



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 53

VISITOR RISK MANAGEMENT

May 2022

1. OBJECTIVES

To ensure that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the department) implements visitor risk management (VRM) procedures and practices through a comprehensive and integrated program and a consistent approach that:

- minimises the potential for incidence of injury to visitors on department-managed lands and waters;
- encourages appropriate behaviour by visitors to department-managed lands and waters that will reduce the risks posed by their activities in and around natural, cultural and developed sites;
- aligns with best practice principles and industry standards; and
- will enable departmental staff to effectively manage visitor risk.

2. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to the lands and waters managed by the department that are classified in the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) as State forest; timber reserves; national parks; conservation parks; nature reserves; marine management areas; marine parks; marine nature reserves; land referred to in section 5(1)(g) and vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission (Commission); land referred to in section 5(1)(h) under the care, control and management of the Commission; lands vested under the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* (SCRM Act); or land that, under an agreement made under section 8A(5)(b), and is managed for a public purpose that is consistent with the CALM Act. These lands and waters are referred to in this policy as department-managed lands.

The policy is not applicable to unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves outside townsites and outside the metropolitan area where the department has responsibility for bushfire prevention and the management of feral animals and weeds.

The policy does not extend to situations where leases and/or licences transfer the responsibility for VRM and the provision of facilities and/or services from the department to other persons and/or companies. Where external proponents seek to undertake commercial visitor opportunities on department-managed lands, the department will require that appropriate VRM processes are in place.

3. CONTEXT

As at 30 June 2021, the department's Parks and Wildlife Service manages close to 27 million hectares of terrestrial and 4.7 million hectares of marine reserves in Western Australia and provides more than 1400 recreation sites. In the 2020/21 financial year, there were 21.25 million visits to Parks and Wildlife Service-managed lands and waters.

The department places a high priority on the management of public risk and the provision of safe and rewarding visitor experiences, however serious injuries and occasional deaths still occur. In addition to a genuine concern for visitor welfare, the department has a moral and a legal responsibility to consider the personal safety and welfare of visitors to department-managed land. The department will aim to manage the potential for injuries and trauma to visitors in a manner that does not unnecessarily diminish visitor experience and recreation opportunities nor alter the landscape qualities that attract those visitors.

Visitors are exposed to risks by the nature of their chosen activities and by the natural, cultural and developed sites that are managed by the department. The department endeavours to minimise these risks through the ongoing implementation of a VRM program. This involves a broad-based understanding of the risks encountered by visitors and by the provision of resources in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible to minimise the likelihood and the severity of consequences of incidents.

4. LEGISLATION

Legislation that applies to this policy includes:

- CALM Act;
- SCRM Act;
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*;
- *Occupiers' Liability Act 1985*; and
- *Civil Liability Act 2002*.

There is also a significant body of case law that is relevant to matters of liability for injuries sustained by persons recreating on or visiting lands and waters that are managed by public authorities.

Departmental corporate policy statements that are relevant to VRM include:

- Corporate Policy Statement 16 Diving;
- Corporate Policy Statement 18 Recreation, Tourism and Visitor Services;
- Corporate Policy Statement 19 Fire Management;
- Corporate Policy Statement 40 Road Management;
- Corporate Policy Statement 56 Risk Management;
- Corporate Policy Statement 59 Moorings;
- Corporate Policy Statement 60 Health, Safety and Wellbeing;
- Corporate Policy Statement 84 Boating; and
- Corporate Policy Statement 88 Prescribed Burning.

5. POLICY

The department will:

- 5.1 ensure that VRM is afforded high priority at all levels of the department;
- 5.2 minimise the potential for injuries to visitors on department-managed land;
- 5.3 provide the necessary resources, training delegations, documentation and other organisational arrangements to maintain a regular cycle of visitor risk assessment and risk treatment; and

- 5.4 develop, implement, maintain and monitor a VRM framework and associated processes that are consistent with ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management: Principles and Guidelines.

6. STANDARDS

The department's commitment and approach to VRM forms part of an organisational risk management framework comprising a systematic approach to the identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment of risks. The risk management process adopted by the department is derived from the international standard ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines.

VRM divisional procedures provide the operational and practical basis for controlling designated risks in relation to visitor activities. They are dynamic documents that are updated in line with new information and are to be read in conjunction with this policy.

Oversight of VRM standards is provided by the VRM operations group of VRM practitioners and the VRM steering group (comprising Executive Directors of Regional and Fire Management Services, Parks and Visitor Services and Corporate and Business Services Divisions).

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The policy implementation strategies are outlined in Corporate Guideline No. 28: Visitor Risk Management. Further information on VRM is available from the [Visitor Risk Management intranet pages](#).

The **Director General** is responsible for approving the department's risk criteria, ensuring that the resources and authorities are in place to enable the policy to be implemented and, assisted by the Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services, to monitor extreme risks, the correct functioning of critical controls and the effective implementation of the policy.

The **Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services** is accountable to the Director General for ensuring that the staff managing VRM have the necessary competencies, delegations and resources to comply with the department's standards. The Executive Director may delegate specific accountabilities and responsibilities in relation to VRM and the acceptance of risk to other staff but will monitor the related performance of those staff. The Executive Director chairs the departmental VRM steering group.

The **Executive Director Parks and Visitor Services (PVS)** is responsible for the provision of specialist advice, plans and specifications in relation to the planning and construction of visitor facilities, and for ensuring that PVS staff involved in providing this advice have the necessary competencies and resources to comply with departmental and other standards.

The **Executive Director Corporate and Business Services** is responsible for the maintenance of a suitable level of insurance coverage appropriate to the level of risk and the department's exposure to liability claims. The Executive Director is responsible for the provision of specialist advice, plans and specifications in relation to risk signs and departmental publications that contain risk messages. This responsibility is delegated to Public Information and Corporate Affairs Branch.

The **VRM Coordinator** is responsible for developing and updating the department's VRM guidance documents, for implementing and ensuring standards are met in regard to VRM across the department, for providing advice and guidance to districts and regions and for the recording and analysis of critical incidents involving visitors to department-managed lands. The VRM Coordinator chairs the departmental VRM operations group and is Executive Officer of the corporate VRM steering group.

Regional and district managers are responsible for applying and complying with standards, procedures and documents relating to VRM in their areas of responsibility and for monitoring the correct functioning and ongoing applicability of risk controls. Regional managers are required to sign-off the VRM corrective action status reports and VRM regional plans each year.

8. CUSTODIAN

Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services.

9. PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's website and intranet.

10. KEY WORDS

Visitor risk management; VRM; liability; injury to visitors; visitor safety; ISO 31000: 2018.

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no later than five years from its effective date.

12. APPROVAL

Approved by



Mark Webb
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Date: 4 May 2022