



Department of **Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions**

## **Review of the overnight temporary accommodation trial within Kings Park**

**Heyscape Tiny Cabins**

**April 2025**

## Contents

1. Purpose and methodology .....	3
2. Trial description.....	3
3. Observations .....	4
3.1 Customer experience .....	4
3.2 Community feedback and sentiment.....	4
3.3 Commercial return .....	5
3.4 Management implications .....	5
4. Learnings .....	6
Appendix A.....	7
Appendix B.....	8

## **1. Purpose and methodology**

On 1 June 2024, the then Minister for Environment, Hon Reece Whitby MLA, announced a trial of temporary overnight accommodation within Kings Park. The purpose of the trial was to explore new opportunities for hospitality and accommodation in the park and provide a case study to test the market in relation to temporary overnight accommodation, and to obtain stakeholder and community feedback.

The Government also committed to a review of the trial. This report documents the review and comprises:

- a description of the trial;
- observations in relation to customer experience, community feedback and sentiment, proponent (Heyscape) feedback, commercial returns, and management implications; and
- learnings.

This report was prepared based on an analysis of stakeholder surveys, media coverage, communication material, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) management documents, and a guest survey report provided by Heyscape. As part of the review, a written submission was also received from the Friends of Kings Park.

## **2. Trial description**

The trial was conducted with WA-based business, Heyscape, to coincide with the Lightscape event operating from 7 June to 28 July 2024. Heyscape operates similar-style cabins in a range of locations across regional Western Australia.

The trial included overnight temporary accommodation involving three 'tiny' cabins, which were made available starting at \$495 per night with minimum two-night stays. The cabins were situated in three locations in Kings Park - the Grevillea cabin was located on a grassed area near the DNA tower, the Balga cabin was positioned in the south of Kings Park to take advantage of views of the Swan and Canning rivers, and the Dryandra cabin was also located in the south of Kings Park near to the Dryandra lookout, offering views of the Swan River and Matilda Bay. The Balga and Dryandra cabins were placed in car parks.

Features of the cabins included a queen size bed, kitchenette, shower and toilet. Each cabin had access to WIFI. Outside each cabin was a deck with a private outdoor bath and barbeque. Sustainability features included roof-top solar panels and a water tank. Privacy screenings were installed around the cabins and CCTV, and two security guards were employed for the duration of the trial.

The cabins also came with two e-bikes to provide guests the opportunity to freely explore Kings Park. Complementary tickets for each guest were available to the Lightscape event, with unlimited access. The overnight package also included an opportunity for guests to enjoy an exclusive tour of the BGPA's plant breeding program to inform guests of WA's unique flora.

The trial occurred under a commercial licence agreement between BGPA and Heyscape and was the first of its kind to offer overnight accommodation in Kings Park.

### 3. Observations

#### 3.1 Customer experience

The overnight accommodation packages achieved an overall 80 per cent occupancy for the trial period.

Guests provided feedback on their experience with 50 per cent of customers participating in a survey conducted by Heyscape. Results indicated a 4.4 out of 5 satisfaction rating. The customer survey report indicated that:

- guests appreciated the unique experience, luxurious amenities, and connection with nature;
- the trial deepened guests' appreciation for Western Australia's natural beauty and BGPA's conservation efforts;
- there is potential for off-grid premium cabins to offer exceptional accommodation experiences in unique natural settings and potential to activate parks;
- privacy was a shared concern, particularly for the guests staying at Grevillea cabin, which was situated at the DNA Tower. Guests indicated that permanent fencing could alleviate these concerns;
- accessibility and navigation were concerns with guests commenting that access to the cabins and clear directions could have been improved. The Lightscape event was likely a contributing factor due to event-related road closures and initially there was a lack of clear directions;
- due to the short lead time to execute, services such as potable water and waste water tanks were not able to be 'hidden' as originally planned.

Overall, customer feedback indicted support from a section of the community for boutique cabins that offer exceptional accommodation experiences in natural settings. A clear drawcard for the trial was the inclusion of tickets to attend the Lightscape event. Data obtained through the trial indicated that guests appreciated the unique experience, boutique amenities, and connection with nature. The overnight packages provided guests with an *experience*, rather than simply accommodation. The novelty of staying in the unique natural environs of Kings Park with the addition of unlimited access to the Lightscape event, exclusive admission into BGPA's plant breeding program was a drawcard (71 per cent of guests who participated in Heyscape's feedback survey reported an increase in knowledge of WA flora as a result of their stay).

The trial demonstrated that BGPA could offer a high-quality tourism experience. The offer of overnight accommodation to complement the Lightscape event was an opportunity for Perth locals and tourist to access novel tourism experiences in Perth's tourism off-season, which has been provided in other Australian capital cities.

The *BGPA Overnight Experience Trial: Heyscape Guest Survey Report* is provided at Appendix A.

#### 3.2 Community feedback and sentiment

The majority of public feedback did not support temporary cabin accommodation in Kings Park. Comments were received via written letters and emails, commentary through the media (radio and print), and via social media. The State government,



including BGPA, received criticism about the trial. This sentiment was recorded through:

- 44 letters and emails expressing concerns about the trial;
- 47 media reports or commentary (15 per cent being positive, 19 per cent being neutral and 66 per cent being negative); and
- 422 social media comments (10 per cent being positive, 19 per cent being neutral and 71 per cent being negative).

There were a range of concerns raised about the trial. These included the:

- perceived privatisation and inappropriate use of Kings Park;
- commercialisation of a public asset;
- restriction of public access, including two car parks and around the DNA tower;
- reduced protection of the park's conservation and heritage values;
- cabin accommodation is not in keeping with King's Park;
- poor visual amenity of the cabins;
- price of the cabins at \$495 per night (minimum two nights) was unaffordable for the average person and available only to a select demographic.

The Friends of Kings Park raised a number of concerns with the trial and provided a written submission. The submission included data from a Friends of Kings Park-led survey to understand the views of its members, volunteers and the wider Western Australian community. The survey received 1354 responses, of which 99 per cent (1341 responses) opposed the accommodation trial. A copy of the submission is provided at Appendix B.

Through social media, some community feedback supported the trial indicating it was a great idea for tourism, similar in price to nearby hotels and provided a unique and different experience. The trial was also welcomed by Australian Hotel Association of WA.

Overall community sentiment indicated that the public have a special connection to Kings Park, as it forms part of Perth's identity and that overnight accommodation in the form of temporary cabins has the potential to impact the public's enjoyment of the park.

### **3.3 Commercial return**

Total revenue received by BGPA for the trial was \$19,894 (incl. GST) comprising licence and establishment fees, the purchased Lightscape tickets for guests, and access to BGPA's plant breeding program.

### **3.4 Management implications**

Key management issues associated with the trial were:

#### *Bump-in and bump-out*

The lead-in (bump-in) time for the trial was to the agreed schedule. Due to the short lead time to execute, services such as potable water and wastewater tanks were not

able to be installed as originally planned. The bump out was largely seamless, with demobilisation occurring quickly and without any notable issues.

#### *Road closures and signs*

Road closures caused some disruptions to local traffic and visitors to Kings Park. These closures were due to the Lightscape event occurring at the same time as the trial, rather than as a result of the accommodation trial. Some issues arose in relation to the supervision of road closures and guest access to the cabins, who were using Park Avenue entry, rather than Lovekin Drive entry for the first two weeks. Vehicles were also reported driving within a closed road area.

While directional signs appeared to be effective for guests and park visitors, it was noted more Heyscape signs at each entrance point would have been beneficial. Free standing or weighted signs that reduced ground disturbance would have been preferable.

#### *Security operations*

Guest security was a key consideration for the trial. Security operations involved the employment of two security guards and CCTV coverage for the cabins. Security arrangements between Heyscape and Lightscape could have been better coordinated in the early stages of the trial and utilising one company may have addressed this issue. Temporary CCTV cameras were effective and assisted security of the cabins.

#### *Bookings*

Obtaining access to Heyscape's booking systems enabled BGPA to view weekly bookings and assist guests with permitted activities.

### **4. Learnings**

The key learnings from the trial are:

1. the trial has provided important data to inform future decision-making in relation to tourism and recreation activities in Kings Park;
2. there was a good uptake of temporary cabin accommodation, which was highly rated as evidenced by the occupancy rate and through positive customer feedback. A clear drawcard for the trial was the inclusion of tickets to attend the Lightscape event;
3. in contrast to customer feedback, the majority of community sentiment and feedback opposed the trial and was expressed through written correspondence, radio and print media, and social media;
4. tourism and recreation trials and proposals benefit from stakeholder consultation and planned lead-in times to organise on-ground infrastructure and management arrangements.

## **Appendix A**

*BGPA Overnight Experience Trial: Heyscape Guest Survey Report*



# BGPA Overnight Experience Trial: Heyscape Guest Survey Report



**HEYSCAPE**

TINY CABINS







# Executive Summary

BGPA's recent overnight immersive experience trial, situating three Heyscape off-grid, premium cabins in Kings Park was a resounding success achieving 91% occupancy for July, and 80% occupancy overall for the 7 week trial period.

Guests appreciated the unique experience, luxurious amenities, and connection with nature.

The trial deepened guests' appreciation for Western Australia's natural beauty and Kings Park's conservation efforts.

Overall, the trial demonstrated the potential for Heyscape's off-grid premium cabins to offer exceptional accommodation experiences in unique natural settings and potential to activate national parks.







## Survey Results

**50% of guests** who stayed completed exit survey.

**71% of survey responses** reported an increased knowledge of WA flora as a result of their stay.

**75% of survey respondents** enjoyed the e-bike experience, underscoring its value as a fun and practical way to explore Kings Park in a childlike way, as many guests mentioned they hadn't been on a bike in years and had never explored the park via bike.

**85% of respondents** were enthusiastic about recommending Heyscape to their friends and family.

Guests consistently rated their overall stay highly, with an **impressive average score of 4.4 out of 5.**







# Constructive feedback

## Privacy:

Common concern raised in relation to privacy, particularly Grevillea cabin, which was situated at the DNA Tower.

Guests referenced permanent fencing could alleviate these concerns, see an artist's impression of a more permanent fencing option (Image 1).

## Accessibility & Navigation:

Guests commented that access to the cabins and clear directions could be improved.

BGPA have noted Heyscape was restricted in what could be provided with respect to wayfinding due to Lightscapes.



Image 1: Artist impression of Cabin Dryandra in-situ







# Potential improvements

## Privacy:

To address 'negative' feedback from guests and the general public, with respect to privacy and appropriateness of temporary fencing, we have created an artist impression on a potential fencing solutions for a more permanent structure within the park, see Image 1.

## Services:

Due to the short lead time to execute, services such as potable water and waste water tanks were not able to be 'hidden' as originally planned.

See images 2 & 3 which illustrates the reduced area and improved aesthetics which can be achieved, with services hidden under the cabin and decking.



Image 2: Actual Cabin Dryandra in-situ



Image 3: Artist impression of Cabin Dryandra







## Conclusion

BGPA's overnight immersive experience trial, utilising Heyscape's off grid premium cabins has been an overwhelming success, providing a unique and luxurious experience that connects guests with nature in an extraordinary way.

With an average rating of 4.4 out of 5 and high levels of engagement, it's clear that the concept has resonated with visitors.

The trial has also captured valuable feedback that, when addressed, will further enhance this exceptional offering.

The combination of stunning natural settings, luxurious amenities, and thoughtful design has set a new standard for immersive accommodation experiences in unique WA landscapes.

Finally, the trial has demonstrated an ability to find the right balance between conservation and activating an iconic State tourism asset.







HEYSCAPE

TINY CABINS

## **Appendix B**

*Friends of Kings Park submission*





# FRIENDS of KINGS PARK

ABN 31 739 367 662

Morgan Marsh  
Executive Director  
BGPA  
1 Kattidj Close  
Kings Park  
WA 6005

24 January 2025

By email: [morgan.marsh@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:morgan.marsh@dbca.wa.gov.au)

Dear Morgan,

## **Re: Review of Overnight Accommodation Trial**

The Friends of Kings Park strongly opposes the State Government's trial of overnight accommodation within Kings Park and Botanic Garden, operated by Heyscape from 7 June to 28 July 2024.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission, both as President of the Friends of Kings Park and as a member of the Western Australian community, to express the concerns of Friends of Kings Park members and the wider Western Australian community.

## **Opposition from Friends of Kings Park and the wider community**

In response to the announcement of the accommodation trial in June last year, the Friends of Kings Park conducted an online stakeholder survey to document and understand the views of our members, volunteers and the wider Western Australian community.

Responses to the survey were overwhelmingly opposed to the accommodation trial. The survey received 1,354 responses, of which 99 % (1,341 responses) are opposed to accommodation in Kings Park.

This survey represents the views of not only Friends of Kings Park members, but the wider public as well. More than 4 in 5 responses came from members of the wider community who are not Friends of Kings Park members. Many of these respondents expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their views via this survey, as they did not feel their voices were being heard elsewhere on this issue.

In addition to our online survey responses, the Friends of Kings Park office also received several handwritten letters expressing opposition to the accommodation trial. One member of the public shared that their parents had been involved in the campaign against a swimming pool in Kings Park in the late 1950s, highlighting the long history of community opposition to commercial development within Kings Park.

*The West Australian* also invited members of the public to voice their opinions on the accommodation trial. Dozens of letters were published over four editions of "Your Say", all in opposition to the accommodation trial, with zero letters received in support. According to Stephen Scourfield, Travel Editor of *The West Australian*, "In the history of this Travel supplement, we have never received such a sustained volume of correspondence on any subject".



# FRIENDS of KINGS PARK

ABN 31 739 367 662

In the assessment of the accommodation trial, we implore the State Government to consider the views expressed in the Friends of Kings Park online survey (see Attachment 1) and the letters submitted to *The West Australian* (see Attachments 2a-d).

These are the voices of the Western Australian community, many of whom feel a strong connection to Kings Park and are concerned for its future.

## Key reasons for opposition to the accommodation trial

Key reasons for opposition outlined by responses to the Friends of Kings Park online survey, and echoed by community letters submitted to *The West Australian*, include:

- ***Accommodation is contrary to the purpose of Kings Park***

According to the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the purpose of botanic gardens centres around “scientific research, conservation, display, and education”.

The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority [highlights](#) that Kings Park is a “special place to the people of Western Australia for recreation, cultural heritage and incredible natural experiences” and that “We pride ourselves on connecting community, conserving flora, celebrating identity”.

Providing accommodation within the botanic garden is contrary to the purpose of Kings Park in both environmental conservation and community connection. This is highlighted by the reasons outlined below from survey respondents and letter writers.

- ***Accommodation is potentially damaging to the park environment***

Kings Park is an A Class Reserve and therefore should have the highest level of protection for public land under WA law.

Overnight accommodation is inconsistent with Kings Park’s status as an A Class Reserve and the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority’s role as an institution for environmental conservation. This is highlighted by Regulation 35 of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Regulations 1999 which prohibits camping in Kings Park.

Friends of Kings Park and the wider community are deeply concerned about the potential environmental impact of accommodation being provided within the botanic garden and close by to the natural bushland. Survey respondents and letter writers expressed concern over the potential for damage to the park environment, highlighting issues around waste and pollution, disturbance to flora and fauna and potential increased bushfire risk.

While the accommodation may have been envisaged as a way to connect visitors with nature in a new way, we argue that this connection should not come at the expense of nature. As described by the Western Australian community in our survey and through letters, accommodation in Kings Park is not valued as a way to experience or connect with nature, but rather seen as a potential threat to nature.

- ***Accommodation is elitist and reduces public access to Kings Park.***

Kings Park was established as a common space open to all, “the People’s Park”, and is funded by the taxpayer. It is a place where everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty and connect with the environment.



## FRIENDS of KINGS PARK

ABN 31 739 367 662

Restricting areas of the botanic garden and fencing off sections for high-priced accommodation for use only by the wealthy few does not align with this vision of Kings Park as “the People’s Park” and was described by many survey respondents as “elitist”.

The juxtaposition of providing expensive overnight accommodation during a cost-of-living crisis and housing crisis was also highlighted by respondents.

In a radio interview in August 2024, Minister for Environment Reece Whitby stated that the accommodation trial had an 80% occupancy rate. Occupancy rate is only one measure of evaluation for this trial, and represents a relatively small number of people who could afford this ‘luxury’ accommodation.

- ***Accommodation is unnecessary as there are other places to stay in Perth.***

There is no shortage of accommodation options in Perth city and other areas nearby Kings Park. There are also regular, free buses into Kings Park every day from the city. Many respondents highlighted the availability of tourist accommodation in Perth, and some indicated that visitors seeking a “glamping” or camping experience could do so at other locations around Perth.

Kings Park and the Western Australian Botanic Garden is already WA's premier tourist attraction without accommodation, and there is no shortage of visitors, both local and from afar.

Accommodation within Kings Park is simply not necessary, and not appropriate.

- ***Accommodation is unaesthetic and not in keeping with the natural park environment.***

Many respondents described the accommodation as an “eyesore” and expressed concern over the impact of accommodation on the natural beauty and ambience of Kings Park.

While the trial accommodation was advertised with beautiful imagery, the reality of the ‘tiny cabins’ was three dongas set up in carparks surrounded by black plastic fencing.

We are concerned that, if accommodation were to be continued in the future, improving the aesthetic view of the ‘tiny cabins’ may result in increased fencing, further restrictions to access in Kings Park and damage to the aesthetic beauty of the natural environment.

- ***Trial accommodation is the “thin edge of the wedge” for further development.***

The Friends of Kings Park is deeply concerned that the trial of accommodation may open the door for further development or accommodation in Kings Park.

Respondents to our survey and letters in *The West Australian* shared these concerns.

As an advocate for Kings Park, the Friends of Kings Park is strongly opposed to commercial developments which threaten the value that Kings Park holds for the community and the natural environment.

We are proud that Kings Park holds such an important place in the hearts and minds of Western Australians and tourists alike, and would welcome initiatives or opportunities that align with the environmental values of the botanic garden and benefit both the community and the natural environment of Kings Park.





## FRIENDS of KINGS PARK

ABN 31 739 367 662

However, clearly the overnight accommodation trial in Kings Park does not align with these environmental values, and is not deemed necessary, appropriate, or wanted by the Western Australian community.

### **Help us protect the 'People's Park'**

The Friends of Kings Park will continue to advocate for Kings Park, to keep the People's Park a place for everyone and to protect it as an A Class Reserve.

We urge the State Government to consider its duty to the Western Australian people and its responsibility to protect our natural environment, and join us in this effort to protect Kings Park and Botanic Garden from commercial threats and development.

For the sake of current and future generations of Western Australians and to protect the natural environment from further development, we call on the State Government to prohibit overnight accommodation in Kings Park and Botanic Garden.

In addition, before any new development initiatives are trialled in Kings Park and Botanic Garden, the Friends of Kings Park urges the WA State Government to commit to conducting an independent environmental assessment and community consultation.

I look forward to your response.

With my very best wishes,

Chris Olney  
Friends of Kings Park President

### Attachments:

1. Survey on Short-Term Accommodation – analysis of responses
- 2a. Kings Park cabins YOUR SAY\_The West Australian
- 2b. More YOUR SAY on those Kings Park cabins\_The West Australian
- 2c. Kings Park cabin trial response rages on\_The West Australian
- 2d. Kings Park cabins, week three of YOUR SAY\_The West Australian