

# Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area – Fairer access to camping trial FAQs – March update

## What is the purpose of this trial?

The trial is so that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) can evaluate whether changing the schedule of opening campsites for bookings reduces the very high rate of cancellation at Ningaloo Coast campgrounds, and its impact on fairer access to camping.

Currently bookings can be made up to 180 days before arrival, with the latest bookable *arrival* date advancing by one day, every day at midnight (AWST). For this trial, campsites will open monthly: at 10am (AWST) on the first Tuesday of each month, the latest *departure* date that can be booked will be advanced by one month.

## Which campgrounds are included in this trial?

All Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) managed campgrounds on the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area will be included in the trial:

- Cape Range National Park
  - Boat Harbour
  - Bungarra
  - Kurrajong
  - Mesa
  - Neds
  - North Mandu
  - One K
  - Osprey Bay
  - Tulki Beach
  - Yardie Creek
- Nyinggulara National Park (ex-Ningaloo)
  - Janes Bay
  - North Lefroy
  - Point Billie
  - South Lefroy Bay
  - Winderabandi
- Warroora Coast, Nyinggulu Coastal Reserves
  - 14 Mile
  - Amherst Point
  - Black Moon Cliff
  - Elles Beach

- Lagoon
- Maggies
- Nicks Camp
- Sandy Point
- Stans Camp – overflow camping
- Stevens Camp
- The Ridge

### When did the trial start?

The first monthly release was at 10am AWST on Tuesday 3 February, when bookings opened for stays between Monday 3 and Thursday 27 August 2026.

### How long will the trial last?

The trial will run for three months and will be reviewed throughout for a potential expansion to include other locations across Western Australia.

### When can I make a booking for stays in August, September and October?

'Open Days' will be the first Tuesday of each month for the period of the trial. Bookings will open at 10am on each Open Day:

Stays between	Date when bookings open
Friday 28 August – Thursday 24 September 2026	Tuesday 3 March 2026 at 10am
Friday 25 September – Thursday 29 October 2026	Tuesday 7 April 2026 at 10am

### Why aren't bookings being opened one calendar month at a time?

Bookable periods won't correspond to a calendar month to avoid splitting weekends. So, for this trial the last bookable date for each month is the last Thursday of that month.

### What if the dates I want to stay are opened in different months?

Exceptions to the opened dates won't be permitted for the period of the trial. If you want to arrive before and depart after:

- Friday 25 September
- Friday 30 October

you can make one booking for the earlier part of your stay and another booking for the latter part, on or after the open day for those dates.

During the first release, many bookings were made that included nights that were previously available as well as newly released nights. The majority of vacancies that remained after the release were for the last nights of the released period, so there should be opportunities for others to do the same for future releases.

### Why are bookings opening at 10am instead of midnight?

The opening time is changing so that people in Australia don't have to get up in the middle of the night. Whilst we welcome visitors from all around the world, most bookings are made from within Australia.

At 10am, staff will be able to be on hand to facilitate a smooth opening and support enquiries.

### Will prices change with this new process?

No. Camping and park entry fees remain the same.

### Do the Online Booking Terms and Conditions still apply?

Yes, terms and conditions are available on the [Explore Parks website](#)

### How will you prevent a system crash with such high demand?

The risk of a crash is managed by limiting the number of users who can make a booking at any one time. Once that limit is reached, anyone else is placed in a queue. Please note, as with most online booking systems, when bookings open the queue may be very long, and your patience is appreciated while you wait your turn to access the booking system.

### How do I make a booking during the trial?

The booking process will remain the same, only the time and date when campsites open for booking will change.

**Book at:** [parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au](http://parkstay.dbca.wa.gov.au)

### How can I increase my chances of securing a booking?

If you can be flexible with your dates and your choice of campground, and your stay is shorter, you can increase your chance of finding a vacancy.

Osprey Bay, South Lefroy and Winderabandi are the highest demand campgrounds. You may increase your chance of securing a booking by focussing your search elsewhere, due to less competition.

Have everything you need ready for Open Day, such as:

- the range of dates you could stay
- how many people will be camping
- what vehicles you will take and their registration numbers
- your payment card details.

You'll need the details of all towed vehicle too (caravans, camper trailers and other trailers) – as they take up space and make a difference to which campsites are suitable for you.

Before Open Day, research the various campgrounds and have back-up plans.

### Can I join a queue or a waiting room before 10am on Open Day?

There is no benefit in accessing the Park Stay website before 10am on Open Day. At 10am the queue will be cleared and new positions in the queue will be allocated at random. Holding a position in the queue before 10am will not give you a place when the queue officially opens.

Please note that the number of positions available in the queue is limited. If you receive a 'queue full' message, you can try again later.

### Have the issues some reported with queueing on the first trial Open Day in February been fixed?

There have been some changes made to the queue process and the messages displayed on screen, as you progress through the queue.

It is important that you don't:

- refresh or reload the page when you're in the queue
- stay away from the queue page for too long
- join the queue on more than one browser tab or window.

### How fast were campsites booked on the first Open Day in February?

In the first hour after opening, bookings were completed at more than four times the rate of the previous record (which was the Total Solar Eclipse in 2022).

For Cape Range and Nyinggulara national parks, bookings peaked in the period immediately after 10am. After 1pm, they slowed significantly as vacancies became fewer and shorter, harder to find and less desirable because of the short duration.

For the Warroora Coast, bookings peaked later, between 11am and 12pm and slowed gradually until 4pm.

By 7pm, booking activity had returned to normal, with the majority of bookings being made and managed for campgrounds away from the Ningaloo Coast and/or for dates before August.

### If I need to switch between campsites or campgrounds to stay for consecutive nights, can I combine them into a single booking and make one payment?

It will not be possible to add more than one campsite to a booking and then make a single payment for all of them.

This means that a separate payment is necessary for every booking you make.

Don't try to start a second booking (on any tab, window, browser or device) before you get confirmation on-screen that your first booking was successful, or you may cause an error with your first booking. If you try again for the same campsite and dates, it may be unavailable for some time before the error is cleared.

If your payment was made but the booking was not completed successfully, we will refund that payment, but we won't be able to recover the booking.

### Why does availability information change from one step of the booking process to the next? Is there a bug in the system?

Availability will change very quickly when bookings open.

You may see availability that disappears when you proceed to the next stage of the process. This isn't a 'bug'. The campsite was available when the grid of campsites loaded for you, but someone else will have clicked 'Book now' before you.

It can work the other way. If someone has clicked 'Book now' and then decides not to proceed with a booking by clicking 'Quit' or 'Back', a campsite that was unavailable will be made available again. Or someone may discover they have made a mistake and cancel a booking or change the dates.

### Can I just enter how many nights I want to stay and have the website show me which campsites have availability at any time during the period that is open?

That is not possible on the current version of Park Stay WA. Availability can change quickly. There are hundreds of campsites on the Ningaloo Coast and they vary significantly. Keeping pace with the rapid changes for so many campsites and displaying those variations in real-time on the small screen devices that most people use, is challenging for any online booking system.

There is no substitute for advance preparation on a larger screen device, if possible. Find which campgrounds and campsites would be suitable before the Open Day, so that you can focus on searching those places for dates within the range that you can stay on Open Day.

### Can I open Park Stay WA in multiple browser tabs, windows or on multiple devices?

We strongly advise against opening the website in multiple browser tabs, windows, browsers or devices. It will increase the chance of errors and technical issues.

Trying to juggle multiple attempts to book at the same time may lead you to make a mistake with dates or campsite choice. If you make more than one booking for any date, you will be in breach of the terms and conditions, and we may cancel the bookings.

Technical errors caused by using more than one browser or device may mean you lose your place if you're in the queue or prevent you from successfully completing a booking. We will refund any payment made for

a booking that is not completed successfully, but we won't be able to recover the booking.

### How long will I have to complete a booking after I get to the front of the queue?

When you get to the front of the queue you will be allocated a 30 minute 'session'.

The time taken to complete a booking can be just a couple of minutes for those familiar with the process and the campgrounds and if there is lots of availability. However, as availability becomes limited, it's likely to take longer. It may take many attempts to find a suitable vacancy, and you must check all the campground and campsite details carefully to make sure they are suitable for you and your vehicles and equipment.

You will also need to take care that you don't make multiple bookings for any date – that is a breach of the terms and conditions, and we may cancel those bookings.

### What if I don't complete my booking within the allocated a 30 minute 'session'?

As with all online booking systems, you can start again but you'll join the back of any queue.

### What if I get distracted while trying to make my booking?

To prevent users who are inactive on the website from delaying the progress of the queue, sessions have an inactivity expiry timeframe of one minute.

Once you get to the front of the queue and your 30 minute session starts, if you don't interact with the website for one minute, an inactivity warning will pop up on screen and a countdown from 30 will start. If you don't follow the prompt to confirm you are still active before the countdown reaches zero, your session will expire.

There is a risk you will miss the inactivity warning if you are doing something else when it pops up. Don't look away for too long. That includes looking at a campground map.

### Why do I need to enter all campers and vehicles, including towed vehicles, when I make a booking?

Campsites and access to them vary in many ways. The approximate dimensions and surface type of all campsites is shown, as well as the maximum number of campers (excluding infants) and vehicles each campsite can accommodate.

When you enter the number of campers and all vehicles (including towed: caravans, camper trailers and other trailers) into the booking system, the suitable and available campsites will be listed first, and the 'book now' button will show for only those. The unsuitable and unavailable campsites are moved to the bottom, so you don't have to scroll through or check them.

If you don't change the number of campers and vehicles from the default '2 adults, 1 car/ute' to your correct details, there is a risk you may book an unsuitable campsite.

If you try to change your booking later, there may be no suitable campsites available. If you arrive at the campsite with more people or vehicles than are included in your booking, your booking may be cancelled.

It's safer and quicker to select the correct number and type of campers and vehicles before clicking 'Book now'.

### What if I make a mistake?

If you make a mistake, you can change your booking at any time up to the day before arrival at the campground, but you should do so as soon as you discover the mistake. You won't be charged a fee to change or cancel your booking unless you cancel or remove dates at short notice.

If you have more than one booking for any date, you need to change or cancel overlapping bookings immediately. It is a breach of the terms and conditions, and we may cancel those bookings.

Please note that not all changes will be possible. There may be no campsite available for any additional dates or suitable for an increased number of different type of vehicles

It is better to take a few moments of your 30 minute session to check all the details before proceeding to payment and confirming a booking. There's no risk of someone else booking the campsite in that time. Once you've clicked 'Book now' on the previous screen, that campsite for those dates is not available to anyone else unless you click 'Quit' or 'Back' on the website, or if your 30 minute session expires.

### How can I cancel or change my booking?

To change or cancel a booking select 'My bookings' from the main menu and follow the prompts.

### Can I make bookings for my family and friends?

No, you must not make a booking for anyone else using your own account. However, you can help others to make their own booking with their own customer account.

If you make more than one booking with your own account for any date, those bookings will be in breach of the terms and conditions, and we may cancel them.

### Can I get someone to help me make a booking?

Extra support staff will be available when bookings open, but there may be a queue and a long wait time or a long delay before someone can call you back.

If you need assistance, asking a friend to help you make a booking online may be quicker.

However, they must not make a booking for you with their own customer account. You should ask them to help you to create your own account. You can do that at any time before bookings open.

*Milyering Discovery Centre is open from 9am – 3.45pm 7 days a week – 08 9947 8070*

## Why can't I make a booking for someone else using my own customer account?

You are not permitted to book more than once in your name, for the same date. The reason for this is that it's impossible to distinguish between bookings made for friends or family who are committed to travelling together, and those made by someone with no intent to camp on any of the booked campsites or dates.

Requiring all bookings to be made with the camper's own customer account means we can more effectively monitor for, and act on, those who act in bad faith and disadvantage other people's access to camping.

## How do we manage no-shows?

Each morning volunteer campground hosts report any booked campsite that was not occupied the previous night to staff at Milyering Discovery Centre.

Staff contact the booking holder and, if no response is received within 48 hours, cancel the booking to make the remaining campsite nights available to other campers. The 48-hour grace period is applied in case of breakdowns or other unplanned delays when travelling in a very remote region with limited mobile phone and data service.

Analysis of bookings and stays, including the winter and spring school holiday peaks, shows that 2% of booked campsite nights were not occupied. The perception of unoccupied campsites may appear much higher to an observer, with campers arriving late in the day and departing very early due to the long travel distances. Campers, particularly those in campervans and rooftop tents, may leave no sign of their continued occupation of a campsite as they visit places away from the campground.

## What about the impact of last minute cancellations?

Late cancellations do significantly restrict the opportunity of others to camp on the Ningaloo Coast. The current, very generous cancellation and refund policy is intended to incentivise earlier cancellation and reduce this impact.

We will continue to monitor booking and camping behaviour to inform ongoing improvements to increase access to campsites and reduce behaviour that disadvantages others.

## Why was the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area chosen for this trial?

The Ningaloo Coast offers some of the most spectacular and sought after campsites in Western Australia. Competition is fierce and we often receive feedback from people disappointed after missing out.

This trial aims to test one aspect of a strategy to give everyone a fairer chance to secure a booking, by addressing booking and cancellation behaviour that is being used to gain an unfair advantage in securing campground bookings.

## Does this change apply to all Parks and Wildlife Service managed campgrounds across WA?

No. For the three month period of the trial, all other Parks and Wildlife Service managed campgrounds across Western Australia will operate as usual.

For all bookable campgrounds other than those in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area (listed above), this means:

- bookings can be made up to 180 days before arrival
- the latest bookable arrival date will continue to move forward by one day at midnight (AWST) daily.

However, the trial will be closely monitored and reviewed to inform potential adoption across all Parks and Wildlife Service campgrounds in Western Australia.