



**MINISTER FOR TOURISM; RACING AND GAMING; SMALL BUSINESS;
DEFENCE ISSUES; CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**

Our Ref: 70-21482

Mr Colin Lockley
President
Boating Western Australia
PO Box 692
SOUTH FREMANTLE WA 6162

Dear Mr Lockley

Thank you for your letter dated 18 July 2020 regarding Rottnest Island mooring site licence fees and the impact of the Island's closure for ten weeks as part of the McGowan Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

You are correct in your assumption that the Rottnest Island Regulations 1988 makes no provision for a refund in these circumstances.

On 12 August 2020, the Premier and the Minister for Transport announced that the Government had introduced a new Bill to State Parliament. The COVID-19 Response and Economic Recovery Omnibus Bill 2020 will allow State Government agencies to waive, vary or refund fees, charges, dues and late penalties or extend the time in which a fee is to be paid.

The purpose of the Bill is to support critical Government decision-making, reduce costs and deliver financial relief to businesses and individuals as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery measures.

The Rottnest Island Authority (RIA) will be in touch with all mooring licensees following the Parliament's consideration of this Bill and the determination by the RIA Board of appropriate rules governing waivers and refunds.

I assure you that the Government is very appreciative of the cooperation and understanding demonstrated by the Western Australian boating community during this challenging time. Visitation to Rottnest Island since its re-opening to day-trippers, holiday-makers and the boating community again confirms to me that Rottnest Island is a special place for all Western Australians.

Yours sincerely



**HON PAUL PAPALIA CSC MLA
MINISTER FOR TOURISM
18 AUG 2020**

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Covid-19 - QUARANTINE OF ROTTNEST ISLAND - REMOVAL OF ACCESS TO ISLAND AND MOORINGS FOR BOATERS

Dear Mr Papalia,

Thank you for your letter of 18 August 2020 – it went a long way towards allaying the fear of Boaters - that “they were being taken for granted by their Elected government.”

We hope now that the deliberations of the new Bill to State Parliament on the 12 August 2020 (Covid-19. Response and Economic Recovery Omnibus Bill 2020) have placed Government in a more tenable position to support a rebate to boaters for the denial of use of their leased moorings and Rottnest Island access for 10 weeks.

Waiting has been difficult, and made even further so by the Rottnest Island Authority demanding full payment for the mooring leases for the forthcoming 2020/21 season. This coupled to an increase in the costs and RIA insistence that the monies be paid by the end of the month. No reminders, and no concessions. This hit the boating public very hard after the denial of lease time.

Those issues were amplified when The Premier announced that he “cannot discount the use of Rottnest in the future for quarantining for Covid-19.

Many Boaters did not want to pay unless they had a refund on the denied lease time – and many just wanted a guaranteed lease time for the following season.

Options were vigorously debated - to “March on Parliament” or to mount a campaign to deny the Rottnest Island Authority any money from boaters.

This was a tough period for Boating Western Australia as the representative body , and we placed our trust in the processes and communications we had opened with you as the responsible Minister and convinced our members to move forward and await a reasoned outcome.

Parallel to this issue and adding to that pressure on boaters, Department of Transport are running a campaign through their leasing agent to increase seabed and pen leases to Clubs and individuals by huge margins entering into 2020/21 - as high as 270 percent at Hillarys and 2700 percent at Fremantle. (2700 is not a typing error Minister). People are beginning to abandon boating as their first leisure, and this has huge ramifications for local tourism.

Rottneest Island Authority have not been in touch with Boating Western Australia as you suggested on the issue of the mooted 10% rebate that was being considered by Government, and despite many people receiving rebates and support on many fronts – boaters do not appear to have made it onto that agenda.

Minister, Rottneest is still the greatest place any metropolitan boater can visit. It is worth the considerable expense to many for the guarantee of that holiday - but there is an absolutely clear need Minister, for Government to consider boaters and what was taken from them without warning. They lost their holidays and they lost their leisure and there is an absolute need to treat them fairly.

The Government's Covid-19 efforts have helped many, and they have invested millions to ease the pressure on Western Australians. Boaters are not asking for anything near that amount. We would estimate that cost to be less than \$700 thousand – which boaters would happily take in a rental concession. Having a Boat certainly does not imply you are rich, in many circumstances it can keep you poor – but the local tourism and the joy of boating outweighs any such negatives.

Boaters have returned to their beloved Rottneest, but we wait to hear soon that boaters do matter and their considerable loss in the essential processes of overcoming Covid-19 have not been taken for granted and that their Government respected their effort .

Many thanks Minister for considering the plight of the boating public. Boating Western Australia remains available for further information or discussion.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Lockley', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Colin Lockley
PRESIDENT
Boating Western Australia

On behalf OF 100 Thousand Registered Boat owners in WA and for the 1 in 5 members of the Western Australian Public who enjoy Boating in one of its many forms.
26/10/2020