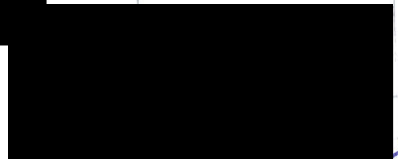
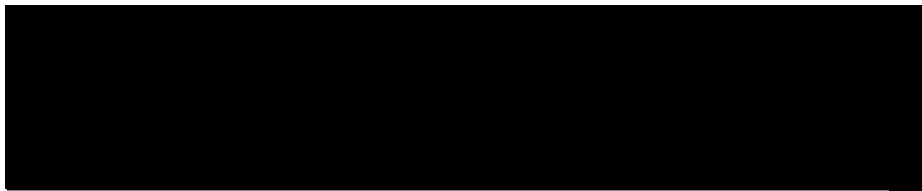


HLTH-1

Shire Of Denmark  
 150156787  
 16 JUN 2015



16<sup>th</sup> June 2015

**ATTENTION: GREG HARWOOD, DENMARK SHIRE**

**RE: PUBLIC COMMENT ON MCLEAN PARK OVERFLOW AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION ACCOMODATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

DIR of FINANCE	
DIR of PLANNING	
INFRASTRUCTURE	
DIR of COMMUNITY	✓
OTHER	

I am very concerned with the use of McLean Park and more specifically the sporting oval as an accommodation facility. Despite the Shire's best intentions for it to be cleaned up, the smallest piece of glass hidden in a vast grassy oval could cut open someone's leg whilst playing football or soccer, or lead to costly vet bills if an animal were to tread on some glass.

I am also concerned that in 4.5 there is a maximum stay quoted as 7 days. If this is an overflow meant purely for the Easter long weekend and the period between Christmas and New Year, then this should not be 7 days. The document in itself is contradictory, as it states on Page 3 in paragraph 2 "approximately 4 days over Easter and 3 days between Christmas and New Year". I would there for see the maximum stay as 4 days.

I am concerned with 4.8 in that I believe the Shire should ensure that sporting activities undertaken by the members and ratepayers of Denmark should have precedence over camping. Sport is a huge part of Denmark and regular activities should not be disrupted for last minute tourists.

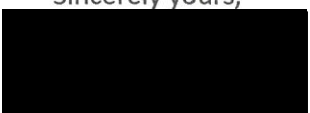
I am unsure as to the meaning of 4.11. Which council policy is being referred to? Either way it is firstly asking for it to be supporting and consistent, yet then may be amended by the CEO. Without even knowing which policy this relates to, I think that this clause loans itself to abuse, and any alterations to a policy such as this should have to come back to council if it is to be amended.

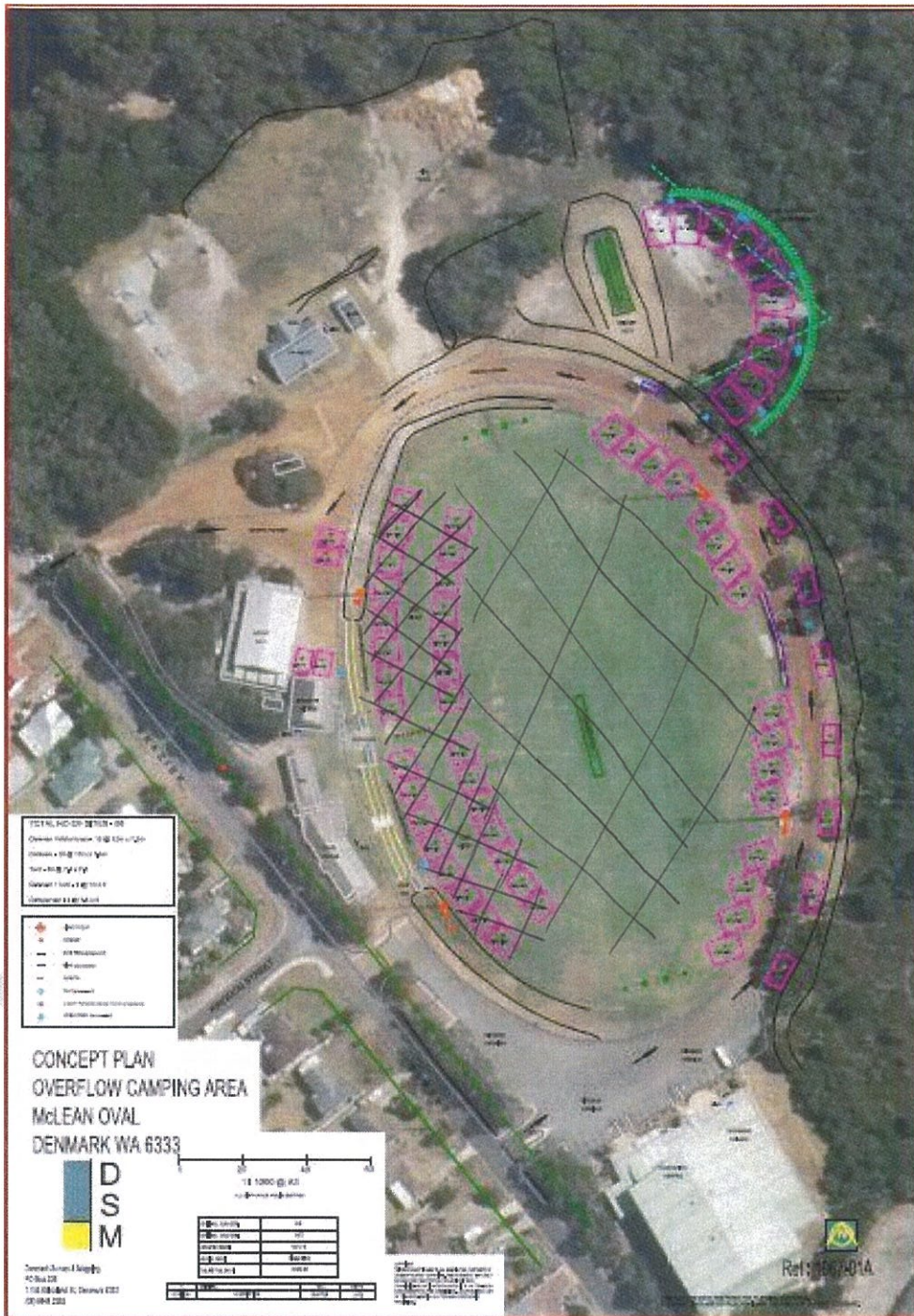
4.12 seems again to be giving the CEO ultimate power over the rules and regulations of this development. I was of the understanding that these documents were the guidelines and rules, and these should certainly not be open to changes without proper approval through council.

Most seriously, there needs to be a clause added to ensure that NO camping or vehicles of any description be permitted on the sporting oval (this is to include the AFL, Soccer and Cricket pitches). I have attached a map of the proposed development, and I have crossed out the area I believe to be fundamental to our sporting clubs in Denmark and this area must not be jeopardised by having camping/caravanning allowed on it.

Look forward to experiencing the resulting action and implementation as a consequence of community consultation, particularly this public comment forum.

Sincerely yours,





McLean Park Site Plan (Site Numbers and Powered / Unpowered Bays yet to be marked)

Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Denmark  
PO Box 183  
Denmark WA 6333

**Re: Overflow Camping & McLean Park Overflow Camping Area**

Dear Sir,

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA) supports Council’s proposal to develop additional facilities at McLean Park.

Our members are significant users of commercial caravan park facilities. Research undertaken in the outback Queensland tourism region by Tourism Research Australia (TRA) found that 34% of recreational vehicle (RV) travellers only use caravan parks, 16% only use non-commercial accommodation and 50% use both commercial and non-commercial accommodation options. Recent research undertaken in South Gippsland by Dr Anne Hardy from the University of Tasmania produced very similar results. The TRA research also found that the 50% of RV travellers using a mix of accommodation options had the highest daily spend.

I have attached a copy of CMCA's position paper on ‘Low-Cost, Self-Contained RV Accommodation’.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted contact information]

26th July 2015



# CMCA Position Paper

## Low Cost, Self-contained RV Accommodation

### Contents

- 1. Synopsis..... 2
- 2. Overview ..... 3
- 3. Issues Analysis..... 4
  - Issue 1 ..... 4
  - Issue 2 ..... 5
  - Issue 3 ..... 8
  - Issue 4 ..... 10



## 1. Synopsis

- Innovative technology has significantly changed the facilities and capabilities of modern recreational vehicles with a major shift in the RV market to self-contained vehicles, those with on-board shower, toilet, water storage and electrical generation capacity.
- Changes in vehicle facilities and capabilities have in turn significantly changed the type of accommodation self-contained RV tourists want and prefer, with the market moving towards low-cost, no-frills camping and away from caravan parks.
- Self-Contained recreational vehicles (RV) are the major growth area of RV tourism, with most of this growth now occurring through the manufacture of caravans from 1.6 tonnes to 3 tonnes.
- The key market for caravan parks is families, with caravan parks competing aggressively with each other, and other low-cost accommodation providers, to attract this seasonal market.
- A secondary market for caravan parks is the touring market, predominantly retirees, and self-contained RVs are a significant segment of this market.
- The basic accommodation product for self-contained RV tourists is a dump point, potable and non-potable water and a place to park. RV tourists are prepared to pay up to \$10 a night for this product.
- Most caravan parks need to charge \$30 per night or more for an unpowered site in order to cover costs and get an acceptable return on investment.
- There is a gap in the RV accommodation market between the price of the lowest cost product provided by most caravan parks and the price self-contained RV tourists are prepared to pay to access basic, no frills RV accommodation.
- To address the RV accommodation market gap and meet the needs of self-contained RV tourists, many councils are providing low-cost, non-commercial RV accommodation options.
- There are significant economic benefits to local communities when councils provide low-cost accommodation to maximise visitation by RV tourists, along with challenges for councils in providing these services.
- Councils must develop policies and associated management plans to effectively manage RV tourism in their regions.
- Councils should involve their communities in the development and management of RV tourism to ensure clear understandings of the issues and challenges this market presents and to maximise the economic and social benefits it can deliver.

## 2. Overview

The development and management of low-cost accommodation facilities for the self-contained RV market must be understood in the context of the impact of technology on RV manufacturing and how this has driven the growth of RV sales in Australia over the past decade.

Some of the key innovations over the past 10 years influencing RV design include:

- More efficient and cost-effective solar panels providing no-cost, renewable energy to the vehicle.
- LED lighting dramatically reducing power consumption.
- Construction methodologies using light weight composite, highly insulated panels.
- Vacuum toilet technology, developed for aircraft toilets, being transferred to the RV market.
- Instant, energy efficient hot water systems from the domestic market adapted for RV use.
- Low decibel inverter generators producing less than 60 dB.
- Availability of low cost, high capacity pure sine wave inverters allowing the direct connection of devices such as lap tops, mobile phones, tablets, HDTV, compressor refrigerators and the like to the RV environment.
- Lithium ion batteries 50% lighter than the equivalent lead acid batteries, with three times the longevity, significantly faster recharge and providing a more cost effective energy storage option.
- Automatic satellite locating dishes plus satellite decoding boxes providing TV reception at any location Australia wide.
- Mobile internet modem and router, creating a Wi-Fi hotspot within the RV to connect multiple devices, allowing the RV tourists to access the internet almost anywhere in Australia.

As a result of these technological advances RV manufacturers worldwide are producing sophisticated and very comfortable, self-contained “mobile homes” with a very similar mix of on-board facilities whether the vehicle is self-propelled or towed.

Self-contained RVs are those vehicles with the minimum on-board facilities of a toilet and fresh water storage tank, and include motorhomes, caravans, 5<sup>th</sup> Wheelers, some campervans and slide-ons, and even some camper trailers. These vehicles usually also have on-board shower, electrical generation capacity (solar panels, generator) and high performance batteries. Most motorhomes and some caravans have on-board grey water tanks or grey water containment facilities and even laundry facilities.

Most RV manufacturers will fit grey water tanks to caravans as a factory option and these tanks can also be fitted aftermarket.

Self-contained RVs do not NEED to externally access electricity, freshwater (except to fill tanks), toilet or shower facilities when stopping overnight and consequently do not NEED to access the facilities of a full-service commercial caravan park. However, many may and do choose to access a caravan park for a range of reasons.

Under the Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) Leave No Trace® Scheme, member vehicles are certified as meeting a set self-containment criteria established by the club. Members are also required to sign up to a code of conduct based on the maxim they leave nothing behind but tyre tracks.

A low-cost camping ground or RV park for self-contained vehicles need only include a dump point with potable and non-potable water, and an area of flat, stable land of a size to allow larger vehicles to park and manoeuvre, with easy access to and from the roadway. It is preferable land area is not adjacent to residential areas and located a reasonable distance from commercial caravan parks.

With an estimated 85% of CMCA member vehicles including some level of self-containment, CMCA supports the development of low-cost RV accommodation for self-contained vehicles as an integral part of the overall accommodation mix for the Australian drive tourism market.

### 3. Issues Analysis

#### Issue 1

**The rapid growth in sales of self-contained caravans, outstripping that of motorhomes, has significantly increased demand for low-cost, no-frills parking and camping options.**

In 2001, self-contained vehicles were motorhomes. Very few caravans had showers, toilets or electrical generation facilities on board, and caravans relied on the services of caravan parks.

Over the past six years, just under 120,000 RVs were manufactured in Australia with the major growth segment being caravans between 1.6 tonnes and 3 tonnes, approximately 17 foot to 24 foot, nearly all self-contained. These vehicles are promoted as “freedom machines” with customers often advised that the on-board facilities mean they can freedom camp where they choose. As a result,

there has been a rapid change in the travel patterns of caravans and the accommodation experience being sought by self-contained RV tourists, towards low-cost camping and away from caravan parks.

Demand for low-cost RV accommodation for RV tourists is now dominated by caravanners, many of whom do not have the facility to contain grey water and need a larger parking area than most motorhomes.

A decade ago motorhomes using low-cost and no cost RV accommodation was an irritant to the caravan park industry. However, the growth in self-contained caravans and the shift by caravanners towards non-commercial accommodation has seen the caravan park industry struggling to respond and highlights the industry's lack of flexibility in its product and its pricing structures.

Over the past 10 years, including locally manufactured and imported vehicles, more than 200,000 RVs have been sold in Australia while the number of caravan parks has decreased by approximately 10%.

## **Issue 2**

**Caravan parks are no longer low-cost accommodation providers and generally do not offer products priced to meet the “no-frills” requirements of the self-contained RV market.**

Caravan parks have historically operated at the bottom of the tourism accommodation market but this has changed over the last decade. Caravan parks in Australia operate on an annual average occupancy of 57.8%<sup>1</sup> and are heavily reliant on revenue generated by family tourists (52.1% of visitor nights<sup>2</sup>) over school holiday peak seasons, approximately 12 weeks a year. Over the past 10 to 15 years caravan parks have evolved their business model to focus on this market, developing a wide range of auxiliary products and services (over and above the basic facilities of power, water, shower and toilet). These auxiliary facilities have been added to compete mainly with other caravan parks, but also other low-cost fixed accommodation providers such as motels and hostels.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012

<sup>2</sup> Ibis world - Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds and Australia 2013



An example of auxiliary products offered by caravan parks are those the Windmill Caravan Park in Ballarat advertises on its website to attract and retain the family market:

1. A flat parking space
2. Rubbish bins
3. Power connection
4. Water connection
5. New Indoor heated pool with 2 spas splash pad and lap pool
6. Free Wireless Internet
7. Large Jumping Pillow
8. Sauna
9. Mini Gym
10. Tennis Court
11. Playground
12. Indoor Sandpit
13. BBQ Area
14. BBQ Camp Kitchen
15. Heated Recreation Complex
16. Camp Kitchen
17. Internet Kiosk
18. Kiosk
19. Laundry
20. Free children's activities during Victorian school holidays
21. Swap 'n' go gas exchange
22. Children's Bathroom
23. Tourist information
24. Local Attraction discount vouchers
25. Games Room with 4 dedicated gaming computers
26. Exercise Facilities including treadmill
27. Guests are invited to pick from our complimentary Garden that contains seasonal herbs such as Sage, Parsley, Mint and other herbs there for your enjoyment

Outside of school holidays there is a secondary market available to caravan parks (26.5% of visitor nights<sup>3</sup>) being "touring" RV tourists who are predominantly retirees travelling on average 156 days a year and generally seek basic low-cost accommodation options. A significant segment of this market is self-contained RVs.

Caravan parks have invested heavily in developing a range of auxiliary products and, faced with other operational costs, must maintain the integrity of their tariffs to ensure an acceptable return on investment. This generally means selling an unpowered site at around \$30 to \$40 per night. Consequently, caravan parks have created a price gap in the market between the lowest priced product they offer and the price self-contained RV tourists are prepared to pay for a low cost, basic camping ground product.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibis world - Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds and Australia 2013

Some caravan parks, usually in more remote locations, have not developed the “full service” model and can provide low-cost camping options to attract support from self-contained RV tourists.

It should be noted that in its report *Caravan Parks and Camping grounds and Australia - November 2013*, IBISWorld identified the following key industry facts:

- Despite the loss of an average 13 caravan parks per year over the past five years, overall industry revenue has grown at an annual rate of 1.9% over the past 10 years and this is expected to increase to 2.1% over the next five years.
- Over the past decade a major industry change has been the general improvement of facilities offered with operators upgrading unpowered sites to include power or replaced them with cabins and flats. Improved facilities, at higher tariffs and improved occupancy rates, have contributed to greater industry revenue over the past five years, despite lower site numbers.
- Many operators have substantially upgraded amenities and recreational facilities to meet the rising expectations of campers and to justify increased tariffs.
- Families are the biggest users of caravan parks, contributing 52.1% of industry revenue.
- Tourists aged over 55 years currently represent an estimated 26.5% of industry revenue and this percentage is expected to grow to over 30% in the next five years. (IbisWorld 2013)
- International tourists account for just 9.7% of industry revenue but there is large scope for this to grow over the next five years.
- While 56.9% of accommodation offered by the caravan park industry is powered caravan sites, cabins return a significantly higher yield per square metre and are the growth area of the industry. The number of cabins has doubled in the past 15 years leading to an increase in employment in the industry.
- Short-term unpowered sites represent just 14.3% of caravan park accommodation and this is expected to decline over the next five years.
- There have been basically no new major caravan parks or camping grounds built Australia-wide over the past five years. The relatively low potential investment returns and the large regulatory hurdles involved do not give new or existing operators sufficient motivation.
- Currently 37.7% of caravans parks are corporately owned or part of member based buying/marketing groups. The remainder are predominantly individually owned/operated businesses.

- There are no formal qualifications required to operate in this industry, although experience and training in various aspects of hospitality is desirable. Basic business operation and hospitality skills are necessary to operate a caravan park. (IbisWorld 2013)

In summary, the supply of unpowered sites in caravan parks has decreased substantially over the past 10 years due to a general decline in the number of caravan parks and the conversion of unpowered sites to either powered sites or cabins. As caravan parks move away from parking caravans and into being family resorts, they have left a gap at the bottom of the RV accommodation market for no-frills basic camping grounds, a gap currently being filled by councils and community based organisations.

### **Issue 3**

#### **Local government is formally recognising and managing low-cost and no cost RV accommodation as part of their tourist accommodation infrastructure.**

Free camping grounds have existed around Australia for decades with many developed by councils in the 1950s and 1960s as community recreational facilities. This was a time when motor vehicle ownership was growing and young families looked to camping and caravanning as the most affordable family holiday options.

The development of the grey nomad market in the 1980s and 1990s saw retirees travelling Australia in caravans, campervans and motorhomes, gradually increasing the use of existing free camping grounds as they sought to stretch their pension cheques and extend their travel time.

By 2000, a relatively small number of vehicles (compared to current numbers) were accessing Council camping grounds and other low-cost or no-cost facilities such as rest areas and bush camps. The caravan parks saw self-contained motorhomes as a problem due to their on-board facilities, but as caravan parks very much owned the caravanning market, their opposition to motorhomers using low-cost accommodation was relatively low key.

The rapid growth in the self-contained RV market over the past decade and particularly the growth in self-contained caravans, has seen a massive increase in demand for low-cost camping areas and high usage of existing facilities. This demand is being driven by baby boomers reaching retirement age, healthier and wealthier than their predecessors, and looking for lifestyle experiences in regional and outback Australia.

In response, councils have developed policies to manage access to these facilities and management plans to ensure these policies are properly enacted. Many councils have formally recognised low-cost camping grounds, rest areas, RV parking areas and bush camps as part of their tourism infrastructure and sought to manage these facilities to maximise their economic value to the local community.

The CMCA RV Friendly Town Scheme<sup>®</sup> has been used by more than 30% of councils across Australia as a tool for managing the provision of low-cost accommodation. CMCA has been active in representing the interests of self-contained RV tourists and maintaining access to low-cost RV accommodation where ever possible.

Some LGA's have decided not to become involved in provision of low-cost and no cost accommodation options while others struggled to come to terms with the policy and management challenges inherent to these facilities. As a result, State governments have become more proactive in working with councils to develop a full range of RV tourism facilities.

In providing low-cost and no-cost accommodation facilities, councils are servicing the gap in the market between the unpowered site product offered by caravan parks and the low-cost camping wants and needs of self-contained RV tourists. These councils provide this accommodation product maximise RV tourist visitation to their region.

In some locations a market gap does not exist as the local caravan park provides low-cost accommodation options. However, the growing RV traveller preference for an accommodation experience other than that offered by caravan park means demand for low-cost camps still exists.

Research undertaken with CMCA members<sup>4</sup> and also with RV tourists using no cost camping grounds in North Queensland<sup>5</sup> found that generally, self-contained RV tourists are prepared to pay up to \$10 per night for no-frills camping options.

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<sup>4</sup> Balfour Consulting – CMCA Member Research 2010

<sup>5</sup> Balfour Consulting - Rest Area Research 2010

## Issue 4

**Councils and local communities do not always fully appreciate the challenges and potential benefits of RV tourism, how to maximise these benefits and minimise any negative impacts.**

Until very recently, the self-contained RV market was well understood by State tourism organisations and many local tourism bodies. This was generally because RV tourists do not spend through traditional tourism channels where their spending patterns could be measured and recorded, and as their average daily spend is low they were considered low value tourists who should and would access caravan parks.

As the number of self-contained RV tourists grew, the caravan parks industry attacked those accessing low-cost accommodation as bludgers, wanting local ratepayers to foot the bill for their accommodation and too cheap to pay the “fair tariffs” offered by caravan parks. This argument was not only wrong but created escalating antagonism between RV tourists and caravan park operators, with councils often caught in the middle. Unfortunately, this antagonism has created entrenched and quite negative attitudes on both sides.

Research has found of the total RV tourists, 34% stay only in caravan parks, 16% stay only in non-commercial accommodation and 50% use a mix of non-commercial and caravan park accommodation. The 50% of RV tourists who use a mix of caravan parks and non-commercial accommodation are the largest spending segment<sup>6</sup>. This research suggests that at any one time there are at least 45,000 RVs on the road, wanting a mix of accommodation options with a further 14,000 vehicles only looking for low-cost, basic camping options and never staying in caravan parks.

Councils have found themselves faced with the choice of whether or not to provide low-cost accommodation for RV tourists and implications this choice may have for the development of tourism in their region.

Over the past decade, many councils have come to understand that self-contained RV tourism can deliver significant economic benefit to their community. Key to this economic benefit is the diffusion of the RV tourist spending across a wide range of businesses in the community.

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<sup>6</sup> Tourism Research Australia - Queensland's outback central West visitor profile and satisfaction survey, 2010

Councils have also come to understand the challenges of managing low-cost and no cost RV accommodation to meet community expectations, protect environmental standards, ensure proper use of facilities and overcome objections from commercial caravan park operators.

Communities in regional and outback Australia do not need to invest in extensive tourism infrastructure to benefit from self-contained RV tourism. What communities do need is a good understanding of how to engage with RV tourists to understand their wants and needs. Community engagement and consultation is critical to developing positive interactions between local businesses and community groups, and the RV tourists visiting their local area.

Becoming a CMCA RV Friendly Town<sup>®</sup> is a management tool that attracts visitation while providing a constant reminder to the community of the importance of RV tourism. It also ensures facilities are in place to meet the basic needs of self-contained RVs, helps prevent inappropriate behaviours such as illegal overnight parking or improper disposal of waste, maximises the benefits this market can deliver and can attract up to 77%<sup>7</sup> of RV tourist who use low-cost accommodation. However, these outcomes cannot be fully achieved without the involvement and support of the local community.

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<sup>7</sup> Balfour Consulting – CMCA Member Research 2010

Dear [REDACTED] ..... and Ross, John, Dale and Gregg

Thank you all for taking the time to meet with [REDACTED] and me on Tuesday to discuss the McLean Oval overflow facility. As promised, I am writing to confirm our understanding of the outcomes of the meeting, and to highlight actions that were agreed.

At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the Caravan Park industry would support the McLean Oval overflow facility being developed, on the understanding that industry would work in partnership with the Shire in deciding when to activate the facility and when to close it. It was suggested and agreed by both parties that a committee with industry and Shire representatives would be the appropriate mechanism.

Overall, details of the management mechanism discussed and agreed at our meeting is summarised below. We do recognise that the formal consultation process on the overflow facility has just been advertised by the Shire, which means that other interested parties (including other caravan park owners not in the room) will now have an opportunity to provide feedback. I would recommend that you also take the opportunity to reiterate your position formally to the Shire through that process.

Tourism WA supports the following that we discussed:

1. A committee that includes Shire and industry representatives would monitor the occupancy levels within the caravan parks, and make the decision on when to activate overflow facilities. Industry agrees to share its occupancy data to enable such a decision to be made. (The Shire has subsequently suggested a committee structure as follows: two industry representatives, two Shire staff and a Councillor – do provide your feedback on this as discussed above).
2. When regularly licenced bays have reached 90% occupancy levels (details within the management plan), the privately owned overflow facilities would first be opened. We recognise that this is a simplification of the process, and it might be that through regular monitoring the committee can estimate a date at which it expects 90% occupancy to be reached and then sets a date at which overflow can be used within your parks. This would be a more proactive rather than reactive approach.
3. Once the privately owned overflow facilities are at 90% (or at a date they are projected to be such), McLean Oval's overflow facility would be opened. Again the committee would decide this.
4. The committee would work together to determine the 'moving on' and 'close down' policies for the McLean Oval overflow facility.

We understand that is not the Shire's intention that McLean Oval house event attendees or groups in preference to existing caravan parks. However having the facility available may be of benefit in exceptional and possibly unforeseen circumstances; it would make sense for the committee to have some say in the use of the Oval in this way, and again I would suggest providing your formal feedback on this issue.

There was discussion of the committee inputting into the pricing policy for McLean Oval overflow sites. While the committee can make recommendations, it was acknowledged that the Council must make the final decisions on all Shire fees and charges due to legislative requirements.

In fact, we do recognise that local government decision making is guided by legislation, so the details of how committee decisions flow through to the accountable decision maker will need to be confirmed. In addition, in a separate conversation with Shire officers they agreed to prepare a fact

sheet to help explain the practical application of the overflow policy, with examples and scenarios. We would also be very interested in reviewing such information.

Based on the positive outcomes from our meeting, and with commitment of all parties to working together for the benefit of all in Denmark, Tourism WA will continue with the planned grant allocation to the Shire of Denmark for the McLean Park overflow facility.

#### Caravans on private land

The second issue that was discussed does not relate directly to this agency – the Shire policy on allowing friends and family (non-commercial visitors) to park caravans on private land for 7 days maximum (up from the current State level of 3 days). Discussion revealed that the Shire wants to encourage Denmark as a destination for visiting friends and relatives, and not to set precedent for quasi-commercial caravan and camping opportunities. Industry was encouraged to provide its views in writing during the consultation period – and as an interested party, Tourism WA will do the same.

Once again it was a pleasure to meet with you all. Feel free to contact Stephanie or me if you have questions on the above. If you have any detailed questions about our activities in the caravan and camping sector, please contact [REDACTED] who is Project Manager for the State wide Caravan and Camping Action Plan.

I have also copied [REDACTED], CEO of the Caravan Industry Association to this email, as I know he is visiting in the next week for further discussions.

Thanks once again and kind regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



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Dear Gregg

I have attached a copy below of the email we received from the Tourism Council WA, following our meeting to discuss accepting the funding for the facility of the Overflow area on McLean Oval.

We were of the understanding that a committee of both **Denmark Shire Representative, Denmark Visitors Centre Representative and Caravan Park Operator Representative** must be formed to decide pricing scheduling, operational dates of the facility and occupancy percentages of operating parks in the area to establish operation of overflow area.

**All parks can confirm that no correspondence from the Shire of creating this committee or to discuss arrangements as indicated in the email below has been received.**

I would like to reiterate my concerns to the policy below:

All of the caravan parks must be 90% full, inclusive of overflow camping areas.

All 9 caravan parks must be included in the Shire to establish percentages of occupancy.

No prior bookings are to be accepted/made for the overflow area.

Special events – all caravan parks must be full before this option of Overflow facility be investigated or used (i.e. – Caravan clubs, sporting events, etc..)

The Fee for patrons using the overflow area must be 5% to 10% higher than the rack rate of existing caravan parks. – (We feel this to be fair, as no caravan park has the same overheads of running their operation; by not charging an appropriate fee, the Denmark Ratepayers will subsidising someone's holiday in Denmark.)

I feel these points are valid as I would very disappointed to think that a Council's poor or ill informed decision could have adverse effects on operating caravan parks in the Shire.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 May 2015 1:04 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Follow up from meeting on McLean Oval overflow facility (12 May 2015)  
**Importance:** High

Dear [REDACTED] Ross, John, Dale and Gregg

Thank you all for taking the time to meet with [REDACTED] and me on Tuesday to discuss the McLean Oval overflow facility. As promised, I am writing to confirm our understanding of the outcomes of the meeting, and to highlight actions that were agreed.

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We understand that is not the Shire's intention that McLean Oval house event attendees or groups in preference to existing caravan parks. However having the facility available may be of benefit in exceptional and possibly unforeseen circumstances; it would make sense for the committee to have some say in the use of the Oval in this way, and again I would suggest providing your formal feedback on this issue.

There was discussion of the committee inputting into the pricing policy for McLean Oval overflow sites. While the committee can make recommendations, it was acknowledged that the Council must make the final decisions on all Shire fees and charges due to legislative requirements.

In fact, we do recognise that local government decision making is guided by legislation, so the details of how committee decisions flow through to the accountable decision maker will need to be confirmed. In addition, in a separate conversation with Shire officers they agreed to prepare a fact sheet to help explain the practical application of the overflow policy, with examples and scenarios. We would also be very interested in reviewing such information.

Based on the positive outcomes from our meeting, and with commitment of all parties to working together for the benefit of all in Denmark, Tourism WA will continue with the planned grant allocation to the Shire of Denmark for the McLean Park overflow facility.

#### Caravans on private land

The second issue that was discussed does not relate directly to this agency – the Shire policy on allowing friends and family (non-commercial visitors) to park caravans on private land for 7 days maximum (up from the current State level of 3 days). Discussion revealed that the Shire wants to encourage Denmark as a destination for visiting friends and relatives, and not to set precedent for quasi-commercial caravan and camping opportunities. Industry was encouraged to provide its views in writing during the consultation period – and as an interested party, Tourism WA will do the same.

Once again it was a pleasure to meet with you all. Feel free to contact Stephanie or me if you have questions on the above. If you have any detailed questions about our activities in the caravan and

camping sector, please contact [REDACTED] who is Project Manager for the State wide Caravan and Camping Action Plan.

I have also copied [REDACTED], CEO of the Caravan Industry Association to this email, as I know he is visiting in the next week for further discussions.

Thanks once again and kind regards

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 July 2015 2:29 PM

**Subject:** ISUB157809 - Invitation For Comment - Overflow Camping & McLean Park Overflow Camping Area - please forward to Dale Stewart, CEO

5

Dear Mr. Stewart:

In accordance with the Shire request for public comments, I have read the following documents prepared by the Shire:

- 1) Draft Policy P130206
- 2) Draft McLean Park Overflow - Management Plan
- 3) Caravan Parks & McLean Oval Overflow Opening Examples

I have also read, carefully reviewed and considered the comments contained in the letter of 13/04/2015 from the Caravan Industry Association Western Australia Inc. (CIAWA) to you and copied to others in the Shire and state government. Attached to this was the letter from Knott Gunning, attorneys for CIAWA making certain observations and requests.

As you are no doubt aware, this pair of documents has gone viral in the community because of the observations made, questions asked, and requests submitted.

I then followed up with my own investigation which included a review of comments from residents, business owners, results reported from various meetings, letters to various areas of state government, and consideration of replies received thus far.

In summary it seems clear that the Shire's submission to Tourism WA for funding in support of this project was misleading at best and possibly criminally fraudulent at worst with a clear intent to obtain funding by misrepresentation of facts. There appears a clear and deliberate failure by the Shire to provide specific assurances requested by Tourism WA that certain conditions had been met prior to submission of the proposal. Most were not. The difference between what was written and the reality of the public consultation process and subsequent Shire work product (the funding request proposal) can only be described as resulting an egregious violation of basic societal principles that focus on truth and clear, transparent and effective governance practices by local government.

CIAWA and its attorneys have asked the Shire to suspend further activity on this project until clear, verifiable facts can be obtained to clarify the actual situation and impact of the proposed project upon the community.

The Shire has not complied with this request having instead proceeded by taking the project into public comment period and soliciting comment, a request to which I am responding with this letter.

In view of the lack of clarity regarding this proposal, the way it was formulated, the apparently fraudulent submissions made in the Shire's proposal, misleading statements and guidance provided by Shire personnel and Council President at a public council meeting to gain funding acceptance, and failure to correctly assess the impact on all business operators and other stakeholders in the community, I urge the Shire to take the following actions:

- 1) Cease any further progress or activity with regard to this project.
- 2) Incorporate the CIAWA letter and a adjoining letter from legal counsel into the public comment record associated with this project.
- 3) Invite a community investigation of the context surrounding this proposed project and detailed actions which led to the production of such a document and subsequent clearly misleading public statements by the Council President and others during a public meeting of Council.
- 4) Issue a letter of apology to Tourism WA for drawing it into such an ugly controversy.
- 5) Issue a similar public letter of apology to the residents of Shire of Denmark together with a list of the corrective actions you will take to prevent such outrageous and misleading performance to emerge from the Shire's work in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

[REDACTED]

Dear CEO

Re: McLean Oval Overflow camping proposal

This is the official response from the [REDACTED]. The content below was unanimously approved at our recent meeting (Tues 28 July 2015).

On behalf of the [REDACTED] we strongly oppose the Denmark Shire's "McLean Oval Overflow camping" proposal. The reasons for our opposition are:

- detrimental impact on McLean Oval
  - damage to the surface by vehicles and campers
  - insufficient watering during peak summer hot and dry weather
  - dangerous debris left by campers eg. glass, tent pegs, other rubbish that may injure sports people
- not available for sporting use
  - cricket and athletics are the main summer users
  - informal sport activities prevented
  - soccer is considering summer competition under lights in this period
- increased traffic and activity in the Brazier St area
  - residents in the area around McLean Oval did not sign up to this proposal when they purchased their houses
  - there is potentially increased undesirable activity in this area due to camping
  - vehicle traffic will increase as a result
- the Denmark Shire can potentially open up the McLean Oval Overflow site at any time of the year
  - direct impact on formal sporting activities - training and games
  - commercial venture will win out over amateur sport

Questions to be answered:

1. what is the maximum length of time the overflow facility be opened for, assuming all other facilities are "full" - is it 7 days as put in the Denmark Shire's briefing papers, or for the duration of the school holidays (Xmas) and Easter school holidays (potentially 8 weeks)?
2. is it possible for the Denmark Shire to open up the McLean Oval Overflow site at anytime in the year the town has reached the 90% full at caravan / camping sites?
3. The town currently has great difficulty servicing the needs of tourists during the busy holiday times. What will have changed so that the town can now service increased tourist numbers?
4. Why is the Denmark Shire operating in a commercial area when there are clearly a number of successful operators in the region? If the Shire is already operating camping facilities, then when will the Shire think about divesting these and focusing on the service it provides us rate payers?
5. Can the Denmark Shire demonstrably prove that the McLean Oval Overflow camping proposal will NOT detrimentally impact the current Commercial Operators?

6. Furthermore, when tourists cannot get into caravan parks, they do select other accommodation options, such as, hotels; the McLean Oval Overflow camping proposal will impact these alternative accommodation options adversely. Can the Denmark Shire explain how it proposes to address this issue?
7. What is the Denmark Shire doing to improve/increase the local capacity to handle the massive influx of tourists at the peak times? For example, the only Laundromat struggles to cope with the increased demand and the McLean Oval Overflow camping proposal will rely solely on this facility and potentially put further pressure on this facility.
8. In the document "Caravan parks & McLean Oval Overflow opening Examples", the Denmark Shire lists all facilities in the Shire and there are 413 caravan sites. At 90% capacity, 372 sites need to be booked before the proposed McLean Oval Overflow camping site can be opened. However, in the proposed media statement (p.9, Draft "McLean Park Overflow and Emergency Evacuation Accommodation Management Plan"), the Shire indicates that only caravan parks within a 15 km radius which are "full" are relevant for the calculation. This will lower the numbers to 313 caravan sites or 282 at 90%.

What baseline will the Shire use, the whole of the Shire or just 15km radius? What assurance will the Shire provide that this baseline will not change without consultation with the community?

9. What are the numbers of tourists that the region "misses" directly as a result of caravan and camping facilities being "full"? Where is the supporting data for the Shire's forecasts?
10. does the Denmark Shire have a profitable business case for this proposal? Can the Shire please make this available for analysis? This is a \$250,000 capital investment and what will be the financial benefit for the community?

regards

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██████████  
████████████████████



1/81 Strickland Street, Denmark WA 6333  
PO Box 148, Denmark WA 6333  
P: 08 9848 2065, F: 08 9848 2063  
[info@denmarkchamber.com.au](mailto:info@denmarkchamber.com.au)

MLTH-1 7

SUB157813

30 JUL 2015	
COUNCILLORS	
CEO	
DIR of FINANCE	
DIR of PLANNING	
DIR of INFRASTRUCTURE	
DIR of COMMUNITY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OTHER	

Mr. Ross Thornton  
Shire President  
Shire of Denmark  
South Coast Highway Denmark WA 6333

**Re: Overflow camping proposal**

Dear Ross,  
The Denmark Chamber of Commerce has met with members and the Committee to discuss the issue of overflow camping on Maclean Oval.

Our members highlighted that there are many exciting opportunities occurring in Denmark and our status as a 'best kept secret' will not be held for much longer with anticipated visitor numbers increasing.

Given our rise in popularity, many of the issues raised over the past months in relation to tourism would be addressed if the Shire had a shared tourism strategy. Whilst we understand an announcement of a local tourism organization is imminent, the Chamber of Commerce still believes that a tourism strategy for Denmark is now of the utmost importance and would like to know when the Council intends to commence this project.

In relation to the overflow facility at Maclean Park, the Chamber questions why the Shire is not supporting the private sector to address the increased demand, particularly given consultation with the existing caravan parks in the Shire where they indicated they did have capacity over the peak seasons?

It is recognized that the grant will provide much needed community facilities at the Oval however the detail of how overflow camping will be managed; through an onsite manager and volunteers; does not address potential impacts of antisocial behavior on the community facilities and surrounding environment.

The officer report used an interesting graph to highlight the peak periods of visitation to Denmark. The rationale used was that overflow camping would increase the capacity at peak periods. The Chamber is concerned that our existing infrastructure and services are already stressed at this time with long queues, limited parking and overworked service staff.

Why is Shire putting more pressure on limited resources by trying to increase peak season and risking the reputation of Denmark through dissatisfaction with service and visitor experience?

We understand the grant has been accepted and therefore works will commence on the overflow facility. The Chamber of Commerce would like to be involved in the review of the management process for this facility when it comes into operation.

Yours sincerely,

Beverley Ford  
President  
Denmark Chamber of Commerce Inc.  
Tuesday, July 28, 2015

## Submission

by

## OVERFLOW CAMPING & MCLEAN PARK OVERFLOW CAMPING AREA OPENING AND FEE SETTING

Suggested changes to the proposed document:

- Objective – all licensed parks should be fully booked *including overflow* before McLean Park is opened. Current written Objective does not include Overflow sites, yet the policy below does.
- Policy –
  - All parks should be fully booked before McLean Park opens for camping or caravans. This generally occurs several weeks prior to peak periods, thereby giving council ample notice to enact the policy.
  - Management of McLean Park should be such that it does not allow for abuse by late arrivals and early departures, or that it becomes known as a general Overflow / Free / Low Cost camp year round as being demanded by certain sectors of the market.

## McLean Park Overflow and Emergency Evacuation Accommodation Management Plan

Suggested changes to the proposed document:

- Page 3 - “This Plan establishes a protocol for establishing when the relevant accommodation in the **eastern area of the Shire is reaching capacity** (the localities of Denmark, Hay, Ocean Beach and Mt Shadforth) and the timing and decision making framework for the overflow Facility to become operational.” - should refer to the whole shire, not just the eastern portion.
- Page 4 – 3.4 – parks should be completely full before bookings for McLean park open. Park operators liaise between themselves and shire to notify when they are full.
- Page 4 – 3.7 – the Visitor Centre rarely knows the true occupation of the parks, until they are fully booked, as most don't list their sites on the VC booking system, nor take bookings through that system for peak times when they will fill anyway with out paying commission on bookings that would come direct otherwise.
- Page 5 – 4.5 – The maximum stay should only be that period when all parks are full. The Exmouth booking method is recommended, where as soon as a site becomes available on a licensed park, the next listed camper / caravan is required to move to that site. Therefore as the longest period (over Xmas / New Year) is generally about 5 days that all parks are completely full, the longest stay could conceivably be only 5 days. Better to not stipulate a set time period at all, just that they must move as soon as an alternative site is available.
- Page 5 – 4.8 – By not taking bookings, you create the situation where you encourage more people to come to the shire without booking and so exacerbate the problem that can exist, of non booked arrivals. Would suggest that only about 10 sites should be kept un-booked so that only true unplanned arrivals are catered for, i.e. Overseas or Eastern States travellers who are unaware that there is limited sites at those peak times.
- *Guidelines and Rules* – have you addressed grey water disposal? Buckets, sumps?
- *Sample Media Statement* –
  - Needs to be changed to reflect that **all** sites in the shire are full.
  - We question the need to put out any statement as this will only encourage more to come than the facility can cater for. The existing parks already refer enquiries on to other parks and then the VC once they are full. With the establishment of McLean park, they will refer them to the Shire also, if that is what council wishes, depending on the management method chosen.



## Overflow Camping Area & Fee Setting Policy, Shire of Denmark

Submission by [REDACTED]

Our submission in relation to the operation of the McLean Park Overflow facility is:

- the facility is opened for the limited time suggested by Council in their draft management plan i.e. 4 days over Easter and 3 days between Christmas and New Year and not before commercial parks in the Shire are deemed to be at 90% capacity
- opening for large scale community events has the same requirement for 90% capacity in commercial parks before opening
- cost of staying in this facility is put on a commercial basis commensurate with peak rates charged by commercial operators – or indeed higher rates to discourage people from relying on this facility
- tourists are actively encouraged to use commercial parks

As Caravan Park operators at Peaceful Bay we have no interest in being involved in the operations of the McLean Park facilities. We will back our ability to manage, promote and drive our own business forward we only ask that the operators of the McLean Park Overflow Camping facilities promote the Region and the businesses that have invested in it with as much passion as we do.

From:

Sent: Fri 31/07/2015 3:53 PM

To: Denmark Shire Enquiries

Cc:

Subject: ISUB157824 - Overflow camping at McLean Park, and caravanning on private property policies.

10

Message

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Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the overflow camping at McLean Park.

I object to this idea. It is a good idea for towns in the wheatbelt that do not have such high tourist volumes and require additional room for a major event, however for Denmark the idea is flawed, especially for McLean oval.

The oval is used by several sporting clubs regularly and all year round. It puts these sport and recreational users at risk with forgotten tent pegs and possible refuse and broken glass. Will the shire cover insurance for those damaged by this proposal?

It takes opportunity away from private investors. Poor idea, and I hope it is not being used as a means of justifying application for grant monies to upgrade facilities at the location.

Also, regarding the caravan and camping on private land, the extent of this idea is wrong. 4 tents/vans for 7 days with 24 persons over normal household is too much and is likely to bring confrontation with neighbours through noise issues etc. One van/tent for 7 days per block is a better compromise.

Regards

[Redacted signature]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 July 2015 5:38 PM  
**To:** [enquiries@denmark.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@denmark.wa.gov.au)

11

Mr Stewart

In relation to the planned overflow camping area at McLean Park, we would like you to note our strong opposition to it. We live directly opposite the entrance to the Recreation Centre and are very concerned at the prospect of having hundreds of people across the road from us during holiday times.

It seems that you have not considered the residents in the area and how this may affect us. The Recreation Centre and Oval are very busy during school terms with many activities happening so its always nice in the holidays to get that break from the extra traffic and people. However your proposal will ensure hundreds of people are driving in and out and making noise on the oval during these times when we usually get a break. We love spending holidays at home with our family in a nice, quiet relaxing setting but this will be shattered if this plan goes ahead. Not to mention the value of our house will fall hugely as who would want to live opposite a camping site!

Why must we make room for every single person that wants to come to Denmark? If they miss out this time then they will book earlier next time to get accommodation. Why do you roll out the red carpet for visitors when you don't do the same for your ratepayers??

In the proposal you received feedback from other Shire's who manage overflow camping areas and it seemed the consensus was that it was too much trouble and not worth it. Why would Denmark then go ahead with it? Also how can you apply for a grant to fund the works at the Oval and have that all approved without having any consultation with the community??? Why is it that when I rang the Shire and spoke to someone in Admin and asked 'will this go out for public comment or is it a done deal' and they replied 'I think it will go out for comment but its pretty much a done deal'. Community consultation is a joke.

How can you be sure the sites on the oval will not ruin the ground for sporting events which is what the Oval is for. You will be going against the majority of residents who do not want this to go ahead. We hope for once that you will listen.

Regards

[REDACTED]

From:

Denmark Shire Enquiries

Sent: Fri 31/07/2015 4:58 PM

12

Cc:

Subject: ISUB157825 - Comment on Draft Caravanning or Camping on Privately Held Land Policy

**Personal reasons:**

I recently moved back to my home town from Perth suburbia to enjoy a quiet, relatively undisturbed lifestyle. If I wanted to have near neighbours & was happy to hear others lives I would have/could have spent much less & lived in Denmark town. I chose to live in Ocean Beach to enjoy the trees, birds & quiet. How can it be fair that the lifestyle I chose can be disturbed by visitors on neighbouring blocks. I certainly accept that I live in a tourist town & encourage visitors within acceptable numbers & in gazetted areas.

**Environmental:**

From a sustainability & environmental point I also have deep concerns about the additional persons in our town when we have power & water issues from residents & the numbers of visitors we already accept. Water is a precious resource & we already have restrictions for much of the year, how will additional water use be managed? Apart from the additional power requirements from the extra persons how is the safe use of power (eg extension leads) going to be policed? This then leads on to the additional fire risk that use of leads etc may cause. The fire risk also relies highly on the care & vigilance of the people in the area - what about camp fires, smoking in unpoliced caravan/camping.

Can Denmark retail & hospitality well service even more numbers in our peak times? Great service & experience surely is better for a smaller number of people?

I don't understand this draft policy or that of the Overflow Camping as I don't see that the town infrastructure can handle it or that the experience of both the residents & visitors during the peak times will be positive. I believe these changes would negatively impact the town & also me personally.

The message does not contain any threats

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### 8.2.3 ACCEPTANCE OF MCLEAN PARK OVERFLOW CAMPING POLICY & DEVELOPMENT GRANT

<b>File Ref:</b>	A3035
<b>Applicant / Proponent:</b>	Shire of Denmark/ Tourism WA
<b>Subject Land / Locality:</b>	McLean Park, Brazier Street, Denmark
<b>Disclosure of Officer Interest:</b>	Nil
<b>Date:</b>	3 April 2014
<b>Author:</b>	Gregg Harwood, Director of Community & Regulatory Services
<b>Authorising Officer:</b>	Gregg Harwood, Director of Community & Regulatory Services
<b>Attachments:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.2.3a – Plan of Overflow Camping Area at McLean Park</li> <li>8.2.3b – Tourism WA Caravan and Camping Action Plan 2013-2018</li> <li>8.2.3c – Template for Local Government Overflow Camping Policy</li> <li>8.2.3d – West Australian Editorial dated 26 March 2015</li> <li>8.2.3e – Council Officer research summary – February 2014</li> <li>8.2.3f – Grant Application to Tourism WA</li> <li>8.2.3g – Tourism WA Grant Offer</li> <li>8.2.3h – Letter to Caravan Park operators dated May 2014</li> <li>8.2.3i – Minutes – City of Albany</li> <li>8.2.3j – Draft McLean Park Overflow Camping Management Plan</li> <li>8.2.3k – Draft Overflow Camping Policy</li> </ul>

#### Summary:

The officer report considers a \$248,234 (ex GST) Tourism WA grant offer for the purposes of establishing a 68 site peak season overflow camping at McLean Park (\$340,321 (ex GST) total project cost) and recommends that Council:

- 1) Accept the grant and commence construction of the facility.
- 2) Advertise the proposed McLean Park Overflow Accommodation Management Plan Policy for 60 days public comment prior to its referral back to Council for final consideration and adoption.
- 3) Advertise the proposed Overflow Camping Policy for 60 days public comment prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption as a Council Policy.

#### Background:

Some years ago, in anticipation of the wind down of the mining boom, the State Government started to plan for the implementation of strategies that would broaden that State's economy and soften the boom and bust cycles that are an inevitable part of a resource based economy.

Given that a softening of the resource boom would lead to a surplus of capital city and regional motel accommodation places and a weak exchange rate, tourism was identified as one of the industries that could be stimulated to drive growth.

To this lead, Tourism WA preparing the "Western Australian Caravan and Camping Action Plan 2013-2018" (refer Attachment 8.2.3b). This plan makes 11 recommendations including the delivery of development ready sites for new caravan parks and identifies the installation of chemical dump points and the creation of local government overflow camping areas in high priority/demand regions as being a funding priority for the State Government.

The State Government has embraced the plan and committed \$34,420,000 over 4 years towards its implementation.

As part of this process Tourism WA also prepared a "Template for a Local Government Overflow Camping Policy" (refer Attachment 8.2.3c) and invited Council's CEO to submit grant applications for a chemical toilet dump point (successful and almost completed) and an overflow camping area.

The main reasons why the Tourism WA targets local governments with this type of funding is that they usually have well located but underutilised infrastructure such as ovals that can be far more economically converted than constructing new overflow caravan parks from scratch.

The second and probably most important reason is that a Local Government will once the facility has been constructed typically attempt to balance running it for the collective benefit of both local park operators and the wider community.

This stands in contrast to a private caravan park operator whose default approach is to seek to maximise the return and business development opportunities that their overflow sites have to offer.

The third reason why Tourism WA targets local governments is that they have the capacity to quickly bring overflow camping projects online, further diverting the State's economy.

Having received requests from the Denmark Visitor Centre (DVC) and the Parry's Beach Volunteer Management Group (PBVMG) and knowing that there were at least four parks in the Shire that did not have dump points, a successful grant application was made and a dump point was recently installed at the DVC.

Similarly, Council has received numerous requests for the opening of overflow camping in Denmark from both caravan park operators, the DVC and the PBVMG with one operator at the time, being the former President of the Denmark Chamber of Commerce and a camping ground operator) being the most recent.

Given these requests and the fact that Tourism WA prefers to fund local government run overflow facilities, a successful grant application for a peak season overflow camping at McLean Park was made.

The end result is that Council has been offered \$248,234 (ex GST) to build an overflow facility with a total project cost of \$340,321 (ex GST) and total Council contribution of \$92,087 in cash and in kind services.

The proposed facility will have 68 sites in the below configuration when calculated using standard ablution block ratios and would have at least another 50 unpowered tent sites if transit park ablution ratios are used:

Caravan/Motorhome.....	10
Caravan .....	16
Tent.....	30
Caravan/Tent .....	8
Campervan.....	4

The grant also stipulates that the project must be complete by the 30 September 2015.

In reading this report Councillors and local facility operators should note that as described in the "Western Australian Caravan and Camping Action Plan 2013-2018" and a West Australian editorial dated the 26 March 2015 (refer Attachment 8.2.3c) that this is just the first tier of funding that will be available to the local industry. If Council and the local business community are proactive and can show themselves as being reliable partners then it is likely that further funding will be available.

Other initiatives under this strategy will include positive elements such training for existing park operators, improved tourism infrastructure and the creation of accommodation trails that lead to high value destinations such as Denmark and Margaret River via low value country towns. It will, however, reveal some challenges as there have also been discussions around creating low cost camping trails and the setting up of \$5.00 per night self-contained motor home overnight parking at isolated general stores such as Youngs Siding.

The genesis of these discussions can be found in the attached City of Albany meeting notes where both the Shire of Denmark and the Shire of Augusta Margaret River representatives advised that their respective Shires were quality destinations and would not be offering free or \$5.00 per night self-contained motor home overnight parking but would participate in the program to ensure that all of Shires involved benefited from it.

**Consultation:**

While specific consultation has not occurred in regards to this grant, the need for a peak season overflow camping area has been under discussion since at least 2008 and was recently discussed during Council's August 2014 caravan industry stakeholders meeting.

The author has also been regularly discussing the project with caravan park operators when conducting other business with them.

While local facility operators continue to acknowledge that the market in Denmark has an almost endless capacity to soak up additional peak season camping space they have expressed concerns which have summarised the following concerns:

- 1) That a quality overflow facility in a quality location that is close to the Denmark CBD will take customers away from the less developed parks in the western part of the Shire and put pressure on them to meet modern market expectations.
- 2) That it is so attractive that a well conceptualised overflow facility at McLean Park may even attract customers away from front line caravan parks such as Ocean Beach and Rivermouth.
- 3) An overflow facility will be difficult for Council to run.
- 4) That notwithstanding the annual dollars that Council contributes to tourism marketing via the DVC an overflow facility would be having a free run on advertising that other parks are paying for.
- 5) Overflow camping should be provided by existing parks where they have the capacity to do so.
- 6) That the creation of an overflow facility will compound the "Parry Beach" problem where because people can't book the facility when they want it, they just "chance it" and drive down from Perth as opposed to booking into a regular caravan park. A quality camping option at the McLean Oval will, in some operator's opinions, only compound that problem.

**Statutory Obligations:**

Caravan Parks & Camping Grounds are required to comply with the requirements of both the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1996 and the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.

In addition to this there is an expectation under National Competition Policy doctrine that Council should ensure that site fees for its overflow camping facility do not compete unfairly with nearby parks. This is important because Council will have a far lower cost base.

The proposed policy takes this into account by nominating the competing market as being any fully registered (excludes nature based) caravan park sites that are within a 15km of McLean Park. This currently includes Rivermouth, Riverbend, Ocean Beach and Karri Mia. The policy states that that Council's CEO will consult with these parks in settings fees for this facility and its opening and closing dates.

Preliminary research has indicated that site fees should be in the range of \$35-45 dollars per site for the first 2 people and an additional \$15.00 per head for additional adults and \$10 per head for additional children (powered).

**Policy Implications:**

There are currently no Council policies in regard to this matter and officer recommendation if adopted by Council will result in the creation of policy.

**Budget / Financial Implications:**

There are no major financial implications upon either the Council's current Budget or Long Term Financial Plan in as much that the development of the overflow camping facility will require a one off Council contribution of \$92,087 in cash and in kind services (only \$26,787 in cash).

The facility should provide Council with a low annual surplus once it has been established and all costs are accommodated for including the increased maintenance of the facilities at McLean Park.

**Strategic Implications:**

The report and officer recommendation is consistent with Council's adopted Mission and Vision and assists achieve the following specific adopted Strategic Objectives and Goals.

*Lifestyle: ...endeavour to maintain and improve the standards and style of living, together with the creative and vibrant culture, that residents and visitors have come to expect.*

*Tourism: ...acknowledge the importance of tourism to the region, and, by innovative policies, practices and partnerships, facilitates and encourages the greater year-round sustainability of tourism, whilst monitoring and managing its impacts.*

*Recreation: ...monitor all forms of recreational and cultural facilities and services, and take careful account of the level of community support for those in determining the improvements or new facilities to be supported together with their relative contribution to personal and community wellbeing.*

**Sustainability Implications:**

➤ **Governance:**

There are no known significant governance considerations relating to the report or officer recommendation.

➤ **Environmental:**

There are known significant environmental implications relating to the report in that the provision of an overflow camping area will reduce incidence illegal camping and the pollution and fire risks that come with it. A clearing permit may be required for parkland clearing of approximately 200m<sup>2</sup> of vegetation surrounding the cricket training facility.

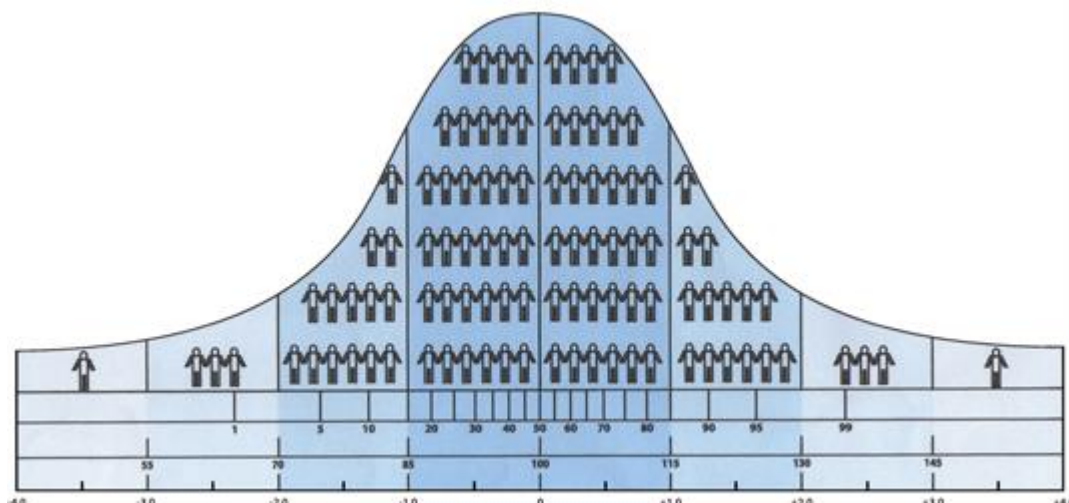
➤ **Economic:**

There are significant economic implications relating to the report or officer recommendation in that the successful implementation of an overflow facility will assist the Shire in further developing its tourism and hospitality sectors through incrementally creating increased park capacity in the following ways.

The tourism market in Denmark and most developing coastal tourist towns is best represented by a "bell curve" with the centre and highest part of the curve being the seasonal peaks of the summer school holidays, Easter and the various summer long weekends.

During these periods every caravan park and tourist service and general retail business is running at peak capacity and making a profit but progressively struggling to make ends meet or are even making a loss as the curve drops down to its outer edges.





The critical trade that makes local caravan parks and tourism related businesses viable is the strength and the duration of the flanks that are either side of the bell curve peak. If these are strong, businesses can retain good staff and managers during the off season and plan ahead to grow and improve their business but if the flanks are weak their businesses gradually get run down.

The best way to strengthen flanks of the bell curve is take the top of the bell higher by bringing overflow camping on line during peak periods. The advantage local government owned overflow camping areas have is that because it does not have to return a profit to an investor it can be closed when a new caravan park is opened and then brought back on line when that facility is clearly going to be full.

This ability to open and close a facility on the basis of need as opposed to return means that the McLean Park over flow facility will provide a ready business case and client pool for anyone wanting to open a new commercial park in the future.

➤ **Social:**

There are no known significant social considerations relating to the report or officer recommendation other than the development of an overflow facility at McLean Park will mean that it is not available for sporting purposes during Christmas / New Year and summer long weekends.

This however should not be an issue as organised sports are rarely run at these times and the High School oval is available as an alternative.

Nearby neighbours to the facility will have the opportunity to comment on the proposal if they have any concerns regarding how the facility is proposed to be managed in terms of noise and anti-social behaviour, however given that a regional Recreation Centre and Youth Facility, located in the same vicinity, already open during the night time, this issue should not be overly vexatious.

➤ **Risk:**

Risk	Risk Likelihood (based on history and with existing controls)	Risk Impact / Consequence	Risk Rating (Prior to Treatment or Control)	Principal Risk Theme	Risk Action Plan (Controls or Treatment proposed)
That the overflow facility will fail to meet market expectations	Possible (3)	Minor (2)	Moderate (5-9)	Not Meeting Community expectations	Control through assembly of a detailed proposal and quality fit out and construction
That the overflow facility will either be priced too low or too high.	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (5-9)	Inadequate Financial, Accounting or Business	Control through ongoing dialogue with nearby facility operators

				Acumen	
That the overflow facility will be inadequately managed.	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (5-9)	Ineffective Management of Facilities and Events	Control through camp rules, Ranger patrols & onsite care takers as required.
That the overflow facility will take bookings away from underdeveloped and poorly located parks	Unlikely (2)	Insignificant (1)	Low (1-4)	Not Meeting Community expectations	Accept Risk as this is normal and nearby upgraded parks have a far greater impact.

**Comment/Conclusion:**

In discussing the merits of establishing an overflow facility at McLean Park the following perspectives and responses to them should be considered by Council:

Is overflow camping needed in Denmark?

There has been a long established need for overflow camping with Christmas/ New Year period and Easter typically being identified as the peak periods of demand.

There have been some seasons where the nearest available camping sites to Denmark have been as far away as Mount Barker and Kojonup and whilst the extent of overflow demand varies, as a result of factors such as Perth temperatures, economic conditions and foreign currency exchange rates, it appears that there are around 7 – 30 days in the year when an overflow facility may be needed. During these periods it may literally be a case of build it and they will come.

Does it work elsewhere?

Officer research in February 2014 (refer Attachment 8.2.3d) indicated that Council / community group run overflow camping areas are run successfully in Broome, Exmouth & Esperance.

The City of Albany has also setup overflow camping for specific events and the creation of these areas should be seen by Councillors as a very normal part of a tourist town's operations and as an economical and immediate way of enabling the local tourism sector to grow creating further income opportunities for local businesses.

Should Council be involved in the caravan park & camping market?

Despite being a magnet for debate this discussion is somewhat of a moot point as Council is the vested land manager for the Peaceful Bay settlement holiday leasehold area, the Peaceful Bay Caravan Park, the Rivermouth Caravan Park and the Parry Beach Camping Ground and is actually the largest accommodation provider within the Shire of Denmark and arguably the lower Great Southern.

Given that Council is not likely to divest its current holiday accommodation at these locations, the central question that should be asked is whether Council's next holiday accommodation meets the following criterion:

- 1) Does it have a sound business case that will cover operating costs?
- 2) Will it have a sustainable management structure?
- 3) Will it meet market expectations and make a constructive contribution to the local economy?
- 4) It should not detract from the social environs of Denmark or degrade the natural environment.

Alternatives that could be implemented:

Given that power, water, sewerage head works, land purchase and finance costs generally make the development of new regulation compliant tourism caravan parks unviable, the only tangible alternatives to proceeding with the McLean Park overflow proposal are as follows:

- 1) Waiting for either the Ocean Beach or the Riverbend Caravan Parks to make a business decision to install more overflow sites.
- 2) Council and/or with the approval of Council, expanding the Peaceful Bay or Parry Beach caravan and camping ground areas, which will be time consuming and expensive and place even more pressure on the operators of outlying caravan parks.

If Council chooses not to act now will the funding be available in the future?

Like the recently installed dump point at the DVC, the funding that is being offered is only available for an overflow facility at McLean Park and must be, if accepted, expended before the 30 September 2015.

If Council chooses not to proceed with this project the grant funding will be diverted to other communities and may not be available in the future.

In addition, if Council rejects the grant offer it may be perceived as lacking the necessary élan to take on large projects which may reduce Council's priority in receiving future Tourism WA grants.

Why McLean Park?

McLean Park is rarely used during holiday periods meaning that at those times of year it is underutilised infrastructure. The reserve is already managed by the Council, the road access has already been built and the power, water connection and head works fees have already been paid.

This means that it can be far more economically converted rather than constructing a new overflow caravan park from scratch.

The proposed development will also bring improved facilities to the park and its closeness to the CBD and the scenic backdrop will provide a quality overflow experience.

Who will the proposed McLean Park overflow cater for and will it meet market expectations?

The proposed overflow camping area will cater for powered caravan and tent sites, unpowered tent sites and a lesser number of self-contained caravan/ RV sites.

All sites will be serviced by hose reels and running water and the powered caravan sites will have sullage points. There will also be a large BBQ and outdoor sinks with hot water for washing up and several large verandas together with various undercover areas that can be opened up in the event of continued inclement weather.

Further to this the McLean Park precinct has a Skate Park and BMX track, good connectivity to walk paths and trails, a nearby historic precinct and is a walkable distance to the CBD.

Given factors there is confidence that the McLean Park overflow area will comfortably exceed market expectations.

Will the proposal be of benefit to McLean Park users?

It is the Officer's opinion that the proposal will benefit McLean Park users by bringing increased facilities such as a BBQ and an outdoor kitchen and provide those groups with an income opportunity through providing food and services during overflow camping seasons.

The proposal will also result in the sealing of the oval's ring road and the Youth Centre / Skateboard Track carpark and steps that should improve the ovals drainage.

How will it be managed?

The overflow will be managed in accordance with the attached draft Management Plan (refer Attachment 8.2.3k) and will be run and insured by the Shire of Denmark using Council staff, local sporting clubs and contractors as required.

What rules will be place?

A list of park rules can be found on the last page of the attached draft Management Plan. This plan also gives Council's CEO the authority to make further rules as operational realities dictate.

Councillors should also note that these rules exclude dogs in accordance with the playing surfaces dog free status.

What will the length of stay be?

The draft Management Plan identifies the maximum length of stay as being seven days but does give scope to the CEO to vary this in response to market conditions so that an incentive to relocate to other parks within the 15km radius is maintained.

How will fees be set and opening times determined?

The procedure for the setting of fees is detailed in the attached draft Management Plan and is summarised as follows:

- 1) Council's CEO after consultation with the DVC and the operators of all caravan parks within a 15km radius of McLean Park will make a decision as to when the overflow facility will open and close and what will be charged for each class of site.

The Council's goal in setting the charges and opening/closure dates will be to strike a balance between setting prices high enough to give McLean Park campers and incentive to relocate to the other parks within the Shire while not overcharging and deterring them from returning to Denmark.

- 2) Once the prices and opening and closing dates have been set by the Council, the CEO will monitor demand for camping space within the 15km radius and if deemed necessary adjust the opening days to maintain an incentive for campers to shift to regularly licenced sites within the radius.

Will the site be available for free/ low cost, self-contained camping at other times?

As was mentioned in the background the answer is no!

The reasons for this are threefold.

- 1) Denmark is a quality destination that travellers are prepared to pay a going market rate for.
- 2) Consumers typically place a lower value on free or low cost experiences.

- 3) Council is committed to supporting the viability of its front line caravan parks.

Impacts on nearby caravan parks:

Having considered the preceding points it is the officer's opinion that the proposed overflow camping area will be of advantage to nearby caravan parks that are seeking to actively manage and grow their business. The reason for this is that it will give them access to free goodwill by providing them with a proven block of confirmed peak season trade which they can incrementally absorb by developing additional sites where they have space to do so.

In addition to this, the creation of a Council run overflow camping area will help all parks to meet their duty of care (whether real or imagined) to campers that they turn away when they are full.

It should however be noted that the proposed overflow camping area may have an impact on smaller nature based and lower standard parks in the western sector of the Shire during the first and second seasons that it opens until the market takes up the slack.

This does however open up the debate as to what constitutes fair competition and free market as opposed to protectionism when considering the creation of additional accommodation capacity.

A frank assessment of the caravan parks in the western half of the Shire would observe that:

- 1) The parks with the exception of Parry Beach and Peaceful Bay are all located in less than ideal locations and are a considerable distance from Denmark. They are simply not comparable to parks that are within a 15km radius of Denmark from consumer perspective.
- 2) The parks are all either nature based and/or should not be compared to modern fully licenced or quality overflow scenarios. The fairest scenario is that they should be considered within their own collective zone and the draft overflow camping policy has been written accordingly.
- 3) The projected occupancy levels of these parks is currently not taken into account in allowing the Rivermouth, Riverbend or Ocean Beach Caravan Park's to open their overflow sites it is just simply done on the basis of allowing the sites to open at times when all parks are known to be busy. Similarly the occupancy level of the Valley of the Giants Eco Park is not considered when allowing Parry Beach, Ayr Sailean or Boat Harbour to open their sites.
- 4) If a Council policy is implemented to ensure that the proposed McLean Oval overflow sites do not compete unfairly then it should extend to all other overflow site providers as well.

In order to deal with the complexity of making fair and equitable decisions as to when parks throughout the Shire are permitted to open their overflow areas the following policy splits the of Shire Denmark into east & west zones and is recommended to Council.

***“Overflow Camping, McLean Overflow Camping Area Opening and Fee Setting Policy***

Objective

*The objective of this policy is to ensure that all regularly licenced caravan and camping sites within a reasonable radius of facilities that have overflow sites are likely to be full before permission is given by the Director of Community & Regulatory Services (DCRS) for the sites to open.*

Policy

*For the purposes of determining booking levels and the opening season of overflow bays the caravan parks and camping grounds within the Shire of Denmark are split into east and west sectors.*

***Privately Operated Overflow Camping Areas (including Parry Beach & Peaceful Bay)***

*The East Sector is defined as being all the caravan parks and camping grounds that are within a 15km radius of McLean Park Oval and the West Sector is the remainder of the Shire.*

*Caravan parks and camping grounds that are within each sector must apply to the Director of Community & Regulatory Services for permission to open their licenced overflow camping sites. On receipt of that application the Director will determine whether and/or when all of the regularly licenced sites in the respective sector are likely to be full and only issue permission for that period.*

*The acceptable standard for overflow bays will be determined by the Director of Community & Regulatory Services using the Caravan Parks & Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 and Tourism WA “Template for a Local Government Overflow Camping Policy”*

***McLean Park Overflow Camping Area***

*Director of Community & Regulatory Services will after consultation with the caravan parks and camping grounds in the East Sector determine their potential bookings and per site charge rates including overflow capacity and make a recommendation to the Shire’s CEO on potential opening dates for the overflow facility and the sites rates that should be charged as per the process mapped out in the “McLean Park Overflow Emergency Accommodation Management Plan”.*

**Responsible Officer**

*The Director of Community & Regulatory Services is the responsible officer for implementing this policy.”*

With such a policy in place it is the author’s opinion that the level of impact on smaller parks is acceptable as they are being considered in zones and Council should proceed with McLean Park overflow camping area.

**Voting Requirements:**

Absolute majority.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

**ITEM 8.2.3**

That with respect to the Tourism WA grant offer of \$248,234 (ex GST) for the purposes of establishing a 68 site peak season overflow camping at McLean Park, Council:

1. Accept the grant and commence construction of the facility.
2. Make an in kind contribution up to the value of \$10,800 in accordance with the conditions of the grant.
3. Allocate \$26,787 out of the current 2014/2015 budget surplus of \$52,696 as a capital contribution towards the project in accordance with the conditions of the grant resulting in a reduced predicted surplus position as at 30 June 2015 of \$25,909.
4. Advertise the proposed draft McLean Park Overflow Accommodation Management Plan (as per Attachment 8.2.3k) for public comment for a period of 60 days prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption.
5. Advertise the proposed draft “Overflow Camping, McLean Overflow Camping Area Opening and Fee Setting Policy” (as per Attachment 8.2.3l) for public comment for a period of 60 days prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption.

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

ITEM 8.2.3

MOVED: CR SEENEY

SECONDED: CR GILLIES

That with respect to the Tourism WA grant offer of \$248,234 (ex GST) for the purposes of establishing a 68 site peak season overflow camping at McLean Park, Council:

1. Accept the grant and commence construction of the facility.
2. Make an in kind contribution up to the value of \$10,800 in accordance with the conditions of the grant.
3. Allocate \$26,787 out of the current 2014/2015 budget surplus of \$52,696 as a capital contribution towards the project in accordance with the conditions of the grant resulting in a reduced predicted surplus position as at 30 June 2015 of \$25,909.
4. Advertise the proposed draft McLean Park Overflow Accommodation Management Plan (as per Attachment 8.2.3k) for public comment for a period of 60 days prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption.
5. Advertise the proposed draft "Overflow Camping, McLean Overflow Camping Area Opening and Fee Setting Policy" (as per Attachment 8.2.3l with the following words added, "The Director of Community & Regulatory Services, after consultation with all caravan parks in the Shire, will ensure that the combined total of caravan and camping facilities within the Shire of Denmark are at 95% or greater capacity prior to considering opening of the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility.") for public comment for a period of 60 days prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption.

LOST: 3/6

Res: 040415

**COUNCIL RESOLUTION**

ITEM 8.2.3

MOVED: CR THORNTON

SECONDED: CR SEENEY

That with respect to the Tourism WA grant offer of \$248,234 (ex GST) for the purposes of establishing a 68 site peak season overflow camping at McLean Park, Council:

1. Accept the grant and commence construction of the facility.
2. Make an in kind contribution up to the value of \$10,800 in accordance with the conditions of the grant.
3. Allocate \$26,787 out of the current 2014/2015 budget surplus of \$52,696 as a capital contribution towards the project in accordance with the conditions of the grant resulting in a reduced predicted surplus position as at 30 June 2015 of \$25,909.
4. Advertise the proposed draft McLean Park Overflow Accommodation Management Plan (as per Attachment 8.2.3k) for public comment for a period of 60 days prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption.
5. Advertise the proposed draft "Overflow Camping, McLean Overflow Camping Area Opening and Fee Setting Policy" (as per Attachment 8.2.3l with the following words added, "The Director of Community & Regulatory Services, after consultation with all caravan parks in the Shire, will ensure that the combined total of caravan and camping facilities within the Shire of Denmark are at 90% or greater capacity of all available bays (including overflow) prior to considering opening of the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility.") for public comment for a period of 60 days prior to its referral back to Council for consideration and adoption.

CARRIED BY AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY: 8/1

Res: 050415

**REASONS FOR CHANGE**

*Council added words to the draft Policy to ensure that it encapsulated all caravan parks within the Shire of Denmark, not just those in the east, and that they were to be at 90% or greater capacity of all available bays (including overflow areas) prior to considering opening the overflow camping ground.*



## COUNCIL POLICY – draft

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### **P130206      OVERFLOW CAMPING & MCLEAN PARK OVERFLOW CAMPING AREA OPENING AND FEE SETTING POLICY**

#### Objective

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- 1) To ensure that regularly licensed caravan and camping sites in the Shire are likely to be at least 90% occupancy of their respective category of sites (not including overflow) before permission is given by the Director of Community & Regulatory Services (DCRS) for overflow sites, other than McLean Park, to open.
- 2) To ensure that regularly licensed overflow caravan and camping sites in the Shire are likely to be at least 90%, as an average, occupancy of their respective category of sites before permission is given by the Director of Community & Regulatory Services (DCRS) for overflow sites, at McLean Park, to open.
- 3) To ensure that local caravan parks operators are consulted with and that a timely and balanced decisions are made in regard to the need to open the McLean Park Overflow Camping Ground from time to time and its management, timing, duration and the fees that will be charged for each site class.

#### Policy

For the purposes of determining booking levels and the opening season(s) of overflow bays the caravan parks and camping grounds within the Shire of Denmark are considered as a collective industry capacity in their various categories of sites (an in toto calculation).

Booking levels for the respective period will be projected by the McLean Park Overflow Camping Ground Working Group whose role is also to provide guidance to the Director of Community & Regulatory Services regarding opening and closing dates for the facility, the setting of fees for each class of site, moving on and 'close down' policies, park rules and the general management of the site.

The McLean Park Overflow Camping Ground Working Group will consist of two caravan industry representatives (nominated and agreed by the local industry), two Shire staff and a Councillor.

Caravan parks and camping grounds including those owned or operated by the Council, must apply to the Director of Community & Regulatory Services for permission to open their licenced overflow camping sites. On receipt of that application the Director will determine whether at least 90% of the



licensed sites in toto in those categories are likely to be full and only issue permission for the respective period.

The acceptable standard for overflow bays will be determined by the Director of Community & Regulatory Services using the Caravan Parks & Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 and Caravan Industry Association Western Australia (CIAWA) "Template for a Local Government Overflow Camping Policy" as a guide.

With specific reference to the McLean Park Overflow Camping Area, the Director of Community & Regulatory Services will, after consultation with the McLean Park Overflow Camping Ground Working Group, ensure that the combined total of caravan and camping facilities within the Shire of Denmark are likely to be at 90% or greater capacity of all available bays (including overflow) when setting a date for the opening of the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility.

It is noted that, pursuant to section 6.16 of the Local Government Act 1995, any fees and charges proposed to be applied by the Working Group and Director of Community & Regulatory Services must be approved by the Council prior to applying.

Responsible Officer

The Director of Community & Regulatory Services is the responsible officer for implementing this policy and preparing and applying management plans and practices with respect to the McLean Park Overflow Camping Area.



# **McLean Park Overflow and Emergency Evacuation Accommodation Management Plan**

## 1. Introduction

The McLean Park Facility is proposed to be modified to allow it to provide camping and caravan sites during periods when the tourist demand exceeds the capacity of the local licensed Caravan and Camping Grounds and to also cater as the primary emergency evacuation facility for the Shire in accordance with the Council's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) Arrangements.

As the responsible licensing authority of Caravan Parks on behalf of the State Government, as well as owner and or operator of three (3) existing Caravan Parks, all with existing overflow facilities within the Shire, it is behoving on Council to ensure that this Overflow Facility will also be licensed and fully compliant with the Caravan and Camping Regulations 1997.

Importantly the site is not intended to function as a 'free camping area' and nor is it intended to be utilised as a stand-alone overnight facility for Recreational Vehicles (RVs).

There is accommodation at the Facility for the following;

- Caravan/Motorhome 10 (Unpowered)
- Caravan 24 (Powered)
- Tent 30 (16 Powered / 14 Unpowered)
- Campervan 4 (Powered)

This 68 site self imposed limitation is an aesthetic and deliberately low limit that is intended to minimise any potential for degradation of the grassed surface and to reduce any perception of overcrowding. In time, depending upon demand and the take-up or increasing capacity supplied by commercial providers, there is actually sufficient ablution facilities and space for 100 - 120 sites. This is particularly relevant if utilised for example, as an emergency evacuation facility, its secondary function as identified in the Council's Local Emergency Management Plan for the Shire. Whilst the McLean Park Recreation Complex will be able to cater for dormitory / bunk style accommodation in such an event, the Grounds at McLean Park will also be able to function as a large scale emergency relief and accommodation venue with the additional facilities provided.

A tertiary function with the additional functionality that McLean Park may prove desirable for, is to cater for larger scale community events, such as markets, festivals, shows or suitable concerts.

Such activities would of course require specific Council approval and consideration on a case by case basis and be, by nature, infrequent.

The primary use of the Facility is to ensure that the visitors – the travelling public - have an opportunity to stay within the locality and townsite of Denmark, as opposed to otherwise bypassing it entirely. It is anticipated that the Facility will result in licensed Caravan and Camping Grounds across the Shire also benefiting at times of peak demand, as the overflow Facility will seek to accommodate visitors until vacancies arise at a local caravan park or camping ground whereupon new bookings or arrivals will be disallowed. The Facility will also enhance visitor's experience of the area and lessen the practice of illegal camping and the resultant degradation of the environment including the escaping of illegal camp fires and will also reduce the incidence of inappropriate use of community facilities.

Over one weekend in Easter 2015 for example, Council Rangers issued infringements or warnings to the drivers of 15 vehicles illegally camping on Council property or on road reserves within the Shire.

Most of these incidents occurred within the localities of Denmark, Hay and Ocean Beach. It can be reasonable deduced therefore that there would be far more than that, that arrive within the Shire

during Easter each year, that cannot be accommodated within the existing licensed facilities and hence the demonstrated need, over many years, for the Council to now provide an Overflow Facility at McLean Park.

It is proposed that the Facility will only be opened for short / specific periods after consultation with commercial providers. Indicatively, only during approximately 4 days over Easter and 3 days between Christmas and New Year.

Nothing would please Council more than as a result of patronage of this facility, existing or indeed new Caravan and Camping Grounds capitalised on any demonstrated demand for usage of this Overflow Facility and further invested in those Parks to cater for that peak demand that Denmark as a major tourist destination is proving.

This Plan establishes a protocol for establishing when the relevant accommodation in the eastern area of the Shire is reaching capacity (the localities of Denmark, Hay, Ocean Beach and Mt Shadforth) and the timing and decision making framework for the overflow Facility to become operational.

It also outlines management procedures for use of McLean Park Facility during those times.

## 2. Definitions

Caravan and Camping Grounds	Licensed Caravan and Camping Grounds (facilities) servicing the Shire of Denmark.
Facility	The sporting grounds, surrounds and facilities at McLean Park, Brazier Street Denmark.
On Site Management	Person or Persons approved by the Shire to manage the Facility, including responsibility for <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Cleaning</li><li>▪ Provision of Services to guests</li><li>▪ Liaison with the Shire and Visitors Centre</li><li>▪ Other functions as determined by the Shire's CEO</li></ul>
Shire	Shire of Denmark as a local government operating under the Council's Policies and Chief Executive Officer's administrative direction.
CEO	The CEO is Chief Executive Officer of the Shire of Denmark.
DCRS	The Director of Community and Regulatory Services of the Shire of Denmark.
Visitors Centre	The Visitors Centre, located at 73 South Coast Highway, Denmark
MPOWG	The McLean Park Overflow Camping Ground Working Group will consist of two caravan industry representatives, two Shire staff and a Councillor. Its role is also to provide guidance to the Director of Community & Regulatory

Services regarding opening and closing dates for the facility, the setting of fees for each class of site, moving on and 'close down' policies, park rules and the general management of the site.

### 3. Determination of Caravan and Camping Ground Capacity

- 3.1. The determination of capacity will relate to registered Caravan and Camping Grounds with the **Shire** of Denmark.
- 3.2. The main peak tourist times in the Shire of Denmark are Easter and the weeks before and after Christmas / New Year in the Christmas Holidays. There may also be other specific events which result in peak tourism from time to time such as the intended CMCA Event in Albany in October 2015.
- 3.3. Caravan and Camping Grounds will be encouraged and permitted to use their own approved overflow capacity before McLean Park is made available for overflow providing that accommodation is in the opinion of the Director of Community and Regulatory Services of a reasonable standard pursuant to the Caravan and Camping Regulations 1997.
- 3.4. The Director of Community & Regulatory Services will, after consultation with the MPOWG, ensure that the combined total of caravan and camping facilities within the Shire of Denmark are likely to be at 90% or greater capacity of all available bays (including overflow) prior to the projected date for the opening of the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility.
- 3.5. The projected dates for the opening and closing of the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility will ideally be set in November for the Christmas period and in February for the Easter period.

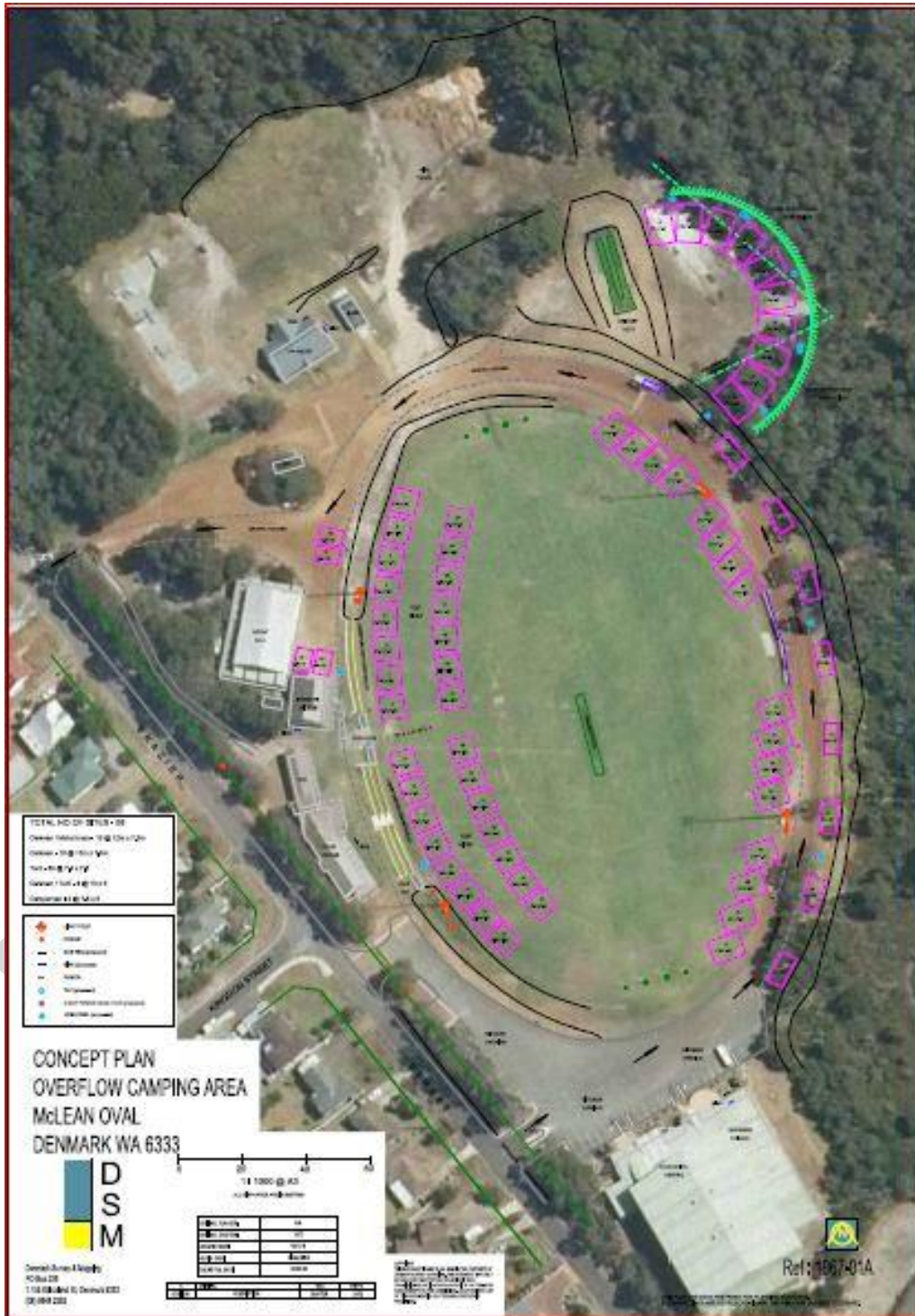
If there are specific events that may warrant consideration of opening of the facility, a decision will be made as to whether the facility opens a minimum of six weeks prior to the event.

The Caravan and Camping Ground operators will be promptly advised of any decision to open the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility.

- 3.6 The Director of Community & Regulatory Services will, after consultation with the MPOWG as to suitable per night tariffs, make recommendations to Council as to site fees for the McLean Park Overflow Camping facility.
- 3.7 The Shire will be the coordinating body for the purposes of this plan, and will;
  - a) Monitor Caravan and Camping Grounds bookings,
  - b) In conjunction with the Visitors Centre and Caravan and Camping Ground operators, determine peak tourist periods that may necessitate opening of the Facility,
  - c) Liaise with operators, and
  - d) Provide relevant safety and other information to visitors including contact and advertising details (to be provided by operators) of licensed Caravan and Camping Grounds within the Shire.

## 4. Management of the Overflow Facility

- 4.1. The Facility will be managed by the Shire through On-Site Management who will manage the Facility in accordance with the Caravan and Camping Regulations including maintenance of an occupants register at all times.
- 4.2. The On-Site Management will allocate sites to visitors, manage during and after hour's behaviours, incidents, requests and questions and receipt revenues due, issuing receipts for every transaction.
- 4.3. The On-Site Management will be determined by the Shire and may be direct employees, contractors or members of local sporting clubs or community groups or an amalgam of these.
- 4.4. The Director of Community & Regulatory Services' goal in recommending to Council the setting of the charges will be to strike a balance between setting prices high enough to give McLean Park campers an incentive to relocate to the other parks within the Shire while not overcharging or price gouging and in turn providing a negative experience and deterring them from returning to the Shire.
- 4.5. The maximum stay at the Facility will be for seven days unless it can be demonstrated that the Caravan and Camping Grounds within the identified localities and radius do not have available licensed capacity.
- 4.6. The Shire will ensure that the oval's reticulation is turned off during approved opening times of the Facility. Given the limited expected duration of the peak season in summer, this is not expected to cause any loss of amenity or functionality of the playing surfaces.
- 4.7. The Shire will mark all bays and the location of any reticulation lines.
- 4.8. The Shire will not take forward oval or training bookings for likely, known or approved overflow opening periods. Given the limited expected duration and likely timing of the opening periods this is not expected to cause any inconvenience to regular users.
- 4.9. The Shire's Ranger Services will monitor the activities at the Facility in conjunction with On-Site Management.
- 4.10. The Facility will not function as a 'free camping area' and nor is it intended to be utilised as a stand-alone overnight facility for Recreational Vehicles (RVs).
- 4.11. This Management Plan underpins and supports the adopted Council Policy relating and subject to being consistent with that Policy, may be amended from time to time by the Council's Director of Community & Regulatory Services.
- 4.12. Guidelines and Overflow Camp Rules for the Facility will be established by the Council's Director of Community & Regulatory Services and may be amended from time to time by that officer.
- 4.13. The Shire shall at the end of each camping session inspect the facility prior to it being used by sporting groups to ensure that:
  - a) Any damaged equipment or facilities are scheduled to be promptly repaired or replaced.
  - b) A thorough inspection of the playing surface takes place and that there is no damage, glass, litter, tent pegs or foreign objects on the surface or perimeter of the oval.



McLean Park Site Plan (Site Numbers and Powered / Unpowered Bays yet to be marked)



## **GUIDELINES AND RULES**

### **McLEAN PARK OVERFLOW CAMPING FACILITY**

Welcome to The Shire of Denmark McLean Park Overflow Camping Facility. The following “rules” are intended to assist in ensuring that everyone is afforded the respect and courtesy that they deserve when staying in the overflow camping area.

We appreciate your support and assistance in this regard and wish to advise that substantive breaches of these rules, antisocial behaviour, illegal drug use or drinking excessive amounts of alcohol will result in eviction from this camping Facility.

- Please refer to the Ground Map (located at either entrance to the Facility) for further information including information on site charges and opening dates that currently apply.
- Payment of the daily fees is required either prior to arriving (if a booking has been made) or on a daily basis in cash to the On-site Manager who will issue you a receipt for the numbers of days you pay for and or intend to stay for.
- Arrivals should proceed to their marked bay (if a prior booking has been made or contact the On-site Manager on 9848 0300 who will advise you where you are to be allocated).
- Dogs, cats or other large animals are not permitted within the Facility.
- Open fires are not permitted but heat beads that are in contained BBQs and cooking or heating appliances can be used.
- Free BBQs are provided for the use and enjoyment of all – please ensure that they are left clean for subsequent users.
- All tents, caravans, annexes and campervans / motor homes are to be sited in accordance with the On-site Manager’s or Council Ranger’s instructions.
- No generators please before 7am nor after 8pm daily and only in the designated generator area.
- Please keep noise to a minimum out of respect for fellow campers.
- Lights out time 10.00pm.
- The camp ground does not have a laundry and a commercial laundry exists in the Denmark Townsite CBD.
- Remember the speed limit within the campground area is 8 km/hour – this is a safety protective measure for all at the overflow area.
- Disposal facilities are provided for rubbish – please use to assist us in ensuring the area is kept clean and tidy.
- Please camp only in designated areas – definitely no camping under trees (this is for your safety – our concern but your responsibility).
- Please have regard for other users of the Facility, BMX track and skate park.
- No vehicle, boat or caravan washing is permitted.
- A chemical toilet dump point is located at the Denmark Visitors Centre.
- Please familiarise yourselves with the emergency evacuation plan and be aware where the safety assembly area is located.
- Guests at the Facility are not permitted to carry out any commercial activities.
- Vehicles are not permitted on the oval and all accommodation including pegs, ropes, annexes and stays must be contained with the specific site allocated.
- The reticulation has been turned off and the pipe locations have been marked. Please do not drive tent pegs into the marked areas.

Above all enjoy your stay here and please provide feedback to Ranger services staff as we strive to continue to improve the overflow camping area for your ongoing pleasure and enjoyment.

For general and out of hours queries please contact the Shire of Denmark on 9848 0300 (this number is manned 24/7).





## McLEAN PARK OVERFLOW CAMPING FACILITY EVACUATION PLAN

### EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN FOR OVERFLOW CAMPING AREA

- 1) On arrival at the camp ground please familiarise yourself with this plan and the surrounding area.
- 2) If there is an incident requiring evacuation of the camp grounds please remain CALM.
- 3) Please Call "000" to advise emergency services of the type of incident.
- 4) Ensure that you leave your camp site quietly and expediently.
- 5) On leaving your camp site please walk towards the front of the Recreation Centre which is directly south of the overflow camp ground. This area is clearly marked with signage stating "emergency assembly area". The purpose of this is to enable family units to link up and for emergency services to check people off.
- 6) Wait for further instructions and remain on the oval until advised to move. Emergency services will attend on notification of an emergency situation and will advise visitors on the best course of action.
- 7) Please do not attempt to gather any belongings or delay your evacuation and do not return to the area until you are advised it is safe to do so.

#### External Threats:

The main external threat to campers at the McLean Park overflow caravan and camping area is if a major fire develops somewhere near Denmark.

If this occurs and the oval is potentially under threat local police and / or Council's Rangers will instruct campers to pack up their tents, caravans and campervans/ motorhomes to pack up and head to a location where they will be safe.

Information on bushfires within the Denmark area can be obtained by listening to ABC local radio 630am or by visiting the DFES website <http://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/alerts/Pages/default.aspx>

We thank you for your co-operation and understanding in this matter and hope that you never need to utilise the evacuation area, however this information is for your safety.

For general and out of hours queries please contact the Shire of Denmark on 9848 0300 (this number is manned 24/7).

Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Denmark