



Four Wheel Drive Northern Territory
PO Box 37476 Winnellie NT 0820
15th May 2012.

**Submission on behalf of Four Wheel Drive Northern Territory Inc. by executive Mal. Stewart
In respect of the public NRETAS document on the proposed Limmen National Park.**

NRETAS,
Attn. Park Planning

I write this report as someone who has lived in the top end of the NT for over 40 years and visited the proposed park area several times.

In recent times I have been enlightened in my recreational pursuits by traveling and camping in much of the magnificent high country park and forestry areas of Victoria. The public land managers in the state of Victoria, actively consult with the major recreational interests to provide a great balance between the lock up as much land as possible mentality and the aspirations of visitors to enjoy real isolated bush experiences in the most attractive areas. There are so many camping areas provided and available bush sites in Victoria's remote parks that a real bush camping experience can be enjoyed. Crowding is not an issue.

This contrasts greatly with overcrowding and having to endure antisocial behavior by some miscreant groups in the small number and size of top end NT parks camping areas.

I can't help but compare the management of one of the remotest parks in Victoria with the proposed highly restrictive proposed management of the Limmen National Park.

No fees apply for camping anywhere in Victoria's remote parks, with facilities or without.
Remote bush camping is allowed in Victoria.

This proposed plan, for an area greater than the Victorian Alpine National Park provides for only 5 camping sites and no bush camping is allowed.

Two of these camping sites are positioned such as to provide very little attraction for camping as the recreational opportunities nearby are very limited. These sites, Limmen River crossing and the Southern lost city are best suited for simply refreshment and meal breaks.

Two other official camp sites which exist only because of the immediate proximity of a fishable water-course become very crowded during the dry season and with the expected increase in fishing activity, this will only get worse.

Butterfly Springs is the exception, but the only activity available appears to be viewing the beautiful waterfall and bathing in the plunge pool. Anything more than an overnight stay is unusual as what more is there to do.

Why is camping not allowed at the "Western lost City" and why is there a locked gate requiring a key for access?

Why is bush camping banned and any camping at all only allowed in the smallest fraction of the area of the park?

Why are chain saws banned when they can be used to limit the length of combustible timber in a camp fire as is insisted in Victoria's parks. This is considered to be a safety matter to limit the size of a fire and to prevent logs from burning outside the allowed limits.

Lomarieum lagoon was one of my recent ideal camping sites. It was wonderful to observe the bird life, particularly in the early mornings and late afternoon. It seems this is never allowed to be experienced again.

As is the case with many NT parks, track closures have already begun to limit the access to historical and scenic attractions.

One in particular I refer to is the access track near Mountain creek which passes through the "Valley of the Springs", the site of the original St Vidgeon Homestead. This track and the adjacent area provided a richly rewarding 4WD and camping adventure which myself and others have greatly enjoyed in the past.

Is this also lost to all forever?

There are a multitude of desirable destinations within this vast park area which should be opened up to visitation and camping, as they would be in Victoria. Why are we so limited in the NT?

An example of how this should happen is provided by an adjoining land holder on Lorrella Springs station.

There needs to be more balance between extreme conservation and the desires of the people for bush recreational access and activities. Parks should be established to provide new areas for exploring, not to reduce the access as they have historically done in the NT.

Unfortunately from past experiences in the NT parks system, I don't feel confident that the balance will change. The Advisory body to the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission does not appear to have any representation or advocates for the responsible bush recreational community, such as our association claims to represent.

If the measures contained in the planning document are adopted, the touring and camping experiences that 4WD club members and other responsible 4WD tourists have enjoyed, will not be available for those who visit the park in the future.

The Northern Territory Tourist Commission has a well known marketing phrase "You will never never know if you never never go" and yet with proposals such as contained in the planning document, we are getting fewer and fewer places to go.

In the interests of the responsible 4WD community and tourism, we request that 4WD Northern Territory is invited as a stake holder in discussions and provide input into the Limmen National Park proposals. We desire to at least maintain or preferably increase the access in this proposed park area.

One of the conditions in being an affiliated club member with 4WDNT is that they abide by a "Code of Ethics" as instructed by our peak body, "The Australian National Four Wheel Drive Council", also Known as 4WD Australia. The code of ethics is outlined in the ANFWDC website as below.

http://www.anfwdc.asn.au/codes_conduct.php

This document is submitted directly on behalf of the many members of the 4WD clubs forming 4WD Northern Territory, and also as a member of Four Wheel Drive Australia, the thousands of members of other states 4WD clubs. Indirectly it is also in the interests of the countless members of the responsible 4WD touring public.

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I fully endorse this document written by Mal Stewart

Regards,

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I fully endorse this document written by Mal Stewart

Regards,

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