



Statewide Policy No. 7

Houseboats

June 2001

Endorsed: 3 August 2001

WATER AND RIVERS COMMISSION
HYATT CENTRE
3 PLAIN STREET
EAST PERTH
WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6004
TELEPHONE (08) 9278 0300
FACSIMILE (08) 9278 0301

Reference Details

This document is protected by copyright. Information in this policy may be reproduced provided that any extracts are fully acknowledged.

The recommended reference for this publication is Water and Rivers Commission 2000, *Houseboats*, Water and Rivers Commission, Policy No. 7.

ISBN
ISSN

*Text printed on recycled stock,
Onyx 50%, recycled 100gsm
Month, Year*



| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Summary | 4 |
| Introduction | 4 |
| Background | 4 |
| Position | 4 |
| Justification | 4 |
| Intent | 5 |
| Policy Statements | 5 |
| General Provisions | 5 |



Summary

The Water and Rivers Commission (the



foreshores and impact on the social values of waterways, such as fishing and recreation.

Intent

This policy clarifies the Commission's position on houseboat use and provides guidance to decision-makers, community groups, private owners and other relevant stakeholders when considering proposals for houseboat use on the State's waterways.

It aims to:

- protect waterway values;
- preserve habitat and natural ecosystems;
- protect the feeding, breeding and habitats of migratory wading birds and resident waterbirds;
- promote safe use of waterways;
- recognise demand for commercial and recreational opportunities on waterways;
- encourage provision of infrastructure to protect waterways; and
- maintain adjacent residential amenity.

Policy Statements

General Provisions

These provisions apply to all houseboats operating on waterways in Western Australia other than on the Swan/Canning river system. Houseboat use in this system is subject to the



Implementation

- i. Houseboat waste and sewage water holding tanks should be emptied at approved pump out facilities, where available. When pump out facilities are not available, alternative arrangements, such as sewage disposal trucks should be explored.
- ii. Rubbish stored on board should be emptied in an approved rubbish disposal facility, in accordance with local government requirements.

Note: It is an offence under the *Waterways Conservation Act, 1976* and the *Environmental Protection Act, 1986* to discharge wastewater to waterways (without approval) or dispose of rubbish on foreshores.

Australian Standards

- i. AS 3542-1996
Toilet waste retention and transfer systems for pleasure vessels

Mooring

Mooring areas may be defined to protect areas of environmental significance or provide safe refuge for houseboats, in accordance with navigable waters regulations.

Policy Statement No.3:

Houseboats shall use approved moorings and/or mooring areas where they have been defined.

Implementation

- i. Transport, in consultation with the Commission, Local Government and the waterway manager will identify suitable mooring areas for houseboats when required.
- ii. Transport issues licences under the *Jetties Act 1926* for any permanent mooring structures such as jetties, boat pens and mooring piles.

Note: It is an offence under the *Waterways Conservation Act, 1976* to secure a houseboat to the bed or banks of a waterway in a way that causes damage to the bed or banks. This includes dragging anchors, tying up to trees or beaching houseboats on banks.

Refuelling

Storage of fuel and refuelling activities must be in accordance with approved best practice to ensure no polluting substances are allowed to discharge into waterways.

Policy Statement No.4:

Houseboat operators should use approved commercial refuelling facilities, when practicable and all refuelling practices must be in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards (as below) to prevent pollution of waterways.

Australian Standards

- i. AS 1692-1989
Tanks for flammable and combustible liquids
- ii. AS 1940-1993
The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids

Boat Repairs

Repair facilities and associated activities adjacent or on waterways may result in pollutants, such as oils, paints and anti-foul entering the waterway.

Policy Statement No.5:

*Houseboat repairs should be undertaken at licensed commercial boat slipping operations. Repair activities should be in accordance with current best practice for the prevention of waterway pollution and be in accordance with the *Environmental Protection Act, 1986* and regulations, 1996 (as amended).*



Polluter Pays

In the event of a polluting incident from wastewater discharge, fuel spillage or the result of maintenance activities, the cost of containment, abatement and rehabilitation will be born by the person(s) responsible for the pollution. When the polluter is not the owner of the vessel, the owner should assist in the identification of the polluter if necessary. The clean-up and rehabilitation efforts will be completed to the satisfaction of the local waterway managers, the Commission and other relevant stakeholders. People causing pollution may also be prosecuted under the Environmental Protection Act.

Private Houseboats

This section contains specific provisions that apply to private houseboats. These are in addition to those general provisions outlined previously.

Permanent Residency

Permanent houseboat residence on waterways may create an undesirable precedent. It may result in an increase in houseboat numbers, especially in popular areas, leading to possible alienation of significant areas of public waterways.

Policy Statement No.6:

The Commission supports the use of houseboats for short-term accommodation



- promote the development of waste-water disposal and refuelling facilities; and
- promote development of other on-shore facilities identified in this policy.

Regulation and Enforcement

Policy Statement No.8:

Current legislation, policies and licensing arrangements will be used to implement the provisions of this policy, wherever possible.

Implementation – Commercial Houseboats

- i. Commercial houseboat operations are licensed to ensure compliance with regulations pertaining to vessel and navigational safety.

Implementation – Private Houseboats

- ii. Guidelines based on policy provisions, will be produced by the Commission and distributed as part of an education package to all private houseboat owners.

Town Planning Schemes

Town Planning Schemes are statutory mechanisms that define acceptable land uses. These schemes can be used to define areas for infrastructure related to houseboat activities, such as potential refuelling, boat repairs and marinas.

Policy Statement No.9:

The Commission promotes the regulation of houseboat activities be linked to provisions that exist under relevant Local Government Town Planning Schemes.

Implementation

- i. The zones defined by local Town Planning Schemes may be used to manage the provision of related infrastructure, amenity, public facilities and other aspects relevant to this policy.
- ii. Transport issues licences under the *Jetties Act 1926* for the relevant infrastructure after consultation with the relevant Local Government Authority and Waterways Manager.

Provision of Facilities

The Commission encourages the installation of wastewater pump-out facilities, refuelling stations and other related infrastructure near waterways.

Use of Facilities

People using houseboats on waterways are encouraged to contribute to the cost of using and maintaining the infrastructure outlined in this policy.



Waterways Management Bodies

The Waterway Management Bodies are:

1. Peel Inlet Management Authority
2. Leschenault Inlet Management Authority
3. Avon River Management Authority
4. Wilson Inlet Management Authority
5. Albany Waterways Management Authority
6. Geographe Catchment Council

They are statutory authorities (except for GeoCatch) established under the *Waterways Conservation Act, 1976* and supported by the Water and Rivers Commission. The management bodies are responsible for the conservation and management of the waterways and associated lands under their jurisdiction. In the context of this policy, the waterway managers may produce and implement management plans



