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Exmouth Coastal Reserves Under Pressure!

The Shire of Exmouth is working with the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and other agencies to implement a strategy to reduce pressure on coastal assets after one of the busiest tourist seasons in recent memory.

Exmouth Shire President Matthew Niikkula said that while the busy season had been fantastic for the local economy, it had also increased pressure on local facilities.

“As well as an increase in illegal camping activity on the Ningaloo coast and associated environmental impacts, our boat ramps have been at capacity and beyond and our beach accesses and car parks have been filled to overflowing,” he said.

“We want to address these issues to ensure that visitors to our region continue to have a positive experience at Ningaloo, but also to ensure we can manage any environmental impacts on our pristine coastline.”

Cr Niikkula said the agencies responsible for managing the coastal reserves and parks include:

- The Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) whom manage the Cape Range National Park / Ningaloo Marine Park and the Jurabi and Bundegi Coastal Park including the Muiron Islands.
- The Shire of Exmouth, jointly manage in partnership with DBCA the Jurabi and Bundegi Coastal Parks and is solely responsible for the coastal strip south of the Bundegi Coastal park boundary to the Bay of Rest.
- Department of Defence via the Australian Federal Police (AFP) are responsible for all defence land including the coastal strip north of the Yardie Creek Rd and Murat Rd intersection on both the west, north and eastern coastal strip; and
- West Australian Police (WAPOL) has powers over all land for trespassing.

All agencies have agreed to work together to develop a compliance and management plan to reduce the impacts of increased use and illegal camping.

Cr Niikkula said that camping at Dunes Car Park was one issue discussed in detail at the meeting.

“Dunes is under the control of the AFP and the Shire and DBCA have no legal ability to move campers on or to infringe. We hope that by the start of the next peak season the Shire and DBCA will have the ability to enact its legislative compliance powers and until then the AFP will continue to manage the situation as best it can,” he said.

Shire of Exmouth MEDIA RELEASE



“We will also review the management plan for the Jurabi and Bundegi Coastal Parks jointly managed by the Shire and DBCA and act immediately to increase the issuing of infringements and education of people free camping or illegally accessing coastal areas.

“We are also exploring funding opportunities to expand car parks that are under stress from increased seasonal visitation such as Wobiri, Janz and Tantabiddi car parks.”

In addition, informal beach accesses, where the public continue to ignore signage and put stress on fragile coastal systems and marine life, will be closed. Improved signage will also be developed and installed prior to next peak season. Agencies will also work with the Department of Defence to obtain management control over coastal areas north of Yardie Creek Rd.

“In relation to the Tantabiddi boat launching facilities the State Government and Shire have developed a taskforce to improve the facility to cater for demand for the next 30 years,” Cr Niikkula said.

“But until this is funded and adopted we will increase the car parking capacity to cater for peak usage periods.”

Cr Niikkula said managing compliance was resource intensive and the legislation under various acts and regulations did not always allow agencies to immediately move people on. In addition, infringements for tourists were not always an effective deterrent.

“We need a comprehensive plan to effectively manage this issue and that is what we are focused on achieving,” he said.

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