional Blueprint over the coming weeks. Augusta has recently had a \$34 million boating facility built and the Denmark region needs to lobby for its share. The requirement for an alternative launching facility in Denmark would be raised as part of input to the Draft Regional Blueprint. General discussions followed regarding alternative launching site options.

Wayne thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting and for their positive and cooperative input to resolving the safety issues at Ocean Beach.

Meeting closed at 7.20pm

### **ACTIONS**

1. DoT to make amendments to the Draft Marine Safety Information sign, as per the input from the Ocean Beach Users Group.
2. DoT to prepare a draft "Enjoy our Beach" sign and send to members for comment.
3. DoT and VMR to review suitability of existing posts marking the gazetted areas boundary and of the alignment of the area itself.
4. Shire of Denmark to progress the closure of the over beach launching facility during peak holiday periods.
- 5 Any agreed new signage is to be incorporated into the DSLSC Sign Audit and the Shire of Denmark is to implement the recommendations from the Audit in a timely manner.
6. All Ocean Beach User Group members to actively promote the message that Ocean Beach is a shared use area and that respect, courtesy and care should be exercised by all user groups.

OCEAN BOATING FACILITIES STUDY OF DENMARK

FOR THE  
SHIRE OF DENMARK

SEARCHED		INDEXED	
SERIALIZED		FILED	
24 AUG 1999			
File <u>PLN-5</u> Ack .....			
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ENG		REC. CLERK	

DRAFT!

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT  
MARITIME DIVISION

1 Essex Street  
Fremantle WA 6160

July 1999

Transport Report 384/96

**OCEAN BOATING FACILITIES STUDY  
FOR THE  
SHIRE OF DENMARK**

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## SUMMARY

The Shire of Denmark has the opportunity to take advantage of the growth in activity within the Shire which is expected to arise from an increase in tourism activity as its area becomes a more accessible alternative to existing holiday centres in Western Australia. Planned improvements and extensions to the highways linking Denmark with Albany and Mount Barker, as well as proposed improvements to the highways connecting Denmark to Busselton and Augusta will result in easier tourist routes between all major towns in the lower South West and lower Great Southern Regions. Planning processes are already in place to allow for this economic development to take place in a sustainable manner. The Shire of Denmark can expedite development within the Shire by progressing Town Planning Amendments in support of the Albany Regional Strategy. Such action would provide a lead for the private sector to concentrate future development projects in areas approved by the Shire and the State Planning Commission.

Existing ocean boat launching facilities within the Shire of Denmark can, at best, be described as minimal. Despite this situation, the number of boats launched and retrieved across the beaches by four wheel drive vehicles at Peaceful Bay and Parry Beach are of the same order as the numbers launched and retrieved from some equivalent "local area" boat ramps within the more populated Peel Region. A boat launching ramp accessible by two wheel drive vehicle would certainly provide more acceptable boating facilities for ratepayers of the Shire if a natural site existed, provided that it can be built and maintained at an acceptable cost to the Shire. However, a naturally sheltered and available site has not been found and it is probable that an effective and safe ramp will require an artificial breakwater which adds considerably to the project cost.

In the immediate future, the Shire of Denmark is likely to find it difficult to raise its share of the funds required to finance ocean boating works from its existing ratepayer base. The Shire should therefore investigate the establishment of a Boating Facilities Trust Account to be used as a holding account for monies raised from other sources. It may be possible to levy the sale of all new residential lots within the Shire, so that new development throughout the Shire would be making an immediate contribution towards these desired facilities. Also, areas of land from which revenue in support of boating facilities can be derived need to be identified now and set aside for future development. Additionally, the Shire of Denmark should seek to secure suitable coastal land areas for future development of recreational boating facilities should such land become available or be proposed for development. All boating facility development within the Shire need to be linked to centres of population growth, where land planning should have precedence but should include the planning of boating facilities.

Public beach launchings and retrievals should continue to be permitted in approved beach locations at Parry Beach and Peaceful Bay. Improved parking access should be provided at Peaceful Bay in accordance with an agreed foreshore management plan. The use of tractors to assist with launchings and retrievals in this location could be encouraged.



Any necessary limits on launchings and retrievals at Parry Beach as a consequence of the existing proclaimed fishing zone should remain.

Access to the sea for sea search and rescue missions should continue to be available at Ocean Beach in accordance with the protocol which has been agreed between the Denmark Sea Search and Rescue Group and the Shire of Denmark. In regard to sea search and rescue, the existing groups should retain their area identity as the specific group to call in terms of local emergency, however the Albany Sea Search and Rescue Group should be given an overall coordinating role as well as an assisting role in regard to the performance of the local area Groups.

While the justification for immediate expansion of facilities has not been established by this Study, it is clear that some forward planning should be initiated so that a preferred future boating facilities site can be identified. Action can then be initiated to clear any existing impediments to that future use. This report includes some sketches of possible sheltered ramp developments to assist the initiation of forward planning, but insufficient information is available to suggest the order of expenditure which would be required.

Finally, this report should be adopted by the Shire of Denmark for use as a reference document when addressing proposals for new development in the Shire. It should be reviewed within a period of five years.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

For a number of years the Shire of Denmark has sought the assistance of Government with the provision of boat launching facilities along the coastline of the Southern Ocean between Denmark and Peaceful Bay. Preliminary investigations in the late 1980's lead to the conclusion that Parry Beach was the preferred location for a boat ramp and in due course funds were allocated for the construction of a ramp in the Capital Works Program.

An environmental document was prepared for this project and during the public comment period it was suggested that the proposed development could lead to interference with the operation of a proclaimed fishing zone. This immediately raised questions of industry preference since it is probable that boating activity could frighten schools of salmon or herring. Fears were raised by members of the local community that if the boat ramp became popular, as it was planned to do, its use would result in the demise of the local fishing industry. The question of the replacement of a significant local primary industry by a growing tourism industry thus needed to be resolved prior to that boat ramp being constructed.

Construction of the proposed boat ramp was immediately put on hold. The Department of Transport offered to assist in resolving the issues by carrying out a detailed study into the justification for boating facilities in the Shire, with a report which would identify the options for boating facility development. Justification of the recommended boating facilities program in an economic sense was the major issue to be addressed in the study. All coastal sites within the Shire capable of boating development at reasonable cost were to be reconsidered. This study report fulfils this offer.

The Department's Strategic Plan for Maritime Facilities was used as the starting point for the investigations. That Strategic Plan evolved from a Discussion Paper which was used as the basis for preliminary consultations with other Government agencies and public bodies with an interest in maritime facilities. It was issued in preliminary draft form as the basis for further detailed consultation with other Government agencies, WAMA, industry and community groups. The resulting Draft Plan was issued for wider public comment, particularly to involved Local Governments. The results of these consultations were incorporated, where appropriate, in the final Strategic Plan for Maritime Facilities. The Minister for Transport obtained Government endorsement of the final document.

A number of key issues relating to the provision and management of maritime facilities are identified and discussed in the Strategic Plan. These provide the basis for developing the proposed strategies for each class of facility to be considered by the Department in its future activities. These strategies are complemented by a series of associated actions. Together the proposed strategies and associated actions which form the core of the document are the means by which the Department seeks to achieve Government objectives for the provision and management of maritime facilities. The Strategic Plan recognises that there are some difficulties in assessing the demand for maritime facilities

and that more effort is required to improve the Department's information base on user needs.

This particular study was undertaken with the prime objective of gaining a better understanding of the ocean boating needs of the Shire of Denmark and is one of a number of similar studies that have recently been undertaken by the Department. The Department chose to set up a Steering Committee to assist with the study. That Steering Committee decided that the study would cover the whole of the Shire of Denmark and its near shore waters. The shoreline within the Shire accessible by two wheel drive vehicle was inspected and existing facilities recorded. Previous studies and reports undertaken by Government Departments and the private sector were also reviewed. Use was made of the Department's private boat registration system, which records vessels by size, type and number to assess the likely boating activity in the study area by residents within the Shire and by boating enthusiasts from neighbouring Shires.

The future requirements for boating facilities within the Shire were assessed by the Steering Committee on the basis of the review of previous studies and on a working knowledge of the area. Development options which met defined needs were then considered, taking into account their relation to known environmental, social, physical and financial criteria.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 STEERING COMMITTEE

Negotiations between the Shire of Denmark and the Department of Transport resulted in an agreement to set up a Steering Committee to lead the study of boating facilities for the Shire of Denmark and report directly to the Department of Transport. Members of the Steering Committee were:

<i>Bob Brindley</i>	Manager Business and Development, Transport
Pascoe Durtanovich /	Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Denmark
Werner Wilmes <i>Jan</i>	Engineer, Shire of Denmark
Phil Shepherd <i>Shepherd</i>	Planner, Shire of Denmark
Les Brenton	Shire Councillor
Joe Burton	Shire Councillor
Merv Hockley /	Denmark Boating and Angling Club
Peter Mc Cullough /	Denmark Volunteer Sea Rescue Group
Les Pinnering /	Professional Fisherman
Eileen Lunan /	Denmark Bulletin
Michael Keeble <i>7.30</i>	Denmark Chamber of Commerce

Representatives from other relevant agencies such as the Departments of Land Administration, Conservation and Land Management and Fisheries were consulted on individual issues from time to time. Consultants from the private sector provided specialist input on a range of matters on request. During the course of the study Mr Brindley retired from the Department of Transport and his position was taken over by Mr Martin Baird, who commissioned an engineering consultant, Dr. W.S. Andrew, to update and finalise the draft report.

### 2.2 STUDY OBJECTIVE

The Steering Committee agreed that the primary need was to obtain an understanding of public ocean boating demands within the Shire of Denmark, and hence the requirement for public boating facilities along the coastline of the Shire. The objective of the study therefore, was to prepare a report containing text, tables and plans which:

- (a) Defined the study area
- (b) Listed all existing boating facilities in the study area
- (c) Listed and reviewed previous boating studies
- (d) Listed current private and commercial boating statistics for the Shire
- (e) Identified the frequency of current boating activities (both commercial and recreational)
- (f) Assessed boating requirements on a short term and long term basis

- (g) Reviewed current land planning policies and development schemes within the Shire and identified possible sites for future boating facilities
- (h) Positioned the Shire of Denmark in relation to neighbouring Shires in regard to the need and type of future maritime facilities
- (i) Nominated options for landside facilities which met the assessed boating requirements
- (j) Identified probable impacts of any nominated facility development options based on the outcomes of previous studies
- (k) Prepared a final report for submission to the Shire of Denmark for its consideration and assessment of any recommended boating facilities.

## **2.3 WORK PLAN**

### **2.3.1 Study Area**

It was agreed that the study area would include the whole of the Shire of Denmark and the near shore waters adjoining the Shire. This is shown on the map at page 14.

### **2.3.2 Existing Boating Facilities**

The shoreline was inspected and all facilities were recorded.

### **2.3.3 Previous Studies**

A listing of previous studies and a precis of the relevant sections of the previous studies is provided in Section 3.0.

### **2.3.4 Boating Numbers**

Data derived from the commercial and private boat registration systems managed by the Department of Transport appears in Section 3.0. Details of commercial fishing operations within the study area were obtained from the Fisheries Department.

### **2.3.5 Current Boating Activities**

Indicative levels of present boating activities in the ocean were obtained from the observations of Department of Transport Marine Inspectors and from the local sea rescue group.

### **2.3.6 Assessment of Boating Requirements**

The boating activity data obtained was used to assess future boating growth by comparing with the results of questionnaires from previous studies including the PA Australia Study 1981. The requirements for boating facilities in the Shire of Denmark were reviewed by the Steering Committee.

### **2.3.7 Overview of Boating Facilities Within the Shire of Denmark**

Boating facilities within the Shires of Manjimup and Albany, and the Town of Albany were inspected and their relationship in terms of location and use to the facilities proposed for the Shire of Denmark was reviewed.

### **2.3.8 Land Planning and Existing Town Planning Schemes**

Existing Town Planning Schemes were examined to identify areas of land capable of being developed for maritime facilities and the boundaries of land set aside for conservation purposes were noted and the management responsibilities of agencies controlling that land identified.

### **2.3.9 Options for Development**

Options for boating facilities which met boating requirements were identified, taking into account the various constraints associated with available land and coastal processes. Options for development appear in Section 6.0.

### **2.3.10 Social, Physical and Environmental Impacts**

Information contained in previous studies (Section 3) was used to determine the likely impacts of developments. The final recommendations for development are given in Section 7.0.

### **3.0 PREVIOUS STUDIES**

#### **3.1 A Study into Recreation Boating Facilities within Western Australia. PA Australia, September 1981.**

In 1981 PA Australia reported on the recreational boating facilities within Western Australia on behalf of the Public Works Department. PA Australia consulted with the boating public and developed a questionnaire which was used to determine a priority for new boating facilities throughout the State.

PA Australia found that the local population catchment provided the majority of users for existing boat ramps within the Shires of Denmark and Manjimup. In most cases the returns from questionnaires were too low for a meaningful analysis, however it appeared that users were generally satisfied with the standard of facility provided.

#### **3.2 Draft Coastal Management Plan - Shire of Denmark. Department of Conservation and Environment, Western Australia. Bulletin 199, January 1987.**

In the 1980's, growing public awareness of the value of coastal land systems led to the Department of Environmental Protection preparing a number of Management Plans for coastal reserves statewide. The Draft Coastal Management Plan - Shire of Denmark sets out areas of concern within the Shire of Denmark and contains policies, recommendations and site plans to guide the development of coastal reserves within the Shire.

The Plan summarises the natural environment in the Denmark area including climate, geology and physiography and identifies land capability in terms of geographic units and vegetation. It assesses future planning and management needs taking into account economic, social and industrial factors. The importance of the professional fishing industry to the area was noted, however attention was drawn to the possibility of changes in international and national fishing agreements and regulations which might eventually impact on South-West fisheries.

Specifically, the Plan recommends that public vehicle beach access for boat launching and recreational fishing only be permitted at Peaceful Bay and Parry's Beach, and limited access be allowed at Boat Harbour and Ocean Beach for sea search and rescue purposes only. The Plan indicates that further development at Peaceful Bay, in a controlled manner such that the natural beauty of the Peaceful Bay Reserve was retained, would assist the viability of the local community and encourage development of crafts and other cottage industries.

#### **3.3 Draft Albany Region Plan. Department of Planning and Urban Development, May 1993.**

The Albany Region Plan was issued as a draft for public comment in May 1993. It covers the Lower Great Southern Region, an area comprising the Town of Albany and the Shires of Albany, Denmark and Plantagenet. The Plan identifies the area's major economic base as agriculture, with fishing and tourism being significant contributors to the economy, and seeks to :

- (a) Provide a frame work for ongoing community and government co-operation in planning for land use, and coordination of State Government agencies involved in land use issues, and
- (b) Assist and guide the initiatives of Local Authorities in a regional context.

One of the objectives of this Plan is to ensure that productive natural resources are used and managed under sustainable conditions, recognising the environmental and social function of areas set aside from production.

### **3.4 Albany Regional Strategy. State Planning Commission, June 1994.**

The Albany Regional Strategy was prepared as a planning framework for the guidance of development and growth in the lower Great Southern. It was the outcome following distribution and comment on the draft Albany Regional Plan. The Strategy covers the Town of Albany and the Shires of Albany, Denmark and Plantagenet. It has been adopted by the State Planning Commission as a policy and will be used in the future decision-making process. The four local authorities will also have regard to the strategy in their planning processes through the adoption of various town planning scheme policies and where relevant amendments to existing town planning schemes.

The objectives of the strategies contained in this document are to:

- (a) Ensure that productive natural resources are used and managed under sustainable conditions,
- (b) Recognise the environmental and social function of areas set aside for production,
- (c) Ensure the community is supported by adequate social, recreation and education infrastructure,
- (d) Promote the provision of adequate employment opportunities,
- (e) Ensure the natural environment is protected and managed in a sustainable manner,
- (f) Ensure public involvement in the planning process,
- (g) Recognise and identify various land use allocations and development proposals on a catchment basis which may have potential for environmental impact on receival water bodies,
- (h) Ensure the protection of potential land uses, and
- (i) Ensure that the heritage values are protected and managed in a responsible and sustainable manner.

All development in the Shire of Denmark must be addressed and measured against the strategies outlined above.



### **3.5 Strategic Plan for Maritime Facilities. Department of Transport, July 1995.**

The Department of Transport, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, prepared a Strategic Plan for Maritime Facilities for Western Australia. The Plan is a working document which can be used to guide relationships for the provision of maritime facilities with other State Government agencies, Local Government Authorities, industry and community groups.

The Plan has been limited to a consideration of maritime facilities used by small craft, including both commercial vessels and recreation craft. It covers the State Government's involvement with the planning, development and management of public and private maritime facilities including boat harbours, marinas, jetties, launching ramps, slipways and boat lifters, navigation aids and declared channels. Ports for commercial shipping are not part of the Plan because they raise a separate range of issues and involve different stakeholders. Groynes and beach protection works are also excluded since their prime function is related to coastal management rather than maritime facilities.

An Appendix to the Plan makes reference to the potential for boating facilities within the Shire of Denmark as follows:

“West from King George Sound there are very few landing places for small boats, and there are many rocks, shoals and hazards. Heavy swell is present on most occasions, and the "Australia Pilot" calls for local knowledge for all craft navigating near shore. A boat ramp to allow rescue boat access and for fair weather recreational use is sought (subject to EPA approval) at Parry Beach, and leads at Peaceful Bay guide fair weather entry to that small basin at the end of Foul Bay. There are no natural havens accessible from the ocean under all weather conditions in this coastal segment.

For recreational boating, the estuaries and rivers of this coast offer wide opportunities, and thus contain a range of facilities including boat ramps, jetties and dredged channels. While the latter require an ordered program of monitoring and maintenance, there is no plan for development or maintenance of the various facilities at this time. Preliminary concepts for a small harbour and marina in Wilson Inlet are being discussed at present with the Local Government.”

### **3.6 Roads 2020 - Regional Road Development Strategy for the Great Southern Region. Main Roads Department, 1995.**

The Main Roads Department, in consultation with a number of agencies and Local Government Authorities, has developed a road strategy resulting in a set of prioritised road proposals to meet assessed road transport needs in the Great Southern Region up to the year 2020. The Strategy does not set a timeline for development, nor does it indicate funding availability. Of relevance to this study are the following recommendations:

### Priority A Proposals

- \* Albany Highway upgrade between Robinson Road and Albany by widening and providing overtaking lanes.
- \* South West Highway upgrade between Walpole and Albany by widening and providing overtaking lanes.
- \* Muirs Highway upgrade between Mt Barker and Manjimup by widening, and improving the alignment and providing passing lanes in selected locations.
- \* Widening the Denmark-Mt Barker Road.
- \* Widening the Brockman Highway between Augusta and Nannup to 7 metres, upgrading Stuart Road and constructing a two lane road from Brockman Highway to Bussell Highway via Sues Road.

### Priority C Proposals

- \* Providing a second carriageway on Albany Highway between Cranbrook and Mt Barker.

The Strategy will be reviewed at intervals of five years to consider the impacts of funding, and changes in the assumptions and forecasts made in the study. The objective of the road improvement program is to enable driving on major roads to be carried out more safely whilst at the same time reducing the time that it takes to travel between major centres. The tourism industry will be a major beneficiary of these programs.

### **3.7 4 SITE Report - Shire of Denmark. Australian Bureau of Statistics, December 1995**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics was commissioned to provide an overview of social and economic factors affecting the Shire of Denmark. Data based on the 1991 census shows that the most common occupation was as a Manager/Administrator (30.4% of the population compared to 12.1% for the State as a whole). The percentage of the population in all other occupations was less than the State averages. Income figures reflect the outcome of the occupation data. Only 1% of the population had an income of over \$50,000 compared to the State average of 4%, while 75% of the population had an income less than \$25,000 compared to the State average of 59%. These figures indicate the necessity for identifying areas of economic growth in the Shire to improve the standard of living of the bulk of the population of the Shire.

Data relating to businesses in the Shire shows somewhat similar trends. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting provide the bulk of business locations, 71.7% compared to the State average of 22.7%. Manufacturing was 2.8% (State average 6.1%), construction 3.8% (State average 6.9%), wholesale and retail 5.9% (State average 21.8%) while recreation, personal and other services were 3.6% (State average 7.5%). Again, the figures

confirm the need for the provision of infrastructure which will improve the economy of the Shire.

### **3.9 Report on the Feasibility of Establishing an Ocean Boat Launching Ramp for the Denmark Shire Council. Department of Marine and Harbours, Report DMH 25/89**

The Coastal Investigations Branch of the Department of Marine and Harbours examined options for establishing an ocean boat launching ramp for emergency and public use within the Shire of Denmark. Three sites were examined, being Parry Beach, Ocean Beach and Madfish Bay. It concluded that the preferred and recommended site was Parry Beach. The cost, in 1989, was estimated to be \$140,000.

### **3.10 Parry Beach Boat Launching Facility - Consultative Environmental Review. Prepared by the Coastal Information and Engineering Services (CIES) business unit of the Department of Marine and Harbours on behalf of the Shire of Denmark September 1993**

This formal document followed from the above 3.9 project report, addressing the environmental issues as required by the Environmental Protection Authority.

The responses to this document revealed a concern regarding the safety of ocean boating from this site, but more particularly a conflict with the operation of a proclaimed (beach) fishing zone at Parry Beach during the February to April period each year. This conflict proved to be unable to be resolved, but the community discussion did establish a need for a further boating needs study.

### **3.11 Shire of Denmark boating Facilities Study - The Operational Wave Climate at Three Prospective Boat Launching Sites. Tremarfon Pty Ltd, September 1996.**

A numerical modelling exercise based on the real wave climate at the edge of the continental shelf determined the operational wave climate at Ratcliffe Bay, Peaceful Bay and Parry's Beach. Three locations at each site, being at the ramp (relating to launching problems), at the 5 metre contour (transition to open water) and in exposed open water, were evaluated. The evaluation was in terms of the percentage of time when boat operations would be restricted. Since different sized boats can handle different sized waves, the study has listed a range of wave heights in each category. The results are summarised in Table 3 - 1 hereunder.

Activity	Launching			Transit				Navigation			
	0.5m	1.0m	1.5m	1.0m	1.5m	2.0m	3.0m	1.5m	2.0m	3.0m	4.0m
Peaceful Bay	0%	0%	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%	9%	4%	1%	0%
Parry's Beach	9%	7%	3%	8%	4%	2%	0%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Ratcliffe Bay	13%	12%	7%	7%	5%	3%	1%	32%	24%	12%	5%

Table 3 - 1 Percentage of Time when boating is restricted at the three sites.

### 3.12 Private Boat Registrations. Department of Transport, 1996.

The Department of Transport is responsible for maintaining a listing of private boats greater than 3.1 metres in length and able to have a motor in excess of 3.75 kilowatts affixed to them. The listing maintained by the Department can be referred to by postcode.

Details of the postcodes relevant to the Shire of Denmark and this boating facilities study are shown in Drawing 485 -20 - 01, on the following page. Details of private boats registered within this region are shown in Table 3 -2.

PRIVATE BOAT REGISTRATIONS - POSTCODE REPORT					
Postcode	Less than 5.0 metres long	5.0 metres to 6.5 metres	6.5 metres to 8.5 metres	Above 8.5 metres long	Total for all lengths
6333	225	48	3	2	278
6398	56	15	2	0	73
6397	2	1	1	0	4
6324	81	26	1	0	108
6327	8	1	1	0	10
6323	11	5	0	1	17
6322	5	7	0	0	12
6321	20	12	1	0	33
6396	3	4	1	0	8

Table 3 -2 Private Boat Registrations, 1997

### 3.13 The Commercial Fishery. Fisheries Department, January 1996.

The Fisheries Department reviewed the commercial fishing activity in the Denmark Region in response to a request from the Department of Transport for such information. Data relevant to this study is provided in Table 3 - 3. It is relevant to this study to note that both Parry Beach and Peaceful Bay are within proclaimed (beach) fishing zones, which together provide the bulk of the salmon and herring catch for the Denmark Region. Bream, cobbler and crabs are mainly caught in inland waters.

DENMARK REGION						
Species	1994/95		1995/96		1996/97 (prelim)	
	Kg	Value (\$000)	Kg	Value (\$000)	Kg	Value (\$000)
Salmon, herring	365,782	181	191,377	116	319,184	195
Bream, cobbler	50,941	234	26,723	118	79,160	362
Other fish	38,577	112	36,214	85	51,092	125
Crabs	1,118	12	-	-	1,526	5
Total		539		319		687
No of Vessels		13		11		13

Table 3 - 3 Commercial Fishing Catch - Denmark Region



TRANSPORT  
Department of Transport

SHIRE OF  
POST  
WARD BO

6320

6258

3

6397

6398

MT BARKER

SHIRE  
OF  
MANJIMUP

HIGHWAY

6326

NORNALUP

NORNALUP  
WARD

6330

ALBANY

BRIDGE

ROAD

WALPOLE

Nornalup Inlet

SOUTH

EAST POINT

PEACE  
POINT IRWI

Torbay Inlet

TOWN OF  
ALBANY

Princess Royal  
Harbour

TORBAY

SHARP POINT



## 4.0 EXISTING FACILITIES

### 4.1 Shire of Denmark

The extent of the Shire of Denmark is shown on the plan at page 14, as are its Local Government ward boundaries. It has some 50 km of coastline fronting the Southern Ocean. The coastline comprises a sequence of rocky headlands with exposed rocky shore on their western sides, but offering some shelter to inset crenulate bays to their eastward. The main headlands of East Point, Point Irwin, Point Hillier, Wilson Head and West Cape Howe provide the greatest shelter to (respectively) Nornalup Inlet, Peaceful Bay, Parry Beach, Ratcliffe Bay and (in the Shire of Albany) Torbay. Other minor headlands offer less eastern shelter to Boat Harbour. Madfish Bay has good local shelter but its approaches are very exposed.

### 4.2 Site Survey

That part of the ocean coastline within the Shire of Denmark and accessible by four wheel drive vehicles was inspected and a record made of existing boating facilities. Under good conditions, beach launchings by four wheel drive vehicle can be carried out at Ocean Beach, Parry Beach, Boat Harbour and Peaceful Bay. At each of these, the final access to the water is across a changeable sandy beach which erodes each winter and accretes each summer, thus not being suitable for a fixed ramp structure. They each experience unacceptable wave action from both swell and storms. Further potential problems exist, being;

- Ocean Beach has conflicting use from swimmers and surfers as well as unsatisfactory sea conditions in its approaches( see item 3.11);
- Parry Beach and Peaceful Bay have conflict of being proclaimed fishing zones;
- Boat harbour has difficult shore access and is in a National Park.

Other sites briefly reviewed included Madfish Bay, which is approached through a National Park and has very difficult shore access and rough sea approaches, and McGeary's Rock in Ratcliffe Bay which has both difficult shore access and unacceptable sea conditions (see item 3.11).

There are no formal ocean boat launching facilities usable by two wheel drive vehicle giving access to the Southern Ocean in the Shire of Denmark. However, Wilson Inlet is a large and deep estuarine basin which offers extensive opportunities for boating to the Denmark town community and to their visitors. It does not have a permanent natural navigable link to ocean waters, nor could one be easily provided into the rough waters of the adjoining Ratcliffe Bay (see item 3.11 above).

The smaller Irwin Inlet, near Peaceful Bay in the centre of the Shire, has a limited capacity for boating and is without a navigable link to the ocean. Additional facilities could lead to strains on that capacity.

### 4.3 Adjoining Shires and Towns

Albany, located some 50 km from the Denmark townsite, has a large sheltered harbour which can be safely accessed at all times. It has a full range of boating facilities in

addition to being a major port. It offers sites for both sheltered water and open ocean boating and can be considered in many ways as the major regional boating centre. Its existence obviates the justification for major facilities in the Shire of Denmark. The Shire of Manjimup has boating access at Walpole to Nornalup Inlet, which is a large estuarine basin with water exchange to the ocean at all times. Some smaller craft with local knowledge can traverse the small channel to the ocean when seas are calm, but it cannot be fairly rated as ocean access. The estuary, which is some 50 km west of the Denmark townsite and is shallower than Wilson Inlet, could be seen to provide extensive boating opportunities for people in the western half of Denmark Shire but is quite distant for the residents and visitors of Denmark townsite.

## **5.0 BOATING DEMAND**

### **5.1 Recreational Boating**

Registered boat numbers show that locally there are a comparatively small number of craft suitable for operation in the Southern Ocean. Past experience indicates that there have generally been of the order of 25 boat launchings per day across Parry Beach and some 50 at Peaceful Bay in the holiday periods between Christmas and March, which represents a reasonable proportion of the 100 or so larger trailable craft in the region. The figures for the holiday periods can be compared with those for individual boat launching facilities in the Peel Region during the 1996 Australia Day weekend (Department of Transport Boating Study Report 386/96) which showed 240 boat launchings per day from eight (8) boat ramps in the Shire of Murray, and 760 boat launchings per day from sixteen (16) boat ramps in the City of Mandurah.

In a technical sense, all privately registered vessels, greater than 5.0 metres long and having postcodes in or near the Shire of Denmark could be reasonably launched within the Shire from just two boat launching ramps (parking standards are equated to 60 boat launchings per ramp per day). Even taking into account the steady increase in tourism expected in the area, boating numbers at this stage do not justify large expenditures on formal boating facilities within the Shire. The high percentage of four wheel drive motor vehicles licensed to residents of the Shire and used by visitors to the Shire suggests that boat launching across the beach in approved locations is an acceptable means of satisfying the greater part of a local demand for ocean access.

### **5.2 Fishing Industry**

It is unlikely that there will be any increase in the size of the commercial fishing fleet operating in waters adjacent to the Shire under current management practices which are aimed at maintaining a sustainable fishing industry Statewide. An exception to this would be if another class of fishing industry was identified, however if this was the case, the catch would almost certainly be well offshore requiring non-trailable vessels that could effectively be based in Albany. Recent changes to fishing quotas in most areas of the Southern Ocean suggest that at best existing production levels will be maintained. The ocean fishing industry thus does not add to the justification for extensive ocean launching facilities.



### **5.3 Potential for an Increase in Boating Demand**

Although the number of vessels currently owned and operated within the Shire of Denmark is relatively small, there is some potential for a steady growth in the numbers due to three main reasons. These are:

- the area is becoming more desirable. The population within the Shire is continuing to increase with more and more people taking up full time residency as economic conditions improve.
- the area is becoming more accessible. Planned improvements to main highways will bring all areas of the lower Great Southern Region closer to Perth in terms of vehicular access.
- planning processes are now in place to foster the economic development of the area in a sustainable manner.

## 6.0 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

### 6.1 Development Policy

Any development which takes place within the Shire of Denmark should only take place within the framework of an approved development policy. An appropriate development policy for boating facilities within the Shire should take into account the following main factors:

- (a) Existing land planning policies,
- (b) Impacts of the development on the prime drivers of the Shire's economy,
- (c) The extent of notional industrial development areas within the Shire,
- (d) The near shore wave climate of the Southern Ocean,
- (e) Near shore coastal processes, and
- (f) The capacity of the Shire and the State to support and finance the nominated development.

In addressing these issues, the quality of facilities provided should be of major consideration rather than the number of facilities provided. In this regard, the recommendations of the Peel Region Boating Facilities Study (Department of Transport Report 386/96) in respect to a hierarchy of boating facilities would appear appropriate. The recommended hierarchy for the Peel Region (in which maximum daily boat launchings are of the order of 1,300 per day (Report 386/96)) was as follows:

- Level 1** An effective and efficient sea search and rescue organisation.
- Level 2** Ocean recreation boat launching facilities at approved locations accessible by four wheel drive vehicle.
- Level 3** Local boat launching facilities at approved locations accessible by two wheel drive vehicle.
- Level 4** District boat launching facilities at approved locations within the Region with a number of boat launching ramps accessible by two wheel drive vehicles. Substantial adjacent landside development to meet the requirements of the broader community.
- Level 5** District boat launching facilities at approved locations within the Region with a number of boat launching ramps accessible by two wheel drive vehicles. Substantial adjacent landside development to meet the requirements of the broader community within close proximity to shopping. Security, lighting and washdown facilities provided. Access available for launchings and retrieval on the payment of the prescribed fee.
- Level 6** One major boat harbour within the Region.

## 6.2 Constraints on Development

The long term conservation of important marine and land ecosystems is necessary for sustainable regional economic growth within Western Australia. Large areas of coastal land within the Shire of Denmark have been reserved for National Parks, Parkland and Recreation, Protection of Flora or Conservation of Flora. These reserves represent important recreation and tourism opportunities, however they are fragile areas of land and must be dealt with in a sensitive manner. Their presence tends to preclude any significant developments at either Madfish Bay or Boat Harbour.

The known wave climate that exists offshore for the entire coastline of the Shire essentially prohibits development of any simple or basic low cost boating facilities within the Shire. An artificially sheltered harbour is needed to provide safe facilities which are suitable for visitors who do not understand local conditions.

## 6.3 Community Expectations for Boating Facilities

Studies undertaken by the Department of Transport involving questionnaires and community meetings have identified the requirements and expectations of boat users regarding environmental issues, the benefits of boating and the apportionment of costs for providing and maintaining boating facilities.

Common expectations include:

- The main attraction of non-urban boating areas is the natural environment. This sets an upper limit to development in those areas, which need to be protected to ensure that sustainable limits are not exceeded.
- The main towns are seen to be both residential and important holiday centres.
- Integrated facilities benefit the whole of the community and therefore every effort should be made to locate boating facilities adjacent to other community facilities.
- Boating is a family pastime and should be planned as such.
- The cost of boating should be equitably apportioned among the beneficiaries.

## 6.4 Financial Considerations

The Strategic Plan for Maritime Facilities (see 3.5) sets out the criteria for determining funding priorities for public boating facilities. Factors which are considered include:

- Level of (widest) community support
- Financial and economic viability
- Boating safety considerations
- Statutory planning and environmental considerations

Of relevance to this study is the criteria for public boat launching ramps which is summarised as follows:

“The Department of Transport will seek funding from Government for fifty percent (50%) of the cost of a public boat ramp (outside of its harbours) or of an upgrade which adds to the handling capacity of an existing ramp which can be justified by recreational need (or in remote areas on the grounds of public safety). This is conditional upon the site being suitable for the permanent facility and the Local Government being prepared to own and maintain the ramp and to provide matching capital funds. This assistance does not extend to the cost of road access, manoeuvring areas and car/trailer parking areas.

Where a boat ramp requires a harbour (comprising breakwaters, channels, navigation aids) to be built solely for its shelter that harbour will be dealt with as a public boat harbour. The boat ramp owner will be required to accept the full cost of operating and maintaining the harbour.”

In its strategy for public harbours, the Department of Transport will seek Government funds to construct boat harbours according to priorities which will be determined after consideration of the following factors:

- level of community support
- financial and economic viability
- boating safety considerations
- statutory planning and environmental considerations.

The strategy has other components which are not directly relevant to a simple boat ramp shelter. They do, however, reinforce the need for wide community and statutory planning support for the whole project, which normally includes the approval of a rock quarry in reasonable proximity to the harbour site.

Clearly, the Shire of Denmark with its low ratepayer base, will have difficulty in funding any major works associated with formal boating facilities within the Shire. Alternative funding sources thus need to be investigated. It is possible that the provision of boating facilities could be made a condition of residential subdivision of land being developed adjacent to the ocean, at sites where conditions in the ocean are suitable for a facility. Non-coastal land developers could be made to contribute to a Boating Facility Trust Account which could then be used for boating facilities of the Shire of Denmark's choice. This would enable the development of boating facilities to be implemented within a shorter timeframe than otherwise would be the case. However, sites for boating facilities still have to be identified and be accepted by the community before such a system could be put in place.

## **6.5 Development Options**

### **Level 1 Standard Boating Facility - Sea Search and Rescue**

The Denmark Sea Search and Rescue group is located on a leasehold site at Ocean Beach, Denmark. It operates a radio watch on HF and UHF, and has a 4 metre rigid base inflatable for nearshore local rescue use. It can call on 6 or 7 local boats for a Sea Search and Rescue task. The Albany group can be called out for offshore rescue, for which they are well equipped.

This site is believed to be the best available option for the local sea rescue group, in the absence of any reasonably sheltered harbour in the area. It has been agreed by the Shire that their boats can have priority use of the sheltered corner of Ratcliffe Bay. It is also an acceptable site for group members with expertise and local sea knowledge should they be able to acquire a larger inflatable boat.

### **Level 2 Standard Boating Facility - Beach Launchings**

Boat launching and retrieval by four wheel drive vehicle across the beach is an acceptable option for many local boat users. Issues to be examined when considering across-the-beach launching include environmental and social factors and protection of the adjacent dune system, as well as normal land use and community planning issues such as road access, parking, rubbish collection and disposal, landscaping, and ablution facilities.

It is recommended that beach launchings and retrievals at Peaceful Bay continue to be permitted. Permitted beach launchings and retrievals at Parry Beach could be constrained to be outside of the commercial herring and salmon fishing season if an accommodation cannot be found, as exists at Peaceful Bay, between boaters and the fishing licensee.

### **Level 3 Standard Boating Facility - Local Area Boat Ramp**

Local area boat launching facilities have been defined as boat ramps suitable for use by trailerable vessels and two wheel drive vehicles. By definition, extensive landside development is not included in this class of facility since the purpose of the facility is to meet the requirements of the local population. Due to the problems of ocean exposure along the whole of the coastline of the Shire of Denmark it is believed that there can be no Level 3 Standard Ocean Boating Facilities within the Shire in the short term. A facility to this or to Level 4 Standard will need to be provided with artificial shelter from a heavy rock breakwater, which may be easier to economically justify if it will permit that higher standard development to be undertaken.

### **Level 4 Standard Boating Facility - District Area Boat Ramp**

District area boat launching facilities have been defined as multiple boat ramps suitable for use by trailerable vessels and two wheel drive vehicles with extensive landside development adjacent, meeting the requirements of the district population. Again, because of the problems of ocean exposure it is believed that there can be no Level 4 Standard Boating Facility provided within the Shire in the short term. However, all of the landside facilities associated with a Level 4 Boating Facility could be provided at Peaceful Bay.

### **Level 5 Standard Boating Facility - Regional Boat Ramps**

Regional boat launching facilities have been defined as multiple boat ramps suitable for use by trailerable vessels and two wheel drive vehicles at all conditions of tide, with extensive adjacent landside development, including commercial facilities, which meet the requirements of residents and visitors to the Region. Since the inclusion of commercial activity is not compatible with the feasible boating sites it is recommended that there be no Level 5 Standard Boating Facilities provided within the Shire.

### **Level 6 Standard Boating Facility - Boat Harbour**

It is recommended that there be no Level 6 Standard Boating Facilities provided within the Shire.

## **6.6 CONCLUSIONS**

It is clear that there are no immediate development options, other than some minor expansion of shore facilities at Peaceful Bay, for boating facilities on the ocean shoreline of the Shire of Denmark.

Sites with the potential for boating use, such as Parry Beach and Peaceful Bay, are already alienated by incompatible land area or water area activities. For the future, a site needs to be settled on which can have the existing constraints to land or water use changed to allow a viable sheltered haven to be built.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Short Term

Since it has not been possible to find either a site or a clear justification for a major public ocean boating facility in the Shire of Denmark, the short term recommendations are to:

- ensure continued ocean access for the local Sea Rescue group at Ocean Beach;
- support the continuation of the existing beach launching activities at both Peaceful Bay and Parry Beach;
- upgrade the shore support facilities at Peaceful Bay where needed by the local community.

### 7.2 Planning for the Longer Term

The Shire of Denmark clearly has three main problems to overcome before it will obtain ocean boating facilities. These will persist in the longer term unless action is initiated to address the problems of:

#### **Finance:**

Consideration should be given to establishing a fund, possibly linked to development, which will in time provide some funds for a sheltered boating facility in the Shire. While assistance may be available from the State Government, it will require some matching money from the Shire.

#### **Site:**

All acceptable boating facility sites (ie sites from which boats can safely transit to the open ocean) have existing and conflicting uses, either on land or on water. These uses cannot be changed unless the broad local community, which is represented by the Shire, decides that it wants to give priority to boating use. It will then require either formal planning and environmental review, or a review of existing statutory use provisions, before the change can occur.

For example, if Parry Beach is preferred for a recreational boating development (because of its closeness to Denmark, or its existing shore land reservation, or its proximity to stone for breakwater construction) then the existing priority for beach fishing along the whole shore of the present proclaimed fishing zone will have to be modified. This need not require immediate action, but some change could be foreshadowed for a future time when changes could occur to the management of the fishing zone.

Alternatively, should Madfish Bay be preferred and be shown to be feasible at a reasonable cost, then land access which is compatible with the National Park together with an excision from that Park will have to be negotiated and validated through a statutory process. The draft of boats intended to access this site needs to be considered though, as the approaches may not be suited to larger craft seeking refuge.

Should Peaceful Bay be selected as the preferred regional facility then both the proclaimed fishing zone and the shore land classification will need to be modified through statutory processes and validation.

To assist with this conceptual planning, basic concept sketches indicating breakwaters which could be effective at Peaceful Bay and Parry Beach are shown as Sketch 1 and Sketch 2 at the end of this report.

**Facility type:**

Past efforts have been to obtain a basic facility aimed primarily to serve the needs of Search and Rescue, but also serving the local boating community. These groups are of insufficient size to justify the high cost of an artificially sheltered harbour. If the facility concept were to be expanded to include a wider "user group" (for example, tourists, travellers or the fishing industry) and including some appropriate land space for those groups, then justification on economic grounds for the type of development such as was recently built at Bremer Bay could be more possible.

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**Other Boating Facilities Studies in this Series:**

- |     |                                 |               |
|-----|---------------------------------|---------------|
| (a) | Shire of Busselton              | Report 365/95 |
| (b) | Shire of Augusta-Margaret River | Report 377/96 |
| (c) | Shire of Gingin                 | Report 380/96 |
| (d) | Shire of Coorow                 | Report 381/96 |
| (e) | Shire of Broome                 | Report 383/96 |
| (f) | Shire of Greenough              | Report 385/96 |
| (g) | Peel Region                     | Report 386/96 |





**Sketch 1**

Peaceful Bay - Possible location of sheltered boat launching ramp and anchorage.



**Sketch 2**

Parry Beach - Possible location of shelter for boatramp and anchorage.