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<p>Initiative 1 REVIEW THE <i>ROTTNEST 8 ISLAND AUTHORITY ACT 1987</i> The Rottnest Society supports a review and believes that it should take place BEFORE further progressing the draft RIMP because a number of management directions and initiatives are in conflict with the content and spirit of the Act. RIMP.</p> <p>The Act defines the purposes for which the island is to be managed and for whom it is primarily to be managed. The draft RIMP attempts to have us believe that a local holiday and recreational island is the same as an ecotourism destination or tourism icon. We do not agree that this is so and we believe that most Western Australians know the difference. The draft RIMP appears to be diverging from the Act in this regard, inasmuch as a number of initiatives appear to be aimed at developing Rottnest as tourism destination – which is contrary to the purpose mandated by Sections 11 and 12 of the Act, and to the often-expressed wishes of the Western Australian public. It appears that there are two main motivating principles for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear intent on the part of tourism executives and of the RIA board to ensure that Rottnest becomes a ‘tourism icon’ to fulfil its potential in this regard for the State – despite the purpose for which it is managed being defined by the Act. • A financial imperative in that the Rottnest Island Authority is in an invidious position of being required by the Act, and successive governments, to be financially self-sustaining whilst at the same time being responsible for the provision and maintenance of services beyond its capacity to do – especially when taken together with the requirement by successive state governments, and public expectations, to keep the island affordable. The draft RIMP acknowledges on p.14 that this is not possible. <p>Successive governments have recognised this impossibility and provided grants from time to time. The inherent tension contained therein means that inappropriate means are sought to resolve that tension – and we see some of those inappropriate means (in that they are not aligned with the word and intent of the Act) being put forward in the draft RIMP. This tension needs to be resolved so that the island can be managed sustainably and in line with what Western Australians want rather than lurching from crisis to crisis. We would hope that this would be examined in a review of this kind.</p> <p>Other concerns include the length of business leases on the island, currently limited by the Act to twenty years, but now becoming normal for longer than that.</p> <p>Such a review should of course cover the proposal to investigate a move to become a Government Trading Enterprise model – although we understand that there is no such thing in Western Australia. Our other major concern in this regard</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p>is that an amended or new Act would maintain clear lines of accountability to the appropriate Minister, the Parliament and the public and there is no lessening of the requirements for reporting.</p>	
<p>Initiative 2 ECOTOURISM STRATEGY When taken with other initiatives in this draft RIMP it appears to us that the development of such strategies are aimed more at developing Rottneest as an eco-tourism destination – which is contrary to the purpose mandated by the Act. Initiative 1 and Initiative 5 should be completed and the results analysed BEFORE the development of any strategy designed to increase visitor numbers or further development of the island as an eco-tourism destination.</p>	No
<p>Initiative 3 TWENTY-YEAR VISION FOR ROTTNEEST ISLAND We support this in principle but do believe that primary input to such a vision should be based on what the people want and NOT on what the business community wants.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 4 SUSTAINABILITY ACCREDITATION This again appears to be a tool to underpin the development of Rottneest as a tourism destination. It may however be a useful tool in the development approval process.</p>	No
<p>Initiative 5 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM RESEARCH We strongly support research into visitor impact on the physical, social and cultural environment. This research project should be completed and its report and any recommendations analysed before any developments are progressed or attempts made to increase summer visitor numbers.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 6 DEVELOPMENT PLANNING CONTROLS We support this in principle. We believe that the current Sustainability Guidelines and Building Guidelines failed the public in relation to the Mt Herschel development and so we find it difficult to have faith that new planning controls will work in the public’s interest. However, everything possible must be done to improve the planning approval system including the development of a definition for a ‘significant’ development’. There must be a mechanism for ensuring that proposed developments are not considered in isolation, but that their cumulative impact is taken into account. We note that this draft RIMP contains several possible developments and that each of them has the potential to have a significant impact on the island. Collectively their potential impact is enormous.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 7 ADDRESS EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC THREATS (INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE) It appears to be contradictory in the extreme to be talking about this whilst at the same time planning developments which will increase all of the pressures normally associated with climate change including increased use of utilities, and increased waste output.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 8 ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT We are pleased to see progress in this area.</p>	Yes

<p>Initiative 9 MAINTAIN QUALITY OF RIA VISITOR ACCOMMODATION We strongly support an ongoing refurbishment programme and commend the RIA for budgeting and planning for this.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 10 PROVIDE A RANGE OF VISITOR ACCOMMODATION It appears to be at least a possibility that there will NOT a permanent camping ground. The RIA should commit definitely to the provision of a new camping ground whether or not it is co-located with an eco development. We agree with the replacement of old fibro units with new chalets.</p> <p>Neither an eco-style development nor ‘guest accommodation’ on the site adjacent to the Rottnest Hotel should be progressed until:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initiative 1 (The Review of the Act) has occurred. 2. Initiative 5 (Sustainable Tourism Research) is completed and report available in 2010. 3. Initiative 6 (Development Planning Controls) is completed. 4. The development of the definition of ‘significant development’ (which we understand will be undertaken). 5. Initiative 16 is resolved (provision of utilities). 	Yes
<p>Initiative 11 UPGRADE KINGSTOWN We are generally supportive although we have reservations about yet another public/private partnership. The focus should continue to be environmental education, school groups and others.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 12 REVIEW VISITOR ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT OPTION We do not support any move to remove RIA managed accommodation from the general pool. Without much more information being available it appears that such a proposal would contravene the Act Section 12(2).</p>	No
<p>Initiative 13 EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES Since we do not know what is proposed here we cannot make any informed comment except that when asking a number of Rottnest visitors about whether this seems to be a good thing one is met with blank looks. Is it another initiative aimed at the tourism market?</p>	No
<p>Initiative 14 IMPROVE VISITOR FACILITIES If this initiative is about providing extra facilities OUTSIDE the settlement area we restate our position that the provision of man-made facilities outside the settlement area is not appropriate with the exception of toilets and water points (where feasible/and should be on maps) in bays which have moorings. We do not believe that the RIA should provide shade shelters. Rather we would prefer to see the RIA do more to educate visitors to the fact that they need to take what they need with them (perhaps there is a market for umbrella or shade hire). A key feature of Rottnest is the minimal visual impact of man-made buildings outside the settlement. Neither do we believe that the RIA should be trying to encourage all visitors to get to outlying bays. In our view visitors should be encouraged to go as</p>	No

far as they are able given their own capacity and circumstances.	
<p>Initiative 15 MARINE FACILITIES – BOATING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The development of this strategy should be completed before proceeding at all with the provision of extra facilities. Neither the proposed feasibility study for a commercial marina nor the redevelopment of the Army Jetty (although it is not covered specifically in this Initiative) should proceed until initiatives 5 and 6 have been completed, and the definition of a ‘significant development’ is completed. Then full public consultation should be part of the process.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 16 REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY FOR UTILITIES AND NON-COMMERCIAL SERVICES</p> <p>The Society supports such a review and would like to see this issue discussed in a wide-ranging review of the Act. However we are seriously concerned that the RIA, whilst talking of sustainability, proposes developments with an indeterminate number of possible beds (but possibly in the order of 600-900, plus staff beds) which are likely to drastically increase the demand for utilities. It is also reasonable to assume that a private operator of utilities would have as their primary aim the desire to increase usage of said utilities. Further the RIA has promoted the increase of power through the addition of electrical appliances in RIA accommodation.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 17 TERRESTRIAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The Rottnest Society strongly supports this initiative but believes that the RIA should undertake a similar process to that which led to the development of the Marine Management Strategy. In other words it should be with wide public consultation.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 18 IMPLEMENT THE MARINE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>Yes of course.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 19 EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT</p> <p>We support this although we are concerned that it may be just another tool to underpin the development of Rottnest as a tourism icon.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 20 ROTTNEST ISLAND RESEARCH STRATEGY</p> <p>We would prefer to see the money spent on actually establishing ongoing research and monitoring programmes designed to produce the information relevant to the management of the terrestrial and marine environment.</p>	Yes
<p>Initiative 21 CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION</p> <p>We strongly support the protection and conservation of heritage places. However, we also strongly support the protection and conservation of the ‘Rottnest ethos’ or the ‘Rottnest Experience’ which we believe to be seriously at risk through this draft RIMP. This appears to be yet another tool to underpin the development of Rottnest as a tourism icon.</p>	No
<p>Initiative 22 EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION PRODUCTS</p>	No

<p>Generally supportive but this appears to be yet another tool to underpin the development of Rottnest as a tourism icon.</p>	
<p>Initiative 23 BUILD ‘TEAM ROTTNEST’ TO PROVIDE A GREAT VISITOR EXPERIENCE</p> <p>A major concern with the very evident focus on the business community in this draft RIMP is the bringing of the RIBC to the forefront in planning and development. There is a place for them and it is obviously good for everyone to have viable businesses on the island. However, the business community is always going to want more people regardless of whether the island can sustain them or not.</p>	No
<p>Initiative 24 FOCUS ON ROTTNEST ISLAND CULTURE</p> <p>What do the RIA and the RIBC have in mind as a ‘culture appropriate to an ecotourism location with supporting tourism facilities, services and activities’? (Draft RIMP (2009-2014) p.85). This item goes on to say ‘The approach will support and be consistent with the Initiative to sustain a desirable island culture’. Frankly this sounds like some kind of social engineering designed to transform our unacceptable local holiday island culture into something more acceptable to tourists – based on the ideas of tourism bureaucrats and local businesses.</p>	No
<p>Initiative 25 SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS</p> <p>The Rottnest Society recognises the different character and requirements of the various volunteer groups serving the island. Insofar as our work is concerned we are satisfied with using the Caroline Thomson cabins or the Governor’s Circle houses for the accommodation required for our three volunteer weekends per year. We do not require special accommodation. As things stand now we pay for one night’s accommodation for up to ten Caroline Thomson cabins with the RIA providing the other night free of charge. Other support that we require is that the sites where we are to work are prepared and fenced (if necessary) and any tools and/or plants required are onsite, transport (if required) is organised, supervision as required is organised.</p>	Yes
<p>Additional comments section</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall it is clear that this document is really a list of proposals to develop strategies and to review policies and strategies a number of which need to be developed and in place before planning further development. There are far too many loose ends. Therefore, in our view, before any further accommodation developments (including Mt Herschel), or redevelopment of the Army Jetty, or a feasibility study of a commercial marina are progressed the following things should happen: 2. The Review of the Act should be carried out first; 3. The Sustainable Tourism Research project should be completed and any recommendations carefully studied before proceeding - that is, if it is indeed a study of the impact of visitors and visitor numbers on specific sites on the island and not just another survey of visitor views and 	

4. Those strategies and reviews proposed for development in the draft should be developed, or not, as deemed appropriate once the above items are in place.
5. As already discussed in our responses to individual initiatives a number of the initiatives appear to be largely intended to underpin the development of Rottneest as a tourism icon. There is a considerable amount of money budgeted for several of these initiatives – by our reckoning \$2,350,000 for Initiatives 19, 21, 22, and 24. There is no amount shown for Initiative 2. We do not approve this kind of expenditure if it is largely intended to further this aim.
6. Also of concern to us is that there is no opportunity in the draft RIMP for comment on an increase in staff accommodation. What are current policies about this? How many people total does the RIA expect to have living on the island if (a) there are no new developments and (b) if all of the accommodation developments proposed herein get the green light? How much new accommodation does the RIA intend building? How does this impact on the utilities?
7. A number of contentious proposals are embedded with proposals that are probably not contentious. This makes it difficult to decide which box to tick. People have expressed concerns about whether, if they ticked ‘yes’, their comments which might qualify that approval, would be read.
8. Some proposals such as the redevelopment of the Army Jetty (as distinct from a marina) are not mentioned in any initiative and so people are not offered the opportunity to comment on them.
9. Another concern is that anecdotal evidence demonstrates that already food prices on the island are going up - quite drastically in some cases. We anticipate rising prices with more upmarket facilities.
10. We have heard a number of complaints about the difficulty of completing this document. One such complaint relates to the difficulty of choosing which box to tick in that one might approve an initiative in certain circumstances but not in others. Our responses for a number of initiatives could have been either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ because our answers are qualified.

Another is that there appeared to be a problem in attempting to enter text into comment boxes in that the cursor was out of sight and it seemed impossible to enter the text unless one scrolled down to the cursor. Some people may have given up before discovering this.

A third complaint is that the ‘email’ button was clicked and the document disappeared but there was no way of knowing whether the document had indeed been sent.

11. The Society appreciates the complexity of managing Rottneest with the

<p>various constraints imposed on the RIA and to date we have been happy with the overall direction taken. However there is a significantly different emphasis in the draft RIMP which we believe to be to be in the wrong direction and contrary to the Act.</p>	
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