

Clampdown on illegal camps proves effective

■ Glenn Cordingley

The number of people illegally camping in Broome has "significantly" dropped since wheel clamps were introduced three months ago.

The Shire of Broome adopted a local law allowing rangers to clamp vehicles parked without permission on council property, in a thoroughfare or in a public place for the purpose of sleeping inside.

Shire chief executive Kenn Donohoe said the council was forced to take drastic measures because illegal camping each dry season had become a visible issue that "detracted from the amenity and visual appeal of the town".

Latest figures from the council showed 11 vehicles have been clamped since the measure was introduced in June.

Rangers have also issued 630 warnings and 146 infringements carrying a \$100 fine for the offence in the same period.

"The Shire considers the introduction of wheel clamps to have been successful, with a significant drop in the numbers of illegal campers around Broome following their introduction," manager of emergency, ranger and beach services Paul Dickson said.

"Rangers continue to issue warnings as a first measure, followed by the issuing of infringements for repeat offenders, and the use of wheel clamps as a last resort.

"Numbers of illegal campers are expected to drop off as wet season approaches."

In addition to the introduction of wheel clamps, the council has taken a range of other actions to combat illegal camping and to

educate the public about what is and is not permissible.

A sign has recently been erected at the entry to town warning visitors shire rangers were targeting illegal camping.

"The sign is variable, and so will also be used to target seasonal issues, from fire management and cyclone warnings to dog registration," Mr Dickson said.

He said rangers were involved in joint campaigns with police that targeted illegal camping, along with other antisocial behaviour issues around the town and shire.

"The Shire also cleared illegal camps from sand dunes and bushland along the Demco foreshore in co-operation with Yawuru and the State Government Department of Regional Development and Lands," Mr Dickson said.

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