

CUSTODIAN NEWSLETTER

Welcome to 2023 Edition 11

Welcome to our Christmas edition of the Custodian Newsletter!

Firstly, thanks to all our members who have volunteered as Park Custodians during 2023. Your commitment to the Club and our members is commended. As all who have taken on the role will attest, it can be very rewarding but does come with its challenges at times!

For those Custodians who have chosen to help over the Christmas period, this is an amazing commitment, and it is not lost on us here at NHQ.

Christmas is an interesting time at our RV Parks. Many of our members are on the road full-time or they are away from family and friends at this time of year, so if you have guests over the Christmas/New Year period it might be worth thinking about how you can all enjoy the festive season together.

We are not suggesting a full-blown baked lunch, but maybe each guest can bring along a plate, get dressed up, share presents in a lucky dip, have a drink (alcoholic or not). Decorating the RVs could be another fun activity...



Figure 1 A typical Custodian rig decked out for Xmas!

People Management

In the first edition of our newsletters, I identified a common issue for most Custodians, **people management**. Obviously, you are dealing with human beings (and their children and pets in many cases) daily, and a positive interaction is critical to the ongoing positive image of our parks and CMCA. Not

everyone has experience in dealing with difficult people, but there are a few things to remember:

- Don't react, remain calm and try to ignore their behaviour. You can only control your own reaction to what is going on.
- Develop a rapport, this may help you understand what makes them tick.
- Practice empathy, try seeing it from their point of view before judging someone.
- Treat the person with kindness and respect, this will de-escalate the situation before it gets out of hand.
- Don't take things personally, this will help you take the best course of action.
- Establish boundaries, let the person know how you expect to be treated but treat the person in the same way.

As Park Custodians, you are responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the RV Park under your care. This does not mean that you rule the park with an iron fist or that it is a free-for-all either.

It is not always plain sailing in our parks and guests will sometimes be ignorant of the rules or try and operate outside of one or more of these rules. How you deal with the situation is important, both for your own health and for the image of the Club.

What you do and say is seen by others and this can be what forms the impression of our RV Parks and our Club as a whole. Positive personal interactions go a long way to making a positive impression for our guests. Conversely when guests witness negative interactions from our Custodians, they can decide to not use our park network in the future or even chose to leave the Club.

Swearing and yelling at guests is not acceptable, no matter what the situation. Even if someone is verbally abusing you, the best way to diffuse the situation is to be cool and not react. If you need some support, call NHQ to ask a staff member to try and diffuse the situation for you.

Promotion of our RV Park network

Promotion is important to the success of our CMCA RV Parks. It is obvious that many of our own members are still not aware of their existence, and with the general travelling public this is even more the case.

We have prepared a flier that lists all our RV Parks across Australia, which is useful to hand out to guests or to let them know where else they can stay in their travels. Of course, CMCA is not the only provider of low-cost camping options, and all are shown in Geowiki X as well as other travel apps. If you do not have the flier at your park, please request more to be sent.

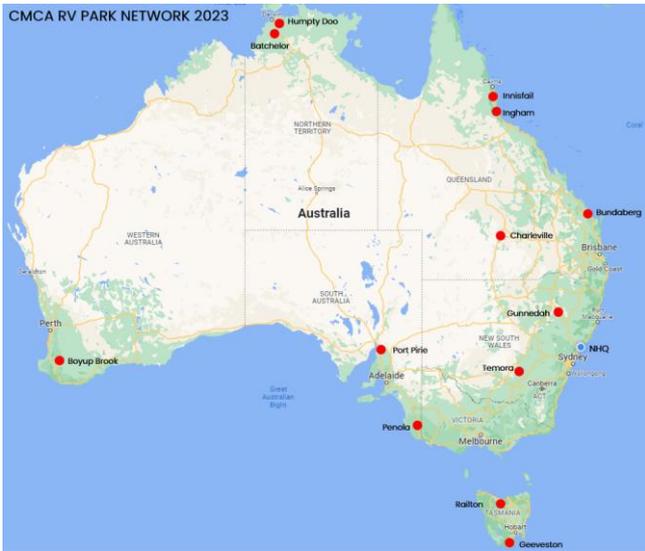


Figure 2 CMCA RV Park network

Park Rules – Custodians must abide by these as well

A friendly reminder from a previous newsletter and some of our current Custodians. Please ensure that you abide by the same rules that we impose on our guests. Also, if you want a certain standard maintained within the park, be sure that you are holding to the same standards.

Common complaints we get from park guests about our custodians are, rude and abusive behaviour, grounds not being maintained in a proper condition, smoking within the park, allowing dogs off lead, non-compliant vehicles allowed to stay, dogs at happy hour without asking those attending,

Incident and accident reporting

As they say, “accidents do happen”, and although this is rare at our RV Parks, when something does happen, it is important to understand what is required of you as the Custodian (person responsible on site).

Each Park has its own Emergency Management Plan and Procedures, ensure that you are aware of these and that your guests can see a copy on the noticeboard.

The nature of the incident will determine the response required. An incident that results in personal injury to yourself or a guest will require a different response than something that results in property damage.

All incidents should be reported to NHQ, then staff can determine what needs to be done as a result. If you are not sure, seek confirmation from NHQ anyway, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Given we have public liability insurance at each park and our Custodians and other volunteers are covered under our CMCA Volunteer Cover, it is important to have the incident form completed by the appropriate person (either the person injured or the owner of the property that has been damaged), we will also ask the Custodian to provide their

own report separately. Photos will also be useful in many situations.

If there is a legal case to answer later, or an insurance claim to be made, the information provided in these early stages is critical.

THANK YOU

As a small token of the Club’s appreciation for what our volunteer Custodians do, we will be sending out some letters and gifts to all those who have undertaken roles at our parks during 2023.

If you are not going to be at your normal place of residence prior to Christmas, please advise NHQ so that we can get this to you prior to Xmas, otherwise it will be waiting for you when you get home.

A special mention to the following members who have been Custodians at any of our parks for at least 2 months during 2023.

- V136587 Hazel Abbott & David Fisher
- V130260 Tim & Sue Backhouse
- W74379 Margaret Cook
- V78727 Michelle Fielding
- S85165 Tony Green
- Q133474 Mark Hancock & Kristie Jacobs
- V127889 Sharon Hayes
- Q94704 Darrell & Sandra Hendry
- Q119902 Perri-Louise Kaye
- W111371 Sherril Leach
- Q76336 Dave & Elaine Murray
- N63146 Lynette Portelli
- N130102 Mark & Julie Rydquist
- T67524 Adrian Saw
- T133912 Ray & Lynette Scott-Hyland
- N16067 Steve Smith
- 89674 Nic & Pam Storer
- Q121113 Peter & Marilyn Streek
- V73426 Lida Van Lieshout
- Q127792 Peter & Elaine Warren
- V124600 Bruce Watts
- Q135826 Sally & Lawrence Webb
- W130305 Colin and Debbie Wild

Custodian Profiles

Darrell & Sandra Hendry Q94704

Current Custodians at Bundaberg

Sandra & Darrell have been full-time travellers for the past eleven years.

“Having both lost our previous partners to cancer we now have a combined total of nine children, seventeen grandchildren & one great grandchild scattered throughout every mainland state except Victoria.”

“To us, it makes sense for us to live in our very comfortable one-bedroom unit on wheels (2007 Winnebago Alpine) as we travel this wonderful country dropping in to see the family when in their area.”

“We enjoy acting as Custodians whenever a vacancy exists reasonably close to where we need to be at the time. The opportunity to meet an amazing variety of park guests whilst also connected to power & water is an enjoyable change for us as we are normally off grid campers. To date we’ve acted as custodians at Bundaberg a number of times as well as once at Ingham. Now that Sandra is also an accredited Custodian, we have no doubt that we’ll take the opportunity at other parks around Australia in our travels.”



Figure 3 Sandra and Darrell Hendry Q94704

Lida Van Lieshout V73426

Currently Custodian at Temora NSW.

Lida came to Australia with her Mum and Dad and 4 siblings in 1960. She became an official Aussie on the 07/07/77 and loves it.

Lida said “I became a custodian by accident.”

“While in Victoria during the Covid pandemic I was not able to stay with my kids in Qld and I ended up at the then CMCA Park in Chinchilla Qld with Neville ‘Nifty’ Cox.”

“I was stranded at Chinchilla and helped Nifty remove all the signage etc at the RV Park when the new owner did not want

the park to continue. I then relocated to Bundaberg CMCA RV Park.”

“With no customers still, we numbered the sites. Once travel was allowed again, I helped Nifty with bookings when he was crook, so I had to quickly take over and look after him and customers.”

“I really enjoyed doing this and was asked if I wanted to be a custodian in other parks which I accepted and I have been doing different parks the last few years.”

“I love the country CMCA RV Parks such as Temora, Penola and Charleville. I have met some great people at our parks over those years.

“I Hope to meet you at one of our RV Parks.”



Figure 4 Lida Van Lieshout V73426

Custodian vacancies for 2024

If you are thinking of travelling in 2024, check out the RV Park Custodian Calendar on our website or call Emily or Sean to discuss opportunities.

Hopefully, we will open some new RV Parks through 2024 and this will offer new opportunities for locations in several states. Our North QLD, NT and Charleville parks are now closed for summer and Geeveston TAS has opened again for the summer.

You will see from the Custodian Calendar that all parks have Custodians booked in until at least April 2024 when Port Pirie 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.