

# Executive Summary

This study reviewed the nature and spatial extent of coastal camping between Carnarvon and Ardyaloon on the Dampier Peninsula. The study sought to reveal core challenges facing the ongoing management of coastal camp sites. The study also focused on identifying opportunities for improved management of coastal camps.

The study involved four field visits, over 200 interviews with campers and managers, four community workshops and focus group discussions. The study was conducted between July 2008 and June 2009.

The study identified that coastal camping was widespread in the Rangelands region, with the nature of camping highly variable, particularly in terms of its geographical characteristics. Camping was found to be a highly valued social activity for both residents of and visitors to the region. Ensuring that coastal camping occurs in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner could significantly contribute to the overall agenda of managing the natural assets of the marine and coastal environment.

The study revealed that many long term campers and campers who frequently visited the area (including surfers, recreational fishers and four wheel drive enthusiasts) had undertaken a number of valuable environmental protection and rehabilitation efforts. This had been driven by individuals' and groups' strong ethic of environmental stewardship. Campers' strong ethic of environmental stewardship was closely linked to their sense of community and belonging to camping areas. Importantly, those campers who tended to stay at low cost campsites that had few regulations governing their activities often demonstrated a stronger ethic of environmental stewardship and also sense of community and belonging. These campers were most likely to be involved in environmental protection and rehabilitation efforts. Increasing the regulation of these camp sites, which would result in increased costs for campers, would cause these environmental stewards to be displaced. This could potentially have significant negative consequences for environmental management in the Rangelands coastal area.

Tightening the regulation of coastal camping sites and developing well serviced camping nodes was found to have resulted in an increase in short term visitors being attracted to those sites. Visitors to such sites usually had a low level of connection to place and rarely participated in volunteer environmental conservation efforts.

Therefore, it is **recommended** that future management of coastal camping areas in the Rangelands should avoid adopting a uniform management model, particularly if that model undermines the current diversity of camping activities. Management models that displace long term and short term repeat visitors should be avoided unless alternative arrangements can cater for the displaced user group.

It is **recommended** that future management of coastal camping areas should seek to actively engage long term visitors and short term repeat visitors (including surfers, recreational fishers and four wheel drive enthusiasts) in environmental monitoring, protection and conservation efforts.

It is **recommended** that future management of coastal camping areas should actively engage Indigenous ranger groups. These groups have the potential to have a more

integrated role in management and, in particular, could facilitate the delivery of management agencies programmes.

Through this study it was found that the Rangelands NRM potentially have a role in facilitating increased involvement of Indigenous ranger groups in the management of coastal camps.

Through this study it was also found that the Rangelands NRM potentially have a role in facilitating further research into Grey Nomad camping across the entire Rangelands region and developing a strategic regional management plan for this important market.