Public Access to Land for Tourism and Recreation

Curtin Business School

Michael Hughes and Marian Tye
Project undertaken on behalf of the Department of Sport and Recreation

Project Participants
Departments of Parks and Wildlife, Water and Lands; Local Government; Water Corporation; Noongar community representative; Recreation clubs and associations

Project Overview
Australia’s growing population, and the associated pressure on natural resources, means that managers of public lands are faced with competing demands from different user groups. The researchers mapped selected study regions, identifying overlapping management jurisdictions, disease risk areas, mining leases, drinking water protection zones, conservation reserves and timber reserves. They then overlaid this with tourism and recreation activities, for example bushwalking and mountain biking trails, fishing, swimming, water-skiing and shooting.

The research highlighted that, while legislation adequately allows for land access, how it is implemented is problematic. The issues included different policy and management regimes across local council jurisdictions, overlapping government department responsibilities and inconsistent implementation of often conflicting policies. Improved communication and coordination of land access management was identified as essential to bring clarity and certainty amongst recreation users and more consistent management practices across jurisdictions.

Outcomes
The project is currently developing a collaborative workshop tool to facilitate understanding of the issues and help resolve challenges. It has also:

- Promoted a better understanding of land access issues
- Contributed to more constructive collaboration between land management agencies