WEDGE AND GREY
PLANNING FRAMEWORK
SEPTEMBER 2016

Preserving Wedge and Grey for WA

AN OVERVIEW

Wedge and Grey are coastal nodes in the Central Coast Region of Western Australia, located between the towns of Lancelin and Cervantes. These settlements have the capability of providing nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities for a wide range of interests and budgets.

Since 1930 the settlements at Wedge and Grey have provided overnight accommodation in the form of squatter's shacks. Both settlements grew informally with most shacks being built in small clusters enabling families and friends to enjoy their holiday experience together. This pattern of development is reflective of the manner in which many village-like settlements occur. The settlements' isolation compelled the shack residents to devise ways of being totally self-sufficient with respect to provision of utilities, a practice still in existence today.

Then, in 1989, the state-wide Squatter Policy was introduced to facilitate removal of all shacks including those at Wedge and Grey. In 2010 the parliamentary Shack Enquiry acknowledged the social heritage value of the settlements however it found that the social heritage could be maintained despite removal of the shacks, a finding rejected by a lengthy study as commissioned by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in 2012. This study supported retention of the shack communities.

In an effort to retain the settlements at Wedge and Grey a planning framework has been developed which provides the state government with a workable strategy for the future management of the settlements. The planning framework demonstrates the ability to retain, upgrade and in some cases relocate shacks at both Wedge and Grey. Central to the planning framework is the need for both settlements to operate in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable manner which mitigates public risk. Conservation of both European and Aboriginal heritage values associated with the settlements and the collaborative management of both representative groups is also an important element of the framework.

Ensuring that the general public and tourists can share in the holiday experience at both Wedge and Grey is an important element of the planning framework. Both settlements offer a unique opportunity for day visits and overnight stays within an easy walk of natural beach environments and each is accessible via good quality spur roads leading from Indian Ocean Drive. A variety of overnight holiday stays will be accommodated including shack-stays, camping and caravanning.

The shack settlements offer the new cultural tourism market an opportunity to stay in authentic rustic accommodation and experience how West Australians have historically learned to develop opportunities for low-cost remote holidays.

The planning framework addresses the long-term issues associated with locating holiday accommodation in coastal reserves. The settlements at Wedge and Grey have a low to moderate ranking in terms of coastal vulnerability, susceptibility and instability and the risks to most existing shacks does not warrant their removal at the present time. There are a number of significant landform characteristics at both settlements, such as barrier vegetation, inshore substrate, beach face and frontal dunes which mitigate against the impact of coastal processes.

All existing shacks and those which are relocated, will comply with the requirements of the National Construction Code.

A detailed set of objectives is provided in the planning framework to assist with the future management of both settlements. The settlements do not threaten natural resources or water resources however within each settlement there are areas requiring some degree of remediation and conservation. Some rationalisation of internal roads is required which has been shown on the master plans.

The overall aim at Wedge and Grey is to ensure the long-term existence of their unique qualities, for all to experience. Hopefully, the planning framework and its associated master plans pave the way for this process to begin.