

# Camping in WA national parks: Visitors' experiences and perceptions

Report prepared for the Western Australian Department of Environment and Conservation and Tourism Western Australia

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This report should be cited as:

Hassell, S., Moore, S. A. and Macbeth, J. (2013). *Camping in WA national parks: Visitors' experiences and perceptions*. Report prepared for the WA Department of Environment and Conservation and Tourism WA, Kensington and Perth, WA.

## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an interview-based study undertaken of campers' experiences in two Western Australian national parks: Warren National Park and Karijini National Park. The overall aim of the study was to describe and analyse the desired and realised experiences of these campers and explore the meanings that campers attributed to these experiences. This report also describes the characteristics of these camping visitors, their perceptions of management and their opinions regarding camping in national parks compared with caravan parks.

The camping experience was identified as diverse and to many people it is much more than a simple accommodation option. It can hold extraordinary meaning far beyond the immediate campsite. The experience was conceptualised as consisting of motivations (e.g., aesthetics, escape from everyday life), meaningful experiences (e.g., awe, plan/fun) and higher order meanings of experience (e.g., reconnection). Campers at both Parks were generally very satisfied with their experience and provided predominantly positive feedback on how the Parks were being managed. Negative, constructive and confused comments were also made and will be of interest to Park managers. Management implications and recommendations synthesised from the interviews include:

- The camping experience is a multi-dimensional concept
- The setting is the conduit for meaningful experiences to occur
- Wanting to escape from everyday life is an important factor for many people
- Higher order meanings, including re-creation, recreation, reaffirmation and reconnection, are important to campers and warrant promotion by park managers

Park-specific comments included:

### ***Warren***

- Increase interpretation of flora and fauna
- Promote as a cooler climate destination
- Include signage on waste management practices e.g., where bins are located and reasons behind waste management decisions
- Provide firewood from the start of the season and keep dry
- Fix and maintain camp site ground levels for improved drainage and camper comfort

### ***Karijini***

- Increase available information on safety and access
- Increase interpretation on geology at the gorges
- Consider booking diversification e.g., online booking in peak season
- Potentially include public internet access at the visitor centre (but not at campground and no Wi-Fi)

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## **1. Introduction**

This report presents the findings of a study undertaken of campers' experiences in two Western Australian national parks: Warren National Park and Karijini National Park. The overall aim of the study was to describe and analyse the desired and realised experiences of these campers and explore the meanings that campers attributed to these experiences. This report includes a condensed account of the camping experience from the full study (available as Hassell, 2012), and also describes the characteristics of these camping visitors, their perceptions of management and their opinions regarding camping in national parks compared with caravan parks. Experience and meaning in tourism, including nature based tourism, is highly variable and diverse, and the following section provides a brief overview of this topic to provide context for the study.

### **1.1 Benefits of nature to people**

The natural environment draws many people. It is valued for a variety of reasons including for essential ecological functioning, recreation and aesthetics (Krebs, 2008; Putney, 2003; Rolston III, 1988). This is evident in the number of people who visit national parks each year, for example in the year 2011-2012 over 15.5 million visits were undertaken to DEC managed lands and waters (Department of Environment and Conservation, 2012). As well as being a pleasurable experience, being immersed in the natural environment has many other personal and social benefits.

For many in the developed Western world, nature is becoming increasingly removed from everyday life due to increasing urbanisation and the commodification of nature and corresponds to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle (McCurdy, Winterbottom, Mehta & Roberts, 2010). For children, having unstructured free play in a natural environment has been linked to less instances of obesity and increased cognitive and mental health functioning (Kellert, 2002; Louv, 2005; McCurdy et al., 2010). These benefits are also true for adults (Shultis, 2003). In addition, direct contact with nature has been linked to a reduction of stress (Ulrich et al., 1991), increased social cohesion (Borrie & Roggenbuck 2001; Shultis, 2003), increased environmental awareness (Tarrant & Green, 1999) and increased familial, community and global social health (Dustin, Bricker & Schwab, 2010). A way of reconnecting

with the natural environment through national parks is to become physically immersed in them, with camping a popular method of achieving this.

## **1.2 Camping experience**

Camping involves staying overnight in a temporary or basic dwelling, such as a tent, a camp hut or a caravan. Camping can also occur in urban areas such as caravan parks, however, this type is not the direct focus of this study. It is traditionally seen as a type of tourism where one can escape urban life and experience being closer to nature (Clark, Hendee & Campbell, 1971). These authors discussed the changing nature of camping behaviours in the United States, from the more traditional view stated previously to one that is more diverse and reflective of different social goals, urban behaviour patterns and technological changes. In Clark, Hendee and Campbell's (1971) study, they found that natural area managers did not share the same concept as campers of what constituted an environmental experience, reflecting differing ontological views of nature and camping, which was also discussed by Vespestad and Lindberg (2011).

Traditionally held ideals of camping (primitive, unconfined recreation) are no longer the dominant reasons people camp in natural areas. Instead, campers display desires for increased comfort and convenience and social interaction (Dorfman, 1979; Garst, Williams & Roggenbuck, 2009), with the shift accompanied by a diversification in the camping market (O'Neill, Riscinto-Kozub & Van Hyfte, 2010). Garst, Williams and Roggenbuck (2009) found a range of camping ideals including both the traditional and those reflecting modern culture, which reflects this broadened diversity of experiences and meanings that tourists/campers have (Pearce, 2005).

## **1.3 Camping management**

A common method of managing the tourist/camping experience seen in the literature is via the setting attributes such as interpretation and facilities (Cole, 2004), which serves as the basis for natural area planning frameworks such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Clark & Stankey, 1979; Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002). This reflects the belief that providing quality products and services equates to tourist satisfaction, which relates back to business and management success (O'Neill et al., 2010). Less common is research and literature on the nature of the meanings that tourists attach to their experiences, the origins

and process of meaning creation and how understanding these can potentially improve management. This could be because these are more difficult to ascertain and cannot be generalised; and therefore are more difficult to apply to management practice (Cole, 2004; Garst et al., 2009).

It is commonly believed that the outcomes of experience studies are solely for the benefit of improved management (for example less negative impacts, increased user satisfaction) and not for the benefit of the tourists themselves outside of the setting. However, tourism and direct contact with nature can contribute positively to tourists outside of the setting (Driver, Brown & Peterson, 1991; Garst et al., 2009; Shultis, 2003). A deeper understanding of the camping experience can assist with both improved management and also make a positive social contribution. To many people, camping is much more than a simple accommodation option; it can hold extraordinary meaning for people far beyond the immediate campsite (Garst et al., 2009; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). The latter was particularly evident in the findings from this study.

## **2. Methodological considerations**

### **2.1 Study sites**

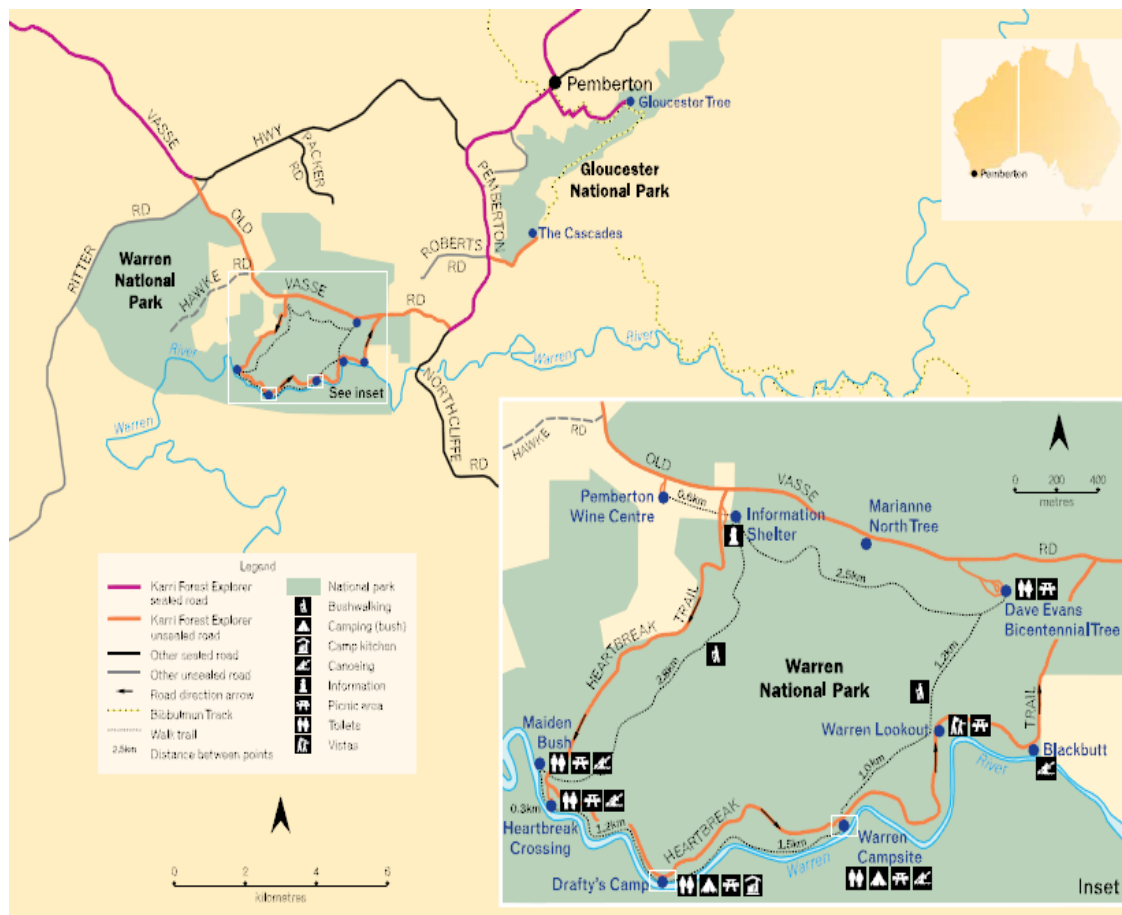
The two sites selected for this study were Warren National Park in southern Western Australia (Figure 1) and Karijini National Park in northern Western Australia (Figure 2). These sites were selected for the following reasons:

1. Very little research has been undertaken on camping experiences and meanings in national parks, particularly in Australia
2. These parks represent a south west park and a remote northern park with very different natural environments and offering potentially different experiences, and
3. The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), the managers of the parks, were interested in finding out more about those who camp in these national parks.

#### **2.1.1 Warren National Park**

Warren National Park is situated in the south-west of Western Australia (Fig. 1). It covers an area of 3,131 hectares of wet sclerophyll forest, dominated by giant Karri trees (*Eucalyptus*

*diversicolor*). The climate is characteristically cool and moist. The Warren River meanders through the Park making it attractive for canoeing and fishing. A number of walk trails are present. Two camping sites are located on the Heartbreak Trail, a 12 kilometre one way gravel road which travels down the Warren River valley to the Warren River. The first is Drafty's Camp which has 16 camp sites, a day use area with a canoe launch and decking, drop toilets and a large undercover camp kitchen with gas barbeques. The second is Warren Camp which has 6 sites tucked back in the forest, a small toilet block, day use area including a canoe launch site and a communal wood barbeque. Both sites are unpowered and due to the steep and slippery nature of the Heartbreak Trail, caravans are not recommended (trailers are not recommended in very wet weather). Fires are permitted in the cooler months in fire rings (not available in every site) and firewood is provided. A small overnight fee is applicable, which in the cooler time of year, is payable by an honour system. An information bay is located at the top of the Heartbreak Trail with minimal management information available on-site.



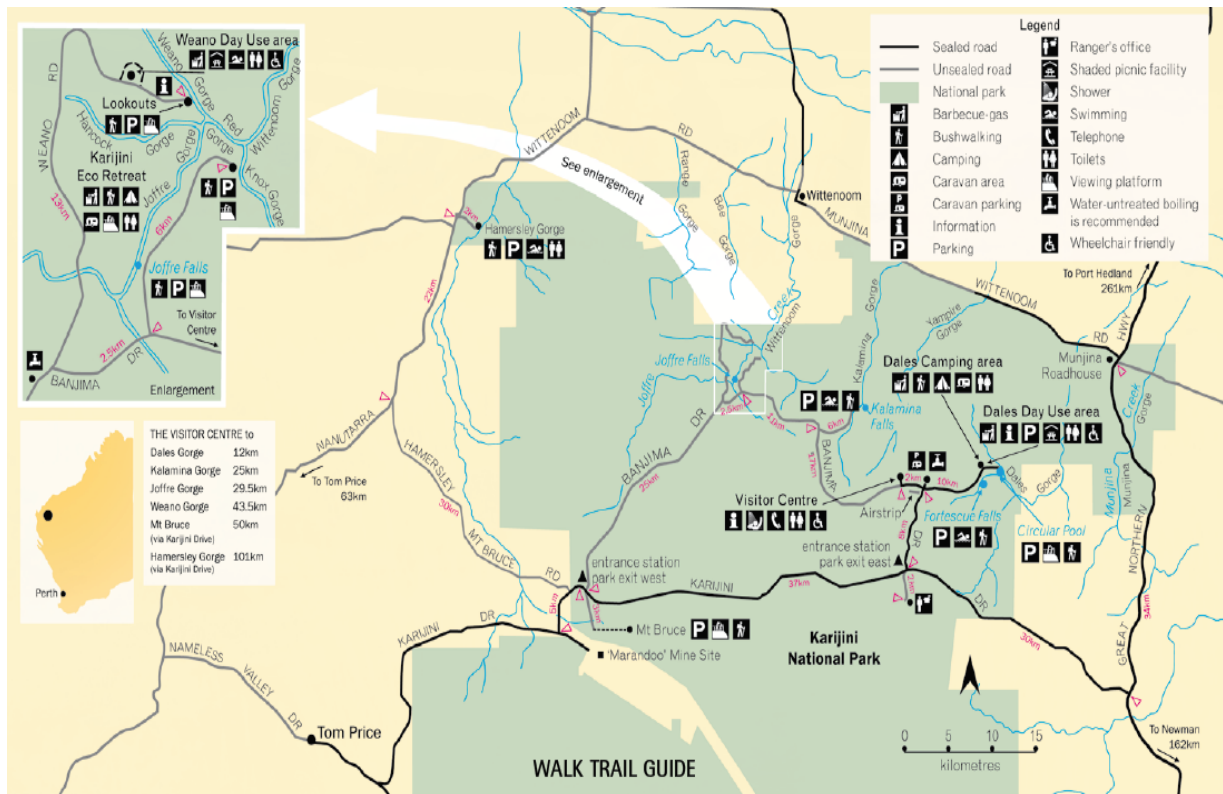
**Figure 1. Location of Warren National Park**



### **2.1.2 Karijini National Park**

Karijini National Park is situated just north of the Tropic of Capricorn in the Pilbara region of north Western Australia. It covers an area of 627,455 hectares and is the second largest national park in the State (Fig. 2). The Park includes spectacular geological features such as high plateaus and deep gorges formed through erosion over millennia. Vegetation includes grassland to closed forest formations, including a large variety of *Acacia* and *Eucalypt* species, as well as *Melaleuca* and *Typha* species in the gorges. The climate is tropical semi-desert and has highly variable temperatures and rainfall. Popular activities in the Park include nature observation and hiking.

Camping is also popular, which is available at Dales Gorge Campground (same fee as Warren). Currently this is the only public campground in the Park, with other previously available sites currently under rehabilitation (Department of Conservation and Land Management, 1999). Another camping and accommodation site is located in the west of the park at Karijini Eco Lodge, which is privately owned and managed. Campers there were not surveyed in this study. Dales Campground consists of 144 sites and has both generator and non-generator camping loops. Each loop has on average 30 sites with communal gas barbeques and drop toilet facilities. There are no shower facilities on-site; however there are showers available at the visitor centre approximately 20 kilometres away. Fires are not permitted at any time. Volunteer camp ground hosts are employed during the busy period to assist with management including fee collection and visitor information. A number of walk trails connect the site to the Dales Gorge Recreation Area.



**Figure 2. Location of Karijini National Park**

## 2.2 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the study was to describe and analyse the experiences of campers in the two Parks including exploring the meanings that campers attributed to these experiences.

The research objectives were:

1. To describe visitor and visit characteristics
2. To describe campers' expectations and engagement with facilities and activities
3. To analyse campers' perceptions of management
4. To describe the desired and realised experiences of campers, and
5. To provide recommendations to DEC for camping management based on this research.

### **2.3 Data collection and analysis**

Due to the nature of this study focusing on meanings and experiences, an inductive, qualitative methodology was used. The methodology utilised face-to-face interviews and participant observation. Using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions allowed campers to provide and share their experiences in their own words. This enabled the researchers to capture the range of perspectives held by those camping in these areas.

Twenty nine interviews were conducted with groups of campers at both of the study sites, lasting from thirty minutes to two hours. The guiding interview questions are given in Appendix 1. This approach was complemented by participant observation, allowing the researchers to understand the context of the interviews and also to observe campers' use of the sites (Babbie, 2008; Bryman, 2004). Notes were taken on-site and photographs were also taken.

The interviews were transcribed. 'Grounded theory', a widely used method for analysing qualitative data, was used to assist with interpretation. This method relies on emergent coding and involves assigning a word or code (e.g. weather, awe) to a portion of transcribed text that represents what the researchers believes it is saying (Bryman, 2004; Charmaz, 2006). There are different types or levels of coding which Charmaz (2006) described as involving two main phases; open or initial coding (e.g., children playing) which is the basic process of breaking down and examining data and then selective or focussed coding (e.g., reconnection) which includes making connections between codes and subsuming them into higher order categories and concepts. This two step process was used to analyse the interview transcripts and produce the results given below.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The following section highlights the results from each of the Parks including visitor and visit characteristics, expectations and engagement with facilities and activities, perspectives of management and campers' opinions of caravan parks. It is followed by a brief presentation of the experiences and associated meanings expressed by campers for both Parks combined, of which the full account can be found in Hassell (2012).

## **3.1 Warren National Park**

### **3.1.1 Visitor and visit characteristics**

A total of 14 groups (35 people in total) were interviewed at Warren National Park (App. 2). Male/female couples without children present were most common, followed by groups of adults without children and couples with children present equally represented. One male friend group was also present. Four groups had children less than 18 years old present. The most common age group interviewed was 25-40 years old. Those aged 50+ years old were second most common and 40-50 years old third. One 18-25 years old group was interviewed. Two groups had a mixture of different aged adults. Males and females were similarly represented. Out of the 35 people interviewed, 18 were male and 17 were female. Camping setups ranged from tents, to camper trailers and also campervans. Some groups had mixed camping setups. Simple tent setups were the most common with complex arrangements being rare.

Almost all campers interviewed were from Australia, with the majority from Western Australia. The exception was one camper from South Africa who was with Australian family. An equal number of groups were first time and repeat campers. Three groups had repeat campers who had brought others for the first time. The majority of campers were on short trips (less than 1 week) with only a couple of groups on trips of greater than 6 months.

### 3.1.2 Expectations and engagement with facilities and activities

When asked what expectations campers had about camping at Warren, they were generally minimal. The majority of responses centred on the setting, which included the *natural*, *built*, *social* and *managerial* settings. The natural setting was the most common expectation with campers expecting to see old growth Karri forest, wildlife and the Warren River. A camper from South Australia stated “...*this was a good example of virgin old growth forest and I was looking to experience that, so we came*”. Another from New South Wales said “*We wanted to see the big forests, you hear about them all the time, the Karri*”. The cool weather was expected and did not detract from campers’ experiences. A few campers expected to see more wildlife than they did, with one camper stating “*I’m surprised, didn’t even hear kangaroos coming through the bush*” with another expecting a similar thing: “*I’m surprised there’s not much wildlife that we can see; no kangaroos or emus*”. Despite this, all campers expressed satisfaction with the natural setting.

Most campers had their expectations exceeded by the built setting, which included facilities, size of sites and the site layout. The camp kitchen was a nice surprise, even though no one reported using it. Fire rings were generally expected and very much appreciated, as were toilets. Some campers expected wood to be provided but a few had not and had bought their own wood. The large size of the sites was not expected, however, no campers interviewed used the smaller sites. The site layout was generally unexpected and well received with campers. Having designated campsites under the trees and surrounded by bush was a pleasant surprise for many campers. One camper stated “*Different people are going to have different expectations and some are probably not realistic, I mean, you’re in the bush! You’re not going to get five star facilities*”.

In regards to the social setting, some campers expected there to be more people camping onsite and were surprised at how quiet it was. They also expected to be able to socialise and have fun within their camp group. There were not many expectations regarding the management of the setting; one camper knew she could not book so she did not expect to.

All campers partook in activities, both outside of their site as well as within. All campers interviewed had used the walk trail adjacent to the campsite, whether as a means of accessing the River or as a nature experience in itself. The River was utilised for kayaking

and fishing, as well as for a couple of quick swims. Observing nature was the most commonly cited activity undertaken outside of the campsite, especially trees, birds and fungi. Parents accompanied children and encouraged them to look out for different species, with one young camper keeping a journal of the different fungi she saw. Activities undertaken within the campsite had a more important emphasis and included socialising with friends and family, cooking, drinking, games and tending their camp fires. One camper emphatically stated “...not being able to light a fire is... camping and the forest or sleeping outdoors, it’s like having spaghetti without the sauce!”

The most popular purposes for visiting Warren National Park were to rest and relax and to enjoy nature and the outdoors, followed by engaging in recreational activities and holidaying. Spending time with family and friends and having a break from everyday life was also important (Table 1). The main activities undertaken included camping, relaxing/fun/enjoyment and bushwalking/hiking. Bird and wildlife watching and sightseeing were also common activities (Table 2).

**Table 1. Main purpose of visit for Warren campers**

<i>Main Purpose of Visit</i>	<i>No. of Respondents (=14)</i>
Rest and relax	13
Enjoy nature and outdoors	13
Engage in recreational activities	10
Holiday	10
Spend time with family and friends	8
Break from everyday life	6
See the sights	5
Adventure	4
Learn about native animals and plants	3

### **3.1.3 Perceptions of management**

Campers were asked about their perceptions of management, and these are categorised below as positive, negative, constructive and confused. These perceptions were focussed mainly on the setting, which consisted of built and managerial. The following sections describe these perceptions of management, each beginning with a quote.

**Table 2. Main activities of Warren campers**

<b>Main Activities</b>	<b>No. of Respondents (=14)</b>
Relaxing/fun/enjoyment	13
Bush walking/hiking	11
Bird watching	9
Wildlife viewing	6
Sightseeing	6
Fishing	5
Picnicking/BBQing	5
Cycling/mountain bike riding	2
Wildflower viewing	2
Fitness/health	1
Photography	1
4WDing	1

### **Positive**

*“I think they’re [DEC] doing a good job. I mean different people have different expectations and some are probably not realistic, I mean ‘you’re in the bush!’ You’re not gonna have 5 star facilities. That’s the whole experience, is just to get away” (Tina,<sup>1</sup> Warren camper).*

Overall, campers had very positive things to say about the management of Warren, with most saying that they were happy with their experience and many would not change anything. The built and the managerial settings were spoken about positively by many campers, which included the sites and how they were designed, laid out and maintained (including the use of vegetation for privacy and site division), the facilities provided (including the camp kitchen, toilets, walk trails and river access points), the provision of firewood and the number of signs and the level of fees charged for camping (Table 3).

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<sup>1</sup> Not her real name; false names used through out to protect the anonymity of respondents.

**Table 3. Positive perceptions of management at Warren**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Site layout/design: liked the privacy, vegetation, size, variety
Facilities: camp kitchen, toilets
Heartbreak Trail: one way system
Walk trails: presence
River protection/access: presence; number of access points
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Firewood: provision
Sites: cleanliness
Camping fees: reasonable
Signage: reasonable amount

**Negative**

*“That was the only thing we found coming into this campsite from other ones that we’ve seen is that the sites are very small. And being a Mum I don’t really like tents close to fires and things, or if there’s not enough room”* (Jenny, Warren camper)

Negative perceptions were not very common, nor passionately expressed. Those that were expressed included opinions regarding camp sites being too small (including fire rings being too close to sleeping quarters), of provided wood being wet (in the early stages of the season/study), lack of interpretative materials and Park entry fees being too high (Table 4).

**Table 4. Negative perceptions of management at Warren**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Bins: not enough
Signs/interpretation: not enough
Sites: too small/too close to fire rings
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Wood: too wet
Rangers: not present
Interpretation: not enough, not enough variety
Fees: expensive fees to enter national parks



## Constructive

*“It does get frustrating when there’s not enough places to stay. I think they’re [DEC] conscious of the two points I made; the width for the camper trailers and sufficient campsites” (Steve, Warren camper)*

Campers were open about giving constructive comments when asked what would make their experience better. They were not always consistent, for example, some campers wanted more bins present onsite and some were against bins being present at all. Other comments included site improvement (increasing size, spreading out more and improving site drainage) and installing new facilities (showers, solar lighting, increased river access) (Table 5).

**Table 5. Constructive comments for management at Warren**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Bins: provide more; provide less
Sites: increase site size/variety; spread out more; improving site drainage; makeover sites, grow grass around sites
Fire rings: provide more/each site
Wood: provide more; build a wood shed to keep dry
Solar lighting: install
Don't build permanent undercover structures at sites
River access: increase river access; install a floating pontoon
Showers: install
Make a fungi garden
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Advertisement of camping: increase
Ranger presence: increase (for interpretation and control)
Access: don't close sites/restrict access to sites; grade access road
Activities: allow recreational shooting/pest control
Fees: no fees to enter national parks

## Confused

*“Where we were yesterday out near Walpole they had rings like this and they provide firewood. And then here interestingly enough only some have the rings, I don’t know why they don’t all have it? Cos if we’re going to light a fire here but the other five people can’t” (Trish, Warren camper)*

Some campers expressed confusion at aspects of Park management, including comparing Warren to other parks they had camped in and wondering at the differences (Table 6).

**Table 6. Confusion expressed by campers at Warren**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Why are there not fire rings in every site?
Where are the bins?
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
When is marron season?

## 3.2 Karijini National Park

### 3.2.1 Visitor and visit characteristics

A total of 15 groups (36 people in total) were interviewed at Karijini National Park (App. 3). Couples with children less than 18 years old were most common. Next most common were male/female couples with no children present and groups of friends (one mixed gender and two female). Five groups had children less than 18 years old present. One group of interviewees consisted of a family with an older child (30+), and one single female camped on her own. Campers interviewed were most commonly over 40 years old with the 40-50 and 50+ brackets equally represented. There were also the same number of 25-40 and 18-25 year olds interviewed. One group of interviewees had mixed ages, ranging from 30-50 years old. Out of the 36 people interviewed, 13 were male and 23 were female. Caravans were the most common camping setup, followed by tents (including with swags). Campervans were the next most common followed by camper trailers. One large motor home was present.

The majority of campers interviewed were from Australia, predominantly Western Australia. Five groups were from the eastern states, with three of the five from New South Wales. One group of interviewees was mixed with one camper from Western Australia and one from Victoria. Two camping groups were international, from Italy and Switzerland. Twelve out of the fifteen groups interviewed had not been to Karijini previously. Three groups had one person who was a repeat camper and the others were first time campers. The majority of camping groups were on longer trips of more than 1 month, with 2 on a 1 year journey and

3 choosing travelling as a lifestyle. Three groups with school-aged children and 1 group of students were specifically at Karijini for the school holiday period.

### **3.2.2 Expectations and engagement with facilities and activities**

Many campers at Karijini had an open mind and not many expectations. Of expectations mentioned, the built setting was the most common including site layout and facilities. Most campers did not expect such a large camping area and such a high level of privacy given the number of other campers present. Campsites were larger and more secluded than expected. Many did not realise that the camping area was so large or that there were designated generator camping loops. This was much appreciated by those campers that did not have generators as the noise was seen as taking away from the natural ambience they came to enjoy. The facilities exceeded expectations with campers expressing gratitude at the amount and cleanliness of the common areas and toilets, as well as having access to water and a toilet dump. Similarly to a Warren camper, a camper from Victoria stated *“If you want to experience the outback, what’s the point in going somewhere luxurious?”*

Naturally, campers expected to see the gorges and the natural setting of the Pilbara. Many expressed having their expectations exceeded with a couple from Italy stating *“We didn’t expect such great camping! We never camp in Italy, there’s no need as our best attractions are cities. Here it’s nature- I prefer here!”* In regards to the social setting, one camper was amazed at the large amount of visitors to the park, yet another was surprised that it did not seem full of families on school holidays.

Some campers expressed expectations regarding the management of the setting. One camper from New South Wales expected to be able to camp where he wanted to (instead of being allocated a site) and also expected to be able to have free access within the Park (to go where he wanted, i.e. not being restricted to roads/paths). Another camper, from Western Australia, had also expected more access and fewer restrictions in the Park and said *“I go to a place that’s not so restricted and you can do so much more. Here there’s so much you can do but you’re so restricted because of the guidelines imposed for lowest common denominator [tourist]”*. On the other hand, a camper from Queensland had expected Karijini to be a potentially dangerous place and was surprised to see less

restrictions than he'd expected- *"If that was on the east coast you'd have to be in harnesses, clipped onto safety rails!"*

Activities undertaken were focussed on the natural setting with all campers interviewed having visited at least one gorge. Days were spent exploring the area, hiking, climbing down and around the gorges and gazing upon landscapes, flora and fauna. Photography was a common activity amongst campers and one camper took her equipment to the gorges and painted. Upon return to the campsite, activities involved cooking, downloading photographs, playing games, writing in journals, reading books and planning onward travel. After spending the day being very active, most campers retired to their sleeping quarters not long after sunset. In contrast to Warren National Park, the activities undertaken outside of the immediate campsite had a more important emphasis.

The main purposes of a visit to Karijini were to enjoy nature and the outdoors and to see the sights. These were followed by spending time with family and friends, holidaying and engaging in recreational activities (Table 7).

**Table 7. Main purpose of visit of Karijini campers**

<i>Main purpose of visit</i>	<i>No. of Respondents (=15)</i>
Enjoy nature and outdoors	15
See the sights	15
Spend time with family and friends	13
Holiday	12
Engage in recreational activities	10
Break from everyday life	6
Learn about cultural heritage	3

The main activities undertaken by campers to Karijini were relaxing/fun/enjoyment, sightseeing and bush walking/hiking. Bird watching was popular, as well as photography, wildlife and wildflower viewing, picnicking and BBQing and swimming (Table 8).

**Table 8. Main activities of Karijini campers**

<b><i>Main activities</i></b>	<b><i>No. of Respondents (=15)</i></b>
Relaxing/Fun/Enjoyment	15
Sightseeing	13
Bush walking/Hiking	13
Bird watching	7
Photography	5
Wildlife viewing	5
Wildflower viewing	5
Picnicking/BBQing	5
Swimming	5
Rock climbing/abseiling	4
Visit Aboriginal/cultural sites	3
Visit visitor centre	3
4WDing	1

### **3.2.3 Perceptions of management**

Similarly to Warren, the perceptions of management expressed by campers at Karijini have been categorised and presented as positive, negative, constructive and confused. These perceptions were focussed mainly on the setting, which consisted of built and managerial elements.

#### **Positive**

*“This is what I wanted; no powered sites, its genuine camping. It’s so well done that they don’t pack 5000 people in here, I love that. It’s beautiful”* (David, Karijini camper)

Overall, campers gave very positive feedback about the management of the Park. The built setting including the layout of the sites was well received, and many did not realise that there were 144 sites at Dales Campground. The facilities, including the Visitor Centre, were also praised as well as the access to gorges and the variety of walk trails. Positive aspects of the managerial setting included the presence of camp hosts and rangers, the management of the camp sites, value for money, respect for the difficulty of the Park employees jobs and the absence of immediate communication (mobile phone, Wi-Fi) (Table 9).

**Table 9. Positive perceptions of management at Karijini**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Facilities: toilets, water access, Visitor Centre (including phone access), BBQs (cooking and socialising), dump site, lack of safety rails
Access: to gorges
Site layout/design: allocation, privacy, vegetation, no power, over flow camping
Walk trails: presence, including those with Indigenous interpretation
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Camp hosts: presence
Sites: cleanliness, designated generator sites
Rangers: interpretation
Asking campers for feedback
Respect for difficult jobs
Communication: appreciated <i>not</i> being able to use mobile phones/lack of communication
Value for money

### **Negative**

*“It’s one of the things I’ve seen as national parks become more commercialised, they dumb things down to the lowest common denominator. Like the access to different things. They put in more and more restrictions on what you can do, because everyone has varying degrees of ability”* (Tim, Karijini camper)

*“The only thing I thought was missing is that if you’re not on a tour, you don’t get any information on the rocks and the formations. If they go to the trouble of saying ‘This is a cork tree’, you could also have other signs that might explain the geology”* (Beryl, Karijini camper).

Negative perceptions of management were not common, with many campers accepting the remote and potentially dangerous nature of the Park. Some, however, did not think there was adequate signage and interpretation and that the roads were in bad condition. Negative comments regarding the managerial setting included too many restrictions on access, the inability to book ahead, allocated sites that they did not want and no Indigenous rangers being present (Table 10).

**Table 10. Negative perceptions of management at Karijini**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Interpretation/signage: not enough, maps not clear enough
Access: bad road quality
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Access: restrictions/made to feel excluded, the popularity of the Park means more restrictions
Sites: allocation of sites, can't book sites ahead, generators are noisy
Rangers: no Indigenous rangers present

### **Constructive**

*"I'd hate to see these parks upgrade facilities; I think it would ruin the landscape. I'm gauging by other countries I've visited. It gets overcrowded"* (Ellen, Karijini camper)

*"We don't have enough mobile phone contact. If the national parks could put a tower in each park it'd be fantastic! You want to be able to stay a week here, but you're so isolated you can't really contact anyone"* (Bob, Karijini camper)

Campers were happy to provide constructive comments for management. As with Warren National Park, these were sometimes conflicting, reflecting the diversity of the camping population surveyed. Some wanted less development (including keeping no mobile phone and Wi-Fi coverage) and some wanted more development (including increasing communication availability, fixing existing infrastructure and increasing the capacity of the Campground). In terms of the managerial setting, many campers expressed a desire to book a campsite in advance, saving them the worry of not being able to get a site. An increase in Indigenous involvement was mentioned, as well as increasing onsite interpretation of the geology and banning generators in all national parks (Table 11).

### **Confused**

*"One thing I would comment about, I'm surprised that all these little toilets don't have a tank, collecting the rainwater. That's so unusual. In most parks, they'll have a gutter system to catch the rain water so you can wash your hands"* (June, Karijini camper)

**Table 11. Constructive comments for management at Karijini**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Access: more roads; better quality
Gorge development: no overt development in the gorges; fix steps to Fortescue Falls; no deck at Fern Pool (keep natural)
Communication: increase communication on site (internet availability); do not provide communication onsite (internet availability)
Sites: orient sites for solar energy; increase capacity of campsites; don't increase capacity of campsites; don't increase comfort level
Facilities: maintain BBQ areas better; more tables near BBQs; increase water access
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Booking: allow online booking/diversify booking methods; communicate current system better to avoid disappointment (notification of capacity status earlier)
Indigenous involvement: increase (rangers, camp hosts, interpretation)
Sites: separate people who want different experiences, ban generators in national parks
Interpretation: increase geological interpretation on site
Promotion of camping: increase
Camping fees: charge more

Confusion was minimal. One camper wondered why there were no rainwater tanks to catch water for hand washing in the toilets. A couple did not understand the reasons behind access restrictions, as was expressed in the negative perceptions. Similarly to Warren, campers wondered why there was not more promotion of camping at Karijini (Table 12).

**Table 12. Confusion expressed by campers at Karijini**

<b>Setting: Built</b>
Why are there no rainwater tanks?
<b>Setting: Managerial</b>
Why are there so many restrictions on access in the Park?
Why is there not much camping promotion/advertisement?

### **3.3 Camping in national parks compared to caravan parks**

Campers were asked how their experience would have differed if they had stayed in a caravan park (App. 1). For the majority of campers to both Warren and Karijini, the camping aspect to their trip was very important, if not the key aspect. At Warren, the camping aspect



was central in facilitating their meaningful experiences, as outlined in the following section. Campers to Karijini were generally there primarily for the landscape, however most said that given the choice, they would not stay in a caravan park or other accommodation option, including the privately owned Karijini Eco Retreat on the western side of the Park. One group had stayed at both Dales Campground and the Eco Retreat, and a couple had tried to get into the Eco Retreat (as it is bookable) but it was full. Overall, most campers only used caravan parks when they required facilities such as power and ablutions (Table 13).

Campers spoke of positives of caravan parks, which included comfort and convenience, facilities and access to other activities/sights, as well as the negatives, including other patrons (including too many, privacy, intrusiveness), less freedom and less challenge, and more expensive. The positives of camping at these Parks were the opposite of the negatives of caravan parks: these campers felt more comfortable, relaxed and happy. There were opportunities available that were not present in caravan parks, including teaching children to 'make do', more challenge and authenticity and being closer to nature (Table 13). The following quotes highlight these responses.

*"I like the space. The next van is way over there but in a caravan park you're all next to each other. A lot more nature based, it's the reason we travel, to get into places like this. You get to go walking, see waterfalls. Each national park has its own different things to see and do. More fun than caravan parks, seeing everyone watch TVs! We like the nature experiences, seeing wildlife and things"* (Rob, Karijini camper)

*"Yeh, the relaxation aspect, and not feeling... I mean there aren't that many bays here but if it was all just one long stretch of camping, it would feel like it was a caravan park then, it's just too much. But this way the way they've got it, little pockets of areas, makes it better"* (Trish, Warren camper)

*"It just depends on what we needed at the time. If it was cloudy, rainy, we'd probably stay in the caravan park 'cos the solar panels don't work that well. And we've gotta keep the two fridges going. We've got our bush fridge and a big fridge inside"* (Deb, Karijini camper).

**Table 13. Positives and negatives of caravan parks, and positives of camping at Warren or Karijini National Park**

<i>Positives and negatives of caravan parks</i>	<i>Positives of camping in Warren or Karijini National Park</i>
<b><i>Positives of caravan parks</i></b>	Less people
Comfort and convenience: easy access, can book ahead, less difficulty than camping in Parks	More privacy
Facilities: showers; laundry	Cheaper
Closer to other activities	More freedom
	Can have fires (only Warren)
<b><i>Negatives of caravan parks</i></b>	More challenging
Too many people	More relaxing
No privacy	Other people are not intrusive
Expensive	More picturesque/aesthetics/nature based
No freedom	Teach children to 'make do'
Can't have fires	More authentic
Less challenging	Specific type of holiday
Not relaxing	Camping is main attraction
Other people too intrusive	Good facilities
	Good site layout
	Self image ('national park people')
	Accessible

At Karijini, campers were also asked why they chose to stay at Dales Campground rather than the Eco Retreat. The responses were similar to those in Table 13 'Positives of camping in these Parks', and also included not booking ahead, being a repeat camper to Dales, word of mouth and unavailability of the Eco Retreat (Table 14).

**Table 14. Why campers at Karijini chose Dales Campground (DEC managed) rather than Eco Retreat (private) on this visit**

<i>Why campers chose Dales Campground rather than the Eco Retreat</i>
Proximity to Dales Recreation Area
More privacy
Cheaper
Nicer to camp in
More easily accessible (better road condition)
More vegetation (privacy and bird life)
Repeat camper
Didn't book ahead (flexible traveller)
Don't need facilities and power at this time
Word of mouth
More authentic 'genuine camping'
Eco Retreat booked out/unavailable
Didn't know about the Eco Retreat

### **3.4 Experiences of campers**

This section outlines the experiences of campers at both Warren and Karijini. Both Parks had a diverse range of campers; however their experiences had many similarities. Because of this, a combined camping experience is presented. An overall description of experience is given, starting with desired experiences, which are conceptualised as 'motivations'. It then proceeds to campers' realised experiences, conceptualised as 'meaningful experiences'. Finally, higher order meanings of these experiences are presented and discussed. An in-depth analysis of the camping experience can be found in Hassell (2012).

#### **3.4.1 Motivations**

The motivations behind camping experiences were explored by asking campers why they chose to camp at Warren and Karijini (App. 1). Travel motivation incorporates many different factors which can be organised according to Crompton's (1979) 'pull' and 'push' factors. Pull factors are the destination attributes attracting visitors to an area and push factors are internal socio-psychological forces that influence visitors' desires to travel (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Pearce, 2005). Another lens for viewing motivation is through 'in order to' and 'because of' factors, which Schuetz (1945, 1951) used to describe factors motivating social actions; the former being connected with anticipated future experiences and the latter being connected with past experiences.

The 'in order to'/pull factors expressed were identified as experiencing nature, aesthetics and self image. 'Because of'/push factors included escape from everyday life, disconnection, self identity and journeys/destinations (Table 15).

### **3.4.2 Meaningful experiences**

Meanings are a component of the whole tourist experience which also includes activities and the setting. They are also situated deeper and comprise a more complex component of the entire experience including past experience and personality (Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998). The meanings articulated by campers were expressed overtly and also covertly; hidden in the rich responses to the interview questions and body language. An experience was judged meaningful through listening to both words and context.

The meaningful experiences expressed by campers at both Parks included awe, adventure/challenge, rest/relaxation, play/fun, family functioning and strengthening friendships (Table 16).

### **3.4.3 Higher order meanings of experience**

Higher order meanings permeate the entire camping experience. Meanings are linked with dimensions of experience, motivations, place attachment and benefits to the tourist. Difficult to define on their own, they are a *more complex part of the whole experience and include emotions and personal and cultural interpretations* (Farber & Hall, 2007; Garst *et al.*, 2009; Pearce, 2005; Vespstad & Lindberg, 2011). The higher order meanings expressed by campers at both Parks included re-creation, recreation, reconnection and reaffirmation (Table 17).

**Table 15. Motivations/'in order to' (pull factors) and 'because of' (push factors) expressed by campers at Warren and Karijini**

<b><i>In order to (pull factors)</i></b>
<p><b><u>Experiencing nature</u></b></p> <p>All campers spoke of nature as an important component of their camping experience, which is consistent with definitions for natural area tourism, ecotourism and in other studies of natural area tourism motivations.</p> <p><i>"I believe that you should enjoy it for what it is, not for what you want it to be. And maybe you might enjoy it more! 'Cos you're not staying at the Hilton! You're staying in nature, and that's what it's all about" (Beryl, Karijini camper)</i></p>
<p><b><u>Aesthetics</u></b></p> <p>Linked to experiencing nature was the attraction of natural beauty; the aesthetic of the parks. Urry (1992) discussed the tourist 'gaze', of the consumption of the tourist space via the visual as well as through other senses, and that it is the unusualness, the difference from what is normally seen, that makes the experience special.</p> <p><i>"It's the flat plains then it drops down into a massive big gorge, it's impressive to see" (Mick, Karijini camper)</i></p>
<p><b><u>Self image</u></b></p> <p>This was connected with campers wanting to camp as it fulfilled a role in the image they desired of themselves, and was associated with campers' desired futures.</p> <p><i>"I've whinged a lot then I'll go home and brag about it! A real hypocrite" (Jemma, Warren camper)</i></p>
<b><i>Because of (push factors)</i></b>
<p><b><u>Escape from everyday life</u></b></p> <p>Campers expressed many reasons behind this motive including work related stress, personal issues at home and not having enough time for leisure. These factors contributed to them wanting to camp, and camping provided the setting for benefits such as seclusion, rest, recovery from injury and relaxation away from everyday life.</p> <p><i>"It nourishes the soul; I dunno it does something different than what the city does for you. I think you're able to feel... I dunno, a bit of freedom, head space" (Renee, Warren camper)</i></p>
<p><b><u>Disconnection</u></b></p> <p>Campers from both Warren and Karijini expressed feelings of disconnection from others, nature and self and this manifested as a motivation to camp.</p> <p><i>"We've suddenly done things as a family, and to me that's the core of camping. It brings you back, we're losing it" (Carl, Karijini)</i></p>
<p><b><u>Self identity</u></b></p> <p>Some campers expressed their desire to camp as being associated somehow with their sense of self, concerning campers' past experience.</p> <p><i>"It's a part of who we are" (June, Karijini)</i></p>
<p><b><u>Journeys/destinations</u></b></p> <p>For many campers, the Parks were their primary destination. For others, their choice to stay was a matter of the destination being a part of a longer journey, or coming across it by chance; they did not have one primary destination.</p> <p><i>"We're winging it... surprises everywhere" (Mick, Karijini camper)</i></p>

**Table 16. Meaningful experiences expressed by campers at Warren and Karijini**

<p><b><u>Awe</u></b></p> <p>Awe is comprised of emotions such as inspiration, amazement, admiration, feelings of vastness and profound joy as well as fear, confusion and humility.</p> <p><i>“The vastness of the countryside- I can’t comprehend it! Amazing!”</i> (Bridget, Karijini camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Adventure/challenge</u></b></p> <p>Having adventures and their associated challenges were meaningful to campers at both parks, including both ‘outer’ challenges, such as hiking in dangerous terrain, and also ‘inner’ challenges, such as trying to set up camp in the rain having forgotten the tent pegs.</p> <p><i>“There was a little bit of fear and a lot of excitement! That sums it up. And you feel really good about it, that you’ve done something and you were able to do it!”</i> (Joanne, Karijini camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Rest/relaxation</u></b></p> <p>Campers at both Parks spoke of having a relaxed persona whilst camping; of not having to keep up appearances. This was seen as a release of social/gender obligations and everyone who mentioned it was happy that they could relax and be themselves.</p> <p><i>“We’re probably not good subjects ‘cos we’re not doing what we’d normally do. We’ve come here specifically to do nothing”</i> (Rita, Warren camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Play/fun</u></b></p> <p>Play can be described as doing things for pleasure, as children do; to enjoy yourself, rather than work. This was experienced by both adults and children at both Parks.</p> <p><i>“They’ve had a great time I think. The big boys have enjoyed the adventurous side of it. The whole experience of walking somewhere where there are no hand rails, no path! They’ve really enjoyed that side of it”</i> (June, Karijini camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Family functioning</u></b></p> <p>Camping fulfilled the important role of facilitating family functioning, such as through increased quality time, socialisation and mutual problem solving.</p> <p><i>“We could’ve easily gone to see gorges every day, but I would’ve been so disappointed if my family had missed out on this [the social experience of camping]. That happens to be a by-product, I’m thrilled we’re here but to me this is what it’s all about”</i> (Carl, Karijini)</p>
<p><b><u>Strengthening friendships</u></b></p> <p>The absence of distractions and obligations contributed to the strengthening of friendships. This was seen both between friends camping together and also with newly formed friendships.</p> <p><i>“People are more friendly here than in the city. When you walk past people ask ‘Hi, how are you?’ But in the city they just walk by with their head down”</i> (Eva, Karijini camper)</p>

**Table 17. Higher order meanings expressed by campers at Warren and Karijini**

<p><b><u>Re-creation</u></b>  Camping allowed people the opportunity to re-create themselves; away from the responsibilities of home such as work and school, from traditional gender roles, from social expectations.</p> <p><i>“As soon as you walk out you forget about the bills, work, the kids schooling; you’re just away. Even though it’s only four days it’s like a holiday; you’ve gotten away, you’ve rejuvenated and then you’re happy to go back and start all over again”</i> (Naomi, Warren camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Recreation</u></b>  Acts of recreation are associated with the other higher order meanings expressed here; recreation acts as an enabler of meaningful experiences such as re-creation of the self, it stimulates arousal and is an expression of freedom of choice.</p> <p><i>“The kids got the biggest buzz from going to Kermit’s Pool yesterday!... We ended up going all the way through, you don’t want to take risks with the kids but we figured we could do it and they’re used to rock climbing. Finishing that was the best; we were on the biggest high! Go team!”</i> (Kate, Karijini camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Reconnection</u></b>  Camping allowed people to reconnect with nature, family and friends. It facilitated this reconnection through simplifying life; there was no power, no televisions, no phones, no employment.</p> <p><i>“The great thing about this is, being a family with young kids, I love that we’ve actually lived. We’ve sat here and talked as a group, we’ve had a laugh, played board games; there they are right now playing Monopoly. That to me is living”</i> (Carl, Karijini camper)</p>
<p><b><u>Reaffirmation</u></b>  For many people, camping represented a part of themselves or a part of who they wanted to be and by going camping this image was reaffirmed or affirmed.</p> <p><i>“For me it’s more about getting back to nature and back to the ancient roots of who you are, how you’re supposed to live, not the desk job that I work”</i> (Scott, Warren camper)</p>

The proceeding section has given an overview of the camping experience identifies at both Warren and Karijini. This view of the camping experience and meanings has been represented in a model format, showing how the higher order meanings of re-creation, recreation, reconnection and reaffirmation surround and are a component of both motivations and meaningful experiences (Fig. 3).

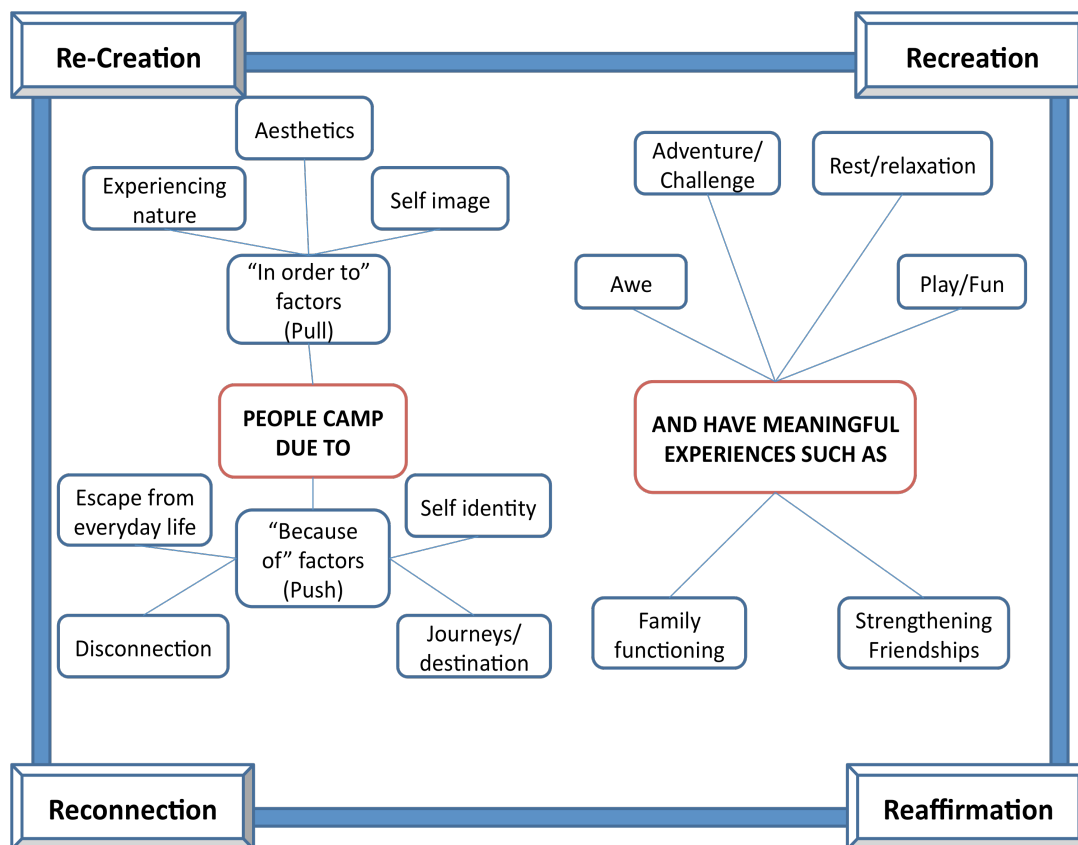


Figure 3. Campers’ experiences and meanings at Warren and Karijini

## 4. Management Implications and Recommendations

### 4.1 Combined Parks

While campers are not a homogenous group, and each Park in this study had differing natural and physical environments, their visitors shared many similarities in their experiences. As such, the following implications from this study are potentially relevant to camping in national parks in Western Australia in general.

#### 1. The camping experience is a multi-dimensional concept

The camping experience is complex involving temporal phases, personal characteristics and interactions with the physical setting including activities, motivations, values, benefits and meanings on many levels encompassing both the personal and the social. Camping is undertaken by a wide variety of the public, not only those looking for a solely natural experience or who cannot afford otherwise. As such, understanding what constitutes the camping experience, including camper



satisfaction with the services and setting, needs to encompass these multiple facets of camping as they are important contributors to the overall experience.

## **2. The setting is the conduit for meaningful experiences to occur**

The natural environment setting is important to campers' experiences, but it is only one facet. Many campers did not particularly mind where they camped (except in caravan parks), as long as other meaningful experiences such as experiencing nature, family functioning and rest and relaxation could occur. Because of this, it is recommended that in addition to managing the setting for basic human requirements (ablutions, cooking) that managers consider the influences the setting has on existing experiences and look to increasing opportunities for meaningful experiences to occur. For example, providing more interpretative materials aimed at both adults and children (increasing learning and family functioning opportunities whilst decreasing confusion over management strategies) and having campsites surrounded by vegetation so as to minimise the visual impact of other campers (e.g., increasing opportunities for relaxation and family functioning and feelings of having escaped from everyday life). Communal facilities and camping loops are important aspects of the setting and these add to the opportunity for these meaningful experiences.

## **3. Wanting to escape from everyday life is an important factor for many people**

Most campers interviewed expressed some desire to escape from facets of everyday life, whether it was something overt like work or stress or more covert like the feeling disconnected from others due to more macro social forces. The natural environment represents a place where people can leave behind distractions and modern 'noise'. This includes electronic devices and technology such as computers, phones and power. Due to these important meanings that people ascribe to camping, it is recommended that campsites stay free from *direct* access to the internet, mobile phone coverage and power as much as possible. Some campers (mainly older, retired campers) expressed a desire for readily available electronic communication, however such access will negatively impact on the overall

experience for many campers. The value of 'making do without' is an important aspect of the camping experience.

#### **4. Higher order meanings are important to campers**

As previously mentioned, the natural environment setting is only one facet of the experience, with many campers expressing higher order meanings such as re-creation, recreation, reconnection and reaffirmation. These psycho-social meanings and benefits can be used to complement marketing of campsites and camping in general, *elevating ordinary experiences into extraordinary ones*. These could be promoted seasonally, for example marketing camping during the cooler months at Warren (when fires are permitted) for the benefits of reconnection with family and friends.

#### **4.2 Singular parks**

Each Park had a variety of types of campers and experiences, and this must be taken into consideration in recommending management actions. The brief recommendations provided below are derived from experiences expressed by the majority of campers.

##### **4.2.1 Warren National Park**

#### **1. Increase interpretation of flora and fauna, including fungi, in the wetter months.**

Many campers expressed a desire for increased interpretation of the flora and fauna, including fungi. Parents wanted their children to have increased learning opportunities as well as unstructured free play.

#### **2. Promote as a cooler climate destination, with campfires and variety of fungi as pull factors.**

Even in the cool and damp weather, Warren is an attractive destination for meaningful experiences to occur, such as family functioning around the fire and searching for different varieties of fungi.

#### **3. Include signs informing visitors about waste management practices.**

These signs could include the reasons there are no bins in the campsite and where campers can dispose of their refuse.

**4. Provide firewood from the beginning of the allowable season, and cover to keep dry.**

Being able to have campfires in the cooler months was extremely important and was much appreciated by campers. The availability of combustible wood at the beginning of the fire season was limited and this was when most of the comments were made.

**5. Fix and maintain ground levels and drainage of campsites.**

As Warren is an attractive destination in the cooler months, and as many campers use tents, drainage is an important issue for visitor satisfaction.

#### **4.2.2 Karijini National Park**

**1. Increase available information on safety and access.**

For example, reasons why there are restrictions, case studies of accidents, legal information and biological conservation. As this is a very important issue, clearer communication could alleviate confusion and avoid negativity towards the Park.

**2. Include onsite interpretation on geology at the gorges, not only in the visitor centre.**

Many campers wanted increased interpretation on geology at the gorges to increase their satisfaction. An example of suitable onsite geological interpretation is in Grand Canyon National Park, USA ('Trail of Time').

**3. Consider booking diversification in the high season.**

This could include online booking, and placing "Campground full" and "Overflow camping available" notifications physically further away on entry roads so campers can make the decision to pull in or continue to another destination earlier (saving time, fuel and patience). In this study only campers who had managed to acquire a campsite at Dales Campground were interviewed, however many expressed a level of stress at potentially not being able to a site, especially after having driven a long distance.

**4. Potentially include publically available computers for internet connection at the visitor centre, not at Dales Campground or Wi-Fi.**

Many older campers desired increased communication with their families, especially grand children. As many 'grey nomads' visit Karijini, providing internet access at the Visitor Centre is an option to consider for both increased visitor satisfaction and increased revenue.

## 5. Acknowledgements

Funding for this research was kindly provided by the WA Department of Environment and Conservation, Tourism Western Australia and the School of Environmental Science, Murdoch University. DEC staff from the Warren and Pilbara regions assisted greatly with this research. Special thanks to Dr Amanda Smith from DEC for initiating and supporting this research and to Dr Kate Rodger for providing advice on designing and conducting this study, and especially for her support in the Karijini part of the fieldwork. And a final thanks to those campers who consented to share their experiences and their expectations. Without their generosity, this report would not have been possible.

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## 7. Appendices

### APPENDIX 1. Interview template

Respondent:

Site/Date:

Questions

1. Why did you choose to camp at this National Park? (Cost factor? Only accommodation in area? Major part of trip?)
2. Have you been here <i>before</i> ?
3. Are there any particular reasons for choosing this particular site?
4. What kinds of things have you done while you have camped here?  a. How would this have been different in a caravan park?  b. What else do you intend to do?
5. What are the best experiences you've had camping at this national park <i>this time</i> ? (Internal/external)
a. What makes them special?
b. (If they're repeat visitors) How about the best experiences you've had here <i>before this time</i> ?
6. What about the not so good experiences? Can you tell me about those?
7. What kinds of expectations did you have about camping here? Have your expectations been met?
8. Is there anything you miss about being at home?
9. Is there anything you would change anything about this park/campground? What could make your experience better? Management/Personal
10. Is there anything else you think I should know to understand camping experiences better? Is there anything you would like to ask me?

## APPENDIX 2. Visitor characteristics of campers to Warren National Park

Interview number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
No. of interviewees	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	2
Age group	50+	25-40	18-25	40-50	50+	40-50+	25-40	25-40	50+	25-40	25-40	25-50+	40-50	25-40
Gender	M/F	M/F	2M/2F	M/F	M/F	2M/2F	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/F	M/M	2M/2F	2M/1F	M/F
Camping setup	CT	CM PV	T	T	CT	CT	CM PV	T	CT	T	Ts	T+ CM PV	Ts+ CTs	T
Home location	WA	WA	WA	NSW	NSW	WA/OS	WA	VIC	SA	WA	WA	WA	WA	WA
1st time or repeat camper	1st	1st	1st/R	1st	R	1st	R	1st	1st	R	R	1st/R	1st/R	R
Children present	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y

**Key: Camping setup-** CT=Camper trailer; CV=Caravan; CMPV=Campervan; T=Tent. **Home location-** WA= Western Australia; NSW= New South Wales; OS= Overseas; VIC= Victoria; SA= South Australia. **1<sup>st</sup> time or repeat camper-** R=Repeat

### APPENDIX 3. Visitor characteristics of campers to Karijini National Park

Interview number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
No. of interviewees	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	4	2	2	2
Age group	50+	50+	50+	50+	40-50	50+	25-40	40-50	40-50	25-40	18-25	40-50	50+
Gender	M/F	M/F	F	M/F	2M/1F	F	M/F	M/F	M/M	F	M/F	M/F	F
Camping setup	CV	CV	CM PV	CV	T/S	CV	CM PV	CT	CT's	MH	T	CV	T
Home location	NSW	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	OS	WA	WA	OS	WA	QLD	WA/VIC
First time or repeat camper	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st/R
Children present	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N

Interview number	14	15
No. of interviewees	1	2
Age group	40-50	18-25
Gender	F	F
Camping setup	T/S	CMPV
Home location	WA	WA
First time or repeat camper	R	1st/R
Children present	Y	N

**Key: Camping setup-** CV= Caravan; CMPV= Campervan; CT= Camper trailer; T=Tent; S=Swag  
 MH= Motor home. **Home location-** WA= Western Australia; NSW= New South Wales; OS=  
 Overseas; VIC= Victoria; SA= South Australia. **1<sup>st</sup> time or repeat camper-** R=Repeat