



ACCESS THROUGH PASTORAL LEASES

Policy:

Recfishwest believes that public access to the coastline and rivers of Western Australia for the purpose of recreational fishing should be maintained. Where pastoral leases lie along these areas, a strip should be excised from the lease sufficient to allow public access along the coast or river according to the topography.

Background:

Recfishwest has a considerable interest in the matter of public access to pastoral leaseholds as recreational fishing is often, though not always, the key driver in the need for provision of access.

Pastoral leases provide the only access to a number of significant natural features in Western Australia. This is not surprising, as pastoral leases make up nearly forty per cent of the area of Western Australia. Natural features of particular interest to Recfishwest include the coast and major rivers. Between Kalbarri and Broome, about 1700 kilometres, access to the coast is nearly all through pastoral lease. The 250 kilometres of coastline between Carnarvon and Yardie Creek has only one access point at Coral Bay that is not through pastoral lease. This area is very important to recreational fishers and an acceptable way to secure ongoing access needs to be found.

Recfishwest can understand the concern of pastoralists and local authorities if pastoral activities are being hindered and the environment is being degraded. However, there is ample evidence that riparian vegetation along our rivers is not being protected and this should be fenced out of a pastoral lease to prevent grazing livestock damaging the banks and exacerbating erosion, which is an increasing serious issue.

Reccomendations:

- It seems likely that in some situations it may be appropriate to licence a pastoral lessee to operate a tourism activity over a certain area of a lease. However, that area should be specified and excised from the lease. After all,

the area would no longer be used for pastoralism rather, the area would be used for tourism. The need for competition should be maintained to avoid the repeat of a feudal toll system.

- Access to coastal strips and rivers should be provided through the pastoral leases on mutually agreed routes in accordance with provisions of the Land Administration Act 1997 Section 64. Although the consent of a pastoral lease holder is required under the Land Administration Act 1997 Section 64 (3a) we believe this consent should be in respect to an appropriate route for the access. A complete refusal to agree to an access route should trigger a response by the Minister to consider excising a public access route from the lease. The excision of coastal strips should be implemented under the provisions of the Land Administration Act 1997 Section 143 (6d);
- The major rivers of Western Australia should be accessible to the public. Where a river is contained within a pastoral lease there should be a riparian reserve running along the river which allows public use. These riparian reserves would serve to enhance water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and greatly improve the quality of the fishing experience. The nature of such reserves, any excisions involved and the rivers to which it should apply should be determined by the appropriate Ministers on the recommendation of a community working group which includes Recfishwest;
- Where local authorities, Department of Environment and Conservation or Department of Fisheries in coastal or riverine areas on pastoral leases require specific management then the pastoralist should be able to tender to provide those services; but the authority for doing so must arise from the local authority, Department of Environment and Conservation or Department of Fisheries.
- If changes occur to the Land Administration Act 1997 the intent of the above recommendations should be preserved by the amended legislation. Further, if such changes extend the scope of the Act to include the wider category of rangelands in Western Australia the need for similar provisions for access, access routes and coastal and riverbank protection should be provided within long-term lease provisions such rangelands.