

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Maley to the Minister for Parks and Rangers:

Potential Issues with the Parks Online Booking System

Territory Tourism Operators have been raising issues and asking questions about the proposed Parks Online Booking System.

Questions:

1. Please advise what safeguards will be in place to ensure major tourism operators don't book all the best camp sites during the peak times a long time in advance.
 2. What protections will be put in place to ensure ordinary Territorians will still be able to book a good site a week in advance, rather than months?
 3. What happens if someone wants to stay another night and does not have phone or internet reception to book on-line?
 4. Who will enforce the new online booking fees?
 5. Will there be fines for people found not to have an online booking?
 6. What will happen if someone books and when they go to their camp site, someone else is there?
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Answers:

1. The Request for Tender seeks submitters to provide an online booking system that includes (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. allow a limit to be set on the maximum number of consecutive nights which may be booked at a particular time;
 - b. allow amendments or cancellations to bookings, but not incremental creep; and
 - c. allow a limit to be set on how far in advance camping sites may be booked.

The Department is confident the functional requirements set out in the Request for Tender will provide the necessary safeguards.

2. See answer 1.

3. The Department will be encouraging visitors to book ahead and plan their travel, however, flexibility is important and mechanisms to ensure visitors are able to change plans during their trip (particularly in more remote parks and reserves) are being explored. The Department proposes establishing booking agencies within roadhouses and fuel stations across the Northern Territory to provide visitors with assistance.

In addition a customer service unit will be established within the Department to provide seven day a week assistance to visitors. Where there is no mobile footprint, rangers and other parties (campground hosts) who already undertake compliance activities on parks and reserves will be able to assist with any campsite issues and will be trained to provide support in these instances.

4. Compliance will be undertaken by rangers and other parties who already undertake compliance activities.

5. In the early stages of implementation there will be a heavy focus on education, and assistance will be provided to ensure all visitors understand what they are paying for and how to pay. If visitors are found to have not paid due fees, or are unwilling to do so, they will receive an infringement notice issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*.

6. A customer service unit will be established within the Department to provide seven day a week assistance to visitors. Where there is no mobile footprint, rangers and other parties who already undertake compliance activities on parks and reserves will be able to assist with any campsite issues. Rangers may not be on hand to provide assistance in some of the more remote parks, however it is unlikely to be an issue in these parks as sites are not numbered and visitors will be booking in a campground that does not have defined sites.