

## 1. Intent

To support the provision of caravan parks within Western Australia by facilitating greater flexibility in the design and composition of new or redeveloped caravan parks, while delivering quality land use planning outcomes.

## 2. Purpose

This bulletin, applied on a case-by-case basis, provides guidance on matters to be taken into consideration in planning for caravan parks, including the development of new or redevelopment of existing parks.

## 3. Introduction and background

Caravan parks are a fundamental component of Western Australia's tourism accommodation mix, particularly in regional areas where self-drive travel is the most practical means of moving between locations. Caravan parks are primarily intended to provide short-stay accommodation for leisure tourists, and vary considerably in size, scale, function, design, location, services and facilities across the State. Due to the evolution of caravan parks, they may not necessarily be referred to as such; other names include tourist or holiday park.

The retention and development of caravan parks as affordable holiday accommodation within the State is a priority that is being addressed across government. Caravan parks experience competing demands, which have contributed to numerous closures throughout Western Australia. Demands include pressure to:

- redevelop (e.g. for residential use or higher end tourism accommodation);

- meet minimum standards and the increasing complexity of regulatory requirements;
- upgrade aging infrastructure, and fund replacement and maintenance;
- provide a greater range of facilities in response to changing market demands;
- continue to provide an affordable holiday experience while balancing increased operational expenses; and
- cater to the demand for other accommodation needs (e.g. social housing, transient workforce accommodation, retirement living, emergency housing).

## 4. Objectives

Key planning objectives are:

- to ensure the development and long term retention of caravan parks as a form of short-stay (affordable) accommodation primarily for leisure tourists;
- to recognise that the commercial sustainability of caravan parks requires some flexibility in product mix, site design and risk mitigation approaches;
- to plan for and facilitate growth in the caravan park industry;
- to ensure the compatibility of short-stay and long-stay uses of caravan parks through appropriate separation;
- to encourage the development and redevelopment of caravan parks in a manner that responds appropriately to the environment, economy and context, and maintains a minimum standard; and

- to ensure any new caravan parks are located appropriately to their intended market, function and context.

## 5. Types of caravan parks

Caravan parks are a designated area of land primarily for affordable short-stay accommodation by leisure tourists provided for within a range of accommodation products. 'Short-stay' refers to occupancy by the same person for no longer than three consecutive months in any twelve month period. 'Long-stay' refers to occupancy by the same person for any period of time greater than three months. Long-stay accommodation is secondary to the primary use.

Other park types and associated licencing provisions exist; these may be exclusively long-stay parks such as residential parks, park home parks, lifestyle villages, transient workforce accommodation parks, transit parks, nature-based parks or a mix of these park types. This bulletin has not been produced for the intent of guiding these types of developments. However, this bulletin, as well as any other applicable policies, could be used as a guide where there are common features.

## 6. Accommodation products and permanent structures

Caravan parks may provide a range of accommodation products to meet visitor demand such as powered and unpowered camp sites, minimal service recreational vehicle (RV) sites, on-site vans, cabins, chalets and eco/safari tents. Caravan parks also provide permanent structures such as caretaker's dwelling/manager's residence, shop/office, café, games/recreation room, ablution facilities, camp kitchen and camp laundry. Many different accommodation products and permanent structures

are permitted in caravan parks, and may not be limited to those mentioned above. It should also be noted that not all of these accommodation types may be permitted under *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* administered by the Department of Local Government and Communities.

Whilst flexibility of accommodation products and permanent structures are permissible, and required for commercial viability, planning considerations exist as to the positioning of these products and structures in constrained areas. For the purposes of this bulletin, constrained areas refers to a specific portion of land that may have restrictions in use due to environmental factors (e.g. steep slopes, flood plains, coastal hazards, bushfire prone areas). Accommodation products located in constrained areas should be removable from the site within 24 hours, this may require the need for additional equipment such as a crane. Permanent structures should not be permitted in constrained areas.

Some cabins and chalets can be affixed to a site (e.g. on a slab) and therefore may be considered permanent structures; as well as this, some camp kitchens, camp laundries and offices may be transportable or donga type structures that can be removed within 24 hours. Discretion should be used when considering these.

## 7. Implementation

### ***Due consideration of this bulletin***

The Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and local governments are encouraged to consider the position set out by this bulletin in planning and decision-making for caravan park related developments.

For the purposes of this bulletin, redevelopment refers to a significant overall upgrade of the entire caravan park and/or construction of new facilities. Discretion should be used when applying this bulletin to the assessment of planning applications. Where the application is for a minor change, such as the renovation of an ablution block or addition of a

swimming pool, there may not be the need for studies to be undertaken as per Section 8.

### ***Local planning strategy***

Where tourism is considered significant within a locality or region, a more detailed tourism component of the local planning strategy should be prepared by the local government. A tourism component of a local planning strategy should provide local governments with a sound rationale for determining the future land allocation, planning controls and infrastructure needs for tourism, including caravan parks, based on sound planning principles. Guidance on the preparation of the tourism component of a local planning strategy is outlined in the *Tourism Planning Guidelines*.

### ***Local planning scheme and scheme amendments***

It is intended that the preparation of new or amended local planning schemes reflect the provisions of this bulletin and guidance contained in the *Tourism Planning Guidelines*. Schemes should include zones that allow for caravan park developments and the permissibility of land uses in each zone. Definitions may be guided by the WAPC's *Model Scheme Text* or the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995*.

### ***Zoning***

The preference is for new caravan park sites to be zoned '*Special Use - Caravan Park*', as opposed to the generic '*Tourist*' zone to provide long term security of use of the site as a caravan park.

In order to promote a more standardised approach to zoning, a local planning scheme may provide for caravan parks (intended for short-stay and long-stay) in the following manner:

- by zoning Caravan Parks as '*Tourist*' or '*Special Use - Caravan Park*';
- by the zoning table identifying Caravan Parks as a permitted use (P) in the '*Tourist*' zone and a discretionary use (D or A) in the '*Residential*' or '*Rural*' zones; and

- by the zoning table identifying Park Home Parks as not permitted use (X) in the '*Tourist*' or '*Special Use - Caravan Park*' zones.

In utilising '*Special Use*' zones, additional scheme provisions may be appropriate for inclusion in the *Schemes Special Use Schedule*. These site specific provisions may be used to restrict length of stay within the caravan park.

Caravan parks primarily intended for long-stay or non-tourism purposes (e.g. residential parks, park home parks, lifestyle villages or transient workforce accommodation parks) should be defined as Park Home Parks and zoned '*Special Use - Park Home Park*'.

### ***Rezoning***

The rezoning of '*Tourist*' or '*Special Use - Caravan Park*' zoned sites to residential, commercial or alike zones is generally considered inconsistent with the objectives of this bulletin. However, if a rezoning is proposed, it should be justified and assessed in the context of the WAPC's *Tourism Planning Guidelines*, any relevant local planning strategy and this bulletin. Where it can be demonstrated that a caravan park site is no longer required, and this is supported by the WAPC in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including long-stay tenants, the WAPC may recommend that the Minister approve the rezoning subject to all other relevant planning considerations.

### ***Subdivision and strata subdivision***

Subdivision is generally not supported for caravan parks; exceptions may be considered for excising a portion of a site if it can be demonstrated that it is no longer required and where the excised portion is to be developed for a compatible tourist use. The strata titling of caravan parks is not permitted. This is to avoid the potential for strata lot owners to develop individual sites in a way which is contrary to the purpose and intent of the caravan park.

## 8. Criteria to assess new and/or the redevelopment of existing caravan parks

A range of factors should be taken into consideration when planning or assessing new caravan parks, redeveloping existing caravan parks, and when determining a new or modified caravan park licence application. As a guide the following criteria, where relevant, should be used to assist in the planning and assessment process:

### Site Suitability

#### *Location and context*

- Identify the purpose and composition of the caravan park in relation to its location and context. Considerations may vary between a stop-over/transit caravan park, destination caravan park catering for tourists and a caravan park catering to long-stay/permanent occupants.
- Where practicable, caravan parks comprising a long-stay component should be located where there is access to urban facilities and amenities.
- There is a presumption against caravan parks comprised of long-stay residents being located in areas of high tourism value because it is preferable that these sites/locations are secured for tourism purposes.
- Provide details of land tenure and any lease agreements.

#### *Topography, drainage, soils and vegetation*

- Caravan parks should generally not be located on steep slopes due to erosion risk and potential drainage problems associated with earthworks and retaining cut and fill embankments. However, if mitigation measures are outlined, sites may be considered in constrained areas.
- Caravan parks should not generally be permitted in areas of potential risk from flooding or waterlogging. However if mitigation measures are outlined, sites may be considered in constrained areas. Watercourses

(such as streams and creeks) and local sensitive environmental features should not be disturbed or altered by the development.

- Acid sulphate soils and other soil types may not be suitable for development as they are susceptible to slipping and slumping, especially during wet periods.
- Vegetation clearing should be kept to a minimum, and in particular, the retention of mature trees should be encouraged, subject to appropriate management of falling limbs and bushfire risk.
- Caravan parks are regarded as generally incompatible in Priority 1 and Priority 2 water resource protection areas, and are conditional use in Priority 3 areas (must be connected to deep sewerage, except where exemptions apply under the *Government Sewerage Policy*).

#### *Coastal or fire hazard constraints*

- Many existing caravan parks are situated within coastal environments. The location of new or the redevelopment of existing coastal caravan parks should take into account coastal processes, landform stability, coastal hazards, climate change and biophysical criteria. Compliance with any relevant coastal planning policy or guideline is required; this may necessitate the need for a coastal hazard risk management and adaptation plan being prepared, where one does not exist.
- Where a new or the redevelopment of an existing coastal caravan park is likely to result in increased visitation to the adjacent foreshore area, a foreshore management plan may need to be developed and implemented.
- Many caravan parks are located in bush settings which may present a bushfire hazard. For sites identified as being bushfire-prone, compliance with any relevant bushfire planning policy or guideline is required. This may necessitate the need for a bushfire hazard assessment and/or bushfire management plan being prepared.

### Visual impact

- Caravan parks may have an impact on landscape character and visual amenity in rural and natural landscapes. The visual impact of the caravan park should be considered from scenic vantage points, public lookouts and tourist routes to reduce the minimisation of high value view sheds.

### Internal Design

#### *Separation of accommodation types/purpose*

- Any long-stay accommodation should complement the short-stay sites with priority given to locating short-stay accommodation on those areas of the site providing the highest tourism amenity (e.g. the beachfront, proximity to shared ablution blocks).
- The design of the caravan park should separate any long-stay accommodation from short-stay accommodation to help ameliorate noise and social issues. Where possible, separate facilities and access should be provided.
- Location of overflow areas should be identified if the caravan park site is likely to require additional space in peak periods, subject to the availability of land. Where practicable, overflow areas should be located in areas that are least likely to impact on long-stay residents to avoid potential conflicts. A local government is required to endorse the details of overflow facilities on each licence.

#### *Access*

- Suitable access and egress should be provided to ensure traffic, cyclist and pedestrian safety within the park.
- Secondary or alternative access routes in event of an emergency (e.g. fire or flood) should be identified.
- Internal road design should consider the interaction between pedestrians and vehicles, and adequate manoeuvring space for RVs and vehicles towing caravans and trailers.



## Amenity

- Vegetation and landscaping should be considered as they are important for integrating the caravan park into the landscape. Vegetation and landscaping provide screening from surrounding land uses, help reduce visual and noise impacts, provide privacy for park users, provide shade, and contribute to a desirable setting for a caravan park.
- Other visual and amenity considerations may include design to minimise the opportunity for crime, using complementary structure styles, colours and materials, suitable choice of fencing, and separating recreational areas (e.g. playgrounds and pools) from quiet activity areas.

## Capability

### Services

- Utility services including a suitable electricity supply, telephone service or mobile phone network availability, a demonstrable water supply and wastewater treatment system should be available. Service providers should be consulted regarding the availability and capacity of services in determining new sites for caravan parks, particularly during seasonal peak demand.
- Where reticulated sewerage is not available, on-site wastewater disposal is to be to the satisfaction of the Health Department.
- All caravan parks are required to have a chemical toilet dump point, with some exemptions (e.g. park home parks). Dump points should be located away from accommodation and in areas of less tourism amenity. If exempted

from providing a dump point on the facility, demonstrated access to an alternative off-site dump point is to be identified.

- Caravan parks catering to long-stay users may be may need to consider a higher level of services and infrastructure than those catering to short-stay users.
- Long-stay sites must be separately metered for electricity and have a separate tap or connection to water.

## 9. Development to be consistent with Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act and Regulations

Development and redevelopment of caravan parks must also comply with the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Act 1995* and the *Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997*, and any updates and/or creation of new legislation that supersede those mentioned.

## 10. Further information

Enquiries concerning this bulletin should be directed to:

Department of Planning  
Gordon Stephenson House  
140 William Street  
PERTH WA 6000

Locked Bag 2506  
PERTH WA 6001

Information relevant to this bulletin is published at [www.planning.wa.gov.au](http://www.planning.wa.gov.au).

## Other resources

Below is a list of other resources which may be relevant, any updates to these policies or legislation shall supersede those listed:

- *Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act 2006*
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1987*
- *Building Act 2011*
- *Building Code of Australia*
- *Strata Titles Act 1985*
- *Health Act 1911*
- *Planning Bulletin 83 – Planning for Tourism*
- *Planning Bulletin 71 – Residential Leasehold Estates and Development*
- *Tourism Planning Guidelines*
- *State Planning Policy 2.6 – State Coastal Planning Policy*
- *State Planning Policy 3.4 – Natural Hazards and Disasters*
- *Planning for Bush Fire Protection Guidelines*
- *Development Control Policy 1.3 – Strata Titles*
- Department of Local Government and Communities website
- Department of Environment and Regulation clearing policies
- Department of Health and WAPC sewerage policies
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services bushfire policies
- Department of Water and WAPC water management policies
- Department of Commerce brochures/information on residential parks

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website: [www.planning.wa.gov.au](http://www.planning.wa.gov.au)  
email: [corporate@planning.wa.gov.au](mailto:corporate@planning.wa.gov.au)

tel: 08 6551 9000  
fax: 08 6551 9001  
National Relay Service: 13 36 77  
infoline: 1800 626 477

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