

## CUSTODIAN NEWSLETTER

### Welcome to 2024 Volume 2 Edition 1

#### Happy New Year to all our Park Custodians!

2023 was a great year, the first one in a few years where people could travel without too many restrictions. More people are travelling overseas again but there is still a lot of demand for recreational vehicles within Australia.

Recent stats suggest there are over 800,000 registered RVs in Australia now, and this is growing by about 40,000 units each year. You can understand why there is a lot of pressure on popular travel destinations, and why travellers are seeking alternatives to the traditional caravan/tourist parks.

Many local councils are trying to navigate this space and work out how they manage large numbers of “freedom campers” who choose to camp in unregulated locations such as residential streets, beach fronts, car parks, rest areas, etc. With a general decline in the number of commercial camp spaces available in traditional caravan parks, other alternatives need to be provided for the traveller.

CMCA will continue to talk to all levels of government about how more low-cost camping options can be provided for the travelling public. CMCA cannot do it all on our own, the country is so vast, and we have limited resources as a club. Private investment in this space is rather limited too, because if you charge a low site fee then it is generally not viable to invest in it. You can understand why local councils are the only other ones providing low-cost and free camping.

There are some great examples around the country of council owned low-cost or free camping grounds, however these operate at a cost to the rate payers of that shire.



Figure 1 Kingston SE RV Park, council owned low-cost camp

Our CMCA RV Parks are designed for fully self-contained travellers. Self-contained can come in many shapes and forms. This can be confusing for those who are trying to

manage our parks, but some simple questions can clarify the situation:

- Do you have an onboard toilet with its own holding tank?
- Do you have a plumbed in sink that drains to a grey water holding tank or sealed container with an outlet that has a shut off tap?
- Do you have a grey water holding system, either a fixed tank or a portable “tote”, and is this system watertight?
- Do you have a fit-for-purpose freshwater tank on board?
- Can you keep all your rubbish on board in a sealed container?

Remember, the principle behind this is “Leave No Trace” where all the campers leave behind are tyre tracks. Many ask why can’t grey water be used on the grass or trees within our parks, this goes against our Leave No Trace commitment that we ask all CMCA members to abide by. The only exceptions are where land owners request this (eg Humpty Doo) to help with their trees.

#### RV Park Storage Sheds

Most of our RV Parks include a garden shed for the storage of our equipment and machinery. Shelving should also be included, and if there is none in your shed, please advise NHQ so that it can be sorted out.



Figure 2 Geeveston RV Park garden shed and path



Figure 3 Organised Geeveston shed at close of the season

Organisation within the shed is important so that each Custodian can access what is needed, and they can see what is available at a glance.



Figure 4 Railton shed with new mower

If something is broken, please don't just leave it in the shed for someone else to deal with, let NHQ know so that we can sort it out and get it fixed or replaced.

I have had a request from a Custodian to remind all that the shed is not a place to leave behind unwanted material such as oil cans, batteries and broken personal equipment. Please dispose of your own waste appropriately. We do not want future Custodians to have to deal with difficult waste left behind by previous Custodians.

### Recent works at our RV Parks

#### Gunnedah RV Park

Gunnedah RV Park has had significant investment by CMCA in the past months with more gravel being laid and a drainage system installed to try and assist with drying out the southern end of the park after rain events or flooding. CMCA received a \$7,000 grant from the Gunnedah Shire Council which assisted in the \$26,000 cost to the Club. The system includes several underground pits all connected to a main sump with a submersible pump and float valve. Water will drain to the main sump and then automatically pump the water to the street.



Figure 5 Drainage works showing the final connection to Chandos St kerb and pits in the background



Figure 6 Painted bollards protecting the new underground tank and submersible pump at Gunnedah



Figure 7 Completed work on the Port Pirie second camping area



Figure 6 New gravel down at Gunnedah RV Park



Figure 8 Another view of the new camping area at Port Pirie RV Park

## Port Pirie RV Park

The second campground area has been completed at the Port Footy Club in Port Pirie, adding a further 15-20 sites to the CMCA RV Park. This will be used for overflow, larger rigs, those who would like to camp away from others and groups who might like to camp as a group away from the main grounds.

The area will also be available for the footy club spectators on Saturday home games during the football season, providing a much better surface for all. Work included tree planting, irrigation and laying of gravel over approximately 3,000m<sup>2</sup>.

CMCA received a grant of \$9,250 through the Port Pirie Lead Abatement Program towards the project cost of \$17,000. A big thanks to Frank Hardbottle and some other dedicated CMCA members who got the new trees planted in this park area.

## Issues Raised by Custodians

Here we will address matters that our Custodians might seek clarification about, or an issue has arisen at a park, and we would like to let all know about it.

### ***Custodian Handover***

Handover to the next Custodian is a critical time for all concerned. A smooth transition to the next Custodians is important for guests and CMCA staff.

The Custodian Folder is provided for each park, and this is your “bible” for information, contacts and procedures. Hopefully Custodians are updating this folder with relevant information as required, because this is where it should be kept.

Whilst we allow incoming Custodians to arrive a few days early to get settled in to the park and manage the handover, and stay on for a few days after their tenure has been completed, we would appreciate it if you leave the custodian work up to the current Custodians. They may do some things a little different to you, or you may feel like offering suggestions for improvement, this is not the time to

be questioning how they do things or talking behind their backs and undermining their work. You are all volunteers, and if you have a concern about how something is being done, let NHQ know so that we can provide some support to the new Custodians and offer them suggestions. If the new Custodians ask for assistance, feel free to provide this.

What we have found is that some bad habits can be passed on to new Custodians, such as allowing non-SCV vehicles to stay, allowing external tents, use of the iPad, etc. New Custodians may not be confident to question what they are being told in the handover, but NHQ staff are always here to help.

### **Custodian Profile**

Mark Hancock and Kristie Jacobs (Q133474) were recently Custodians at CMCA RV Park Geeveston.

They have just started their full time 'life on the road' after finishing the build of their 4x4 Camper Truck in December 2022.

"After living in the UK and travelling around Europe in a motorhome for the previous 5 years, we were intending to ship our vehicle to the USA and continue our travels there. Instead, we decided that we were going to miss out on too many countries with a two-wheel drive van, so we decided to return to Australia first to build our own camper that could handle everywhere that we want to go."

Mark said, "it took us three years to build but now we're reaping the rewards of our efforts - living very comfortably wherever we might find ourselves."

After the build, Mark started his own remote CNC Programming business. "With the truck and Starlink we can live and work anywhere" he added.

Kristie said, "with this in mind (and having had an enjoyable stay at the CMCA RV Park Bundaberg on our shakedown trip), we thought why not stay put for a while and look after a park, seeing as Mark is almost always on site!"

"So far we have done a month at CMCA RV Park Penola SA and are now really appreciating the opportunity to be a part of the community in Geeveston, Tas."



*Figure 9 Mark and Kristie with Audrey next to their 4x4 Camper Truck at Geeveston*

### **Custodian vacancies for 2024**

You will see from the Custodian Calendar that all parks have Custodians booked in until at least March 2024 when Temora is available.

We also have vacancies for parks when the new dry season opens in QLD and NT, so check out the calendar if you are interested in any of these locations.

As new parks are developed, we will advise all Custodians in advance in case these locations fit in with your travel plans. There are no new ones for certain as yet, but we will continue to work towards having some new parks in 2024.

## **HAPPY 2024 AND SAFE TRAVELLING**

