

► WHAT IS A ROADSIDE INFORMATION BAY

Roadside Information Bays are unattended stopping places provided on the approaches to towns featuring large display boards with maps and information on services, facilities and attractions of interest to visitors to the town or area.

► EFFECTIVENESS OF ROADSIDE INFORMATION BAYS

The effectiveness of **Roadside Information Bays** located on the outskirts of towns has been frequently raised. Based on numerous anecdotal comments and experiences, Tourism WA believes that **Roadside Information Bays** are generally more effective when they are located in the town rather than on the outskirts of the town.

Whilst there may be plenty of space available on the outskirts of towns to provide ample parking for the information bay, and the provision of landscaping can make it an attractive stopping point, experience has shown that the bays are used as a rest area rather than an information point.

By locating the information bays on the outskirts of the town, visitors are not necessarily motivated to stop again in the town where they could spend their time and dollars.

Given their relative isolation, information bays located on the outskirts of town are always prone to vandalism and rubbish dumping, thereby creating a negative first impression of the locality for the visitor. Furthermore, there would need to be an information bay located at each major road entrance into town. This of course, means that the costs of maintaining such an information service is increased manyfold, whereas, if an information bay is located in the town centre, it is only necessary to maintain one such information facility, which significantly reduces the maintenance and costs due to vandalism.

It seems that, in general, the information displayed in the bays has very little relevance or interest to the touring public. Advertising from the private sector is acceptable, however, emphasis should be placed on providing information aimed at encouraging the visitor to stay and see the area rather than driving straight through.

Ideally, the **Roadside Information Bay** would best be located in the middle of town next to the Visitor Centre if at all possible or an adjacent park, with adequate parking for tourist vehicles, including caravans.

An excellent example of this is Walpole, where the information bay is located in the Pioneer Park adjacent to the Walpole-Nornalup Visitor Centre. This encourages visitors to:

- call into the Visitor Centre
- use the information bay for its intended purpose – provision of visitor information outside of normal business hours
- stop for refreshments, petrol, other information etc.

It also helps to ensure that visitors spend their time and tourist dollars in the town, rather than merely passing through.

Locating the information bay near a Visitor Centre means that it becomes highly visible and would enable the Visitor Centre to easily manage the information on a regular basis as part of its visitor servicing responsibilities thereby ensuring that the information is always relevant and current.

► USEFUL ROAD SIGNS FOR THE VISITOR

It is suggested that, instead of creating and maintain expensive **roadside information bays**, signs be installed on the approach to a town indicating that there is a Visitor Centre in town with the distance. Main Roads Western Australia provides for the following advance signs to be erected on main approach roads to town.



Modular Advance Sign
(for **non-accredited** Visitor Centres)



Modular Advance Sign
(for **accredited** Visitor Centres)