

CUSTODIAN NEWSLETTER

Welcome to 2023 Edition 10

This edition's topic is "RV Park equipment register and equipment maintenance"

CMCA provides a range of equipment to assist Park Custodians in their duties, especially with grounds maintenance. You should find an equipment register in the Custodian Folder that lists what has been purchased by CMCA over time, and this should be checked regularly or at Custodian handover to ensure that all items listed are still at the park.

Most parks now have a push mower, or self-drive walk behind mower or a ride-on mower. The type of mower depends on the size of the park grounds and how much grass there is to manage. We also provide a whipper snipper and spray equipment, barbecue, fire extinguisher, wheelbarrow, shovel, rake, pull trolley, garden tools, portable totes and attachments, and maybe some other smaller tools.

As we expand the RV Park network, we can determine what is essential for the operation and management of each park. Our Custodians have been crucial in providing feedback and input into what is needed at each park.

Some recent good suggestions are a ladder for each park, trolley for carting the 40lt portable totes, and a ramp for the dump point (like what is now at Ingham and Geeveston).



Figure 1 Geeveston dump point ramp installed in 2022



Figure 2 Railton dump point ramp installed in 2019

If you have other suggestions for equipment or improvements to the function of our parks or the comfort of our guests, please let NHQ know.

Portable grey water totes

As mentioned in a previous newsletter, we require all guests to have their own portable tote for their grey water capture and disposal if they do not have a fixed tank on board. This is an education process for many because they have purchased "self-contained" rigs and set off on the road not realising that simply running a hose from their grey water to the ground is not consistent with CMCA "Leave no Trace" code of conduct.

There are many options on the market, and guests can set up their own system very cheaply using the information provided on our website or in the fliers you should have available.

CMCA purchases 40lt portable totes for its parks through Outback Equipment, an online store for the RV traveller. You can pass this link on to those looking to purchase a brand tote.

<https://www.outbackequipment.com.au/40l-portable-water-tank~58433>

These are not always in stock so may have to be ordered in advance or have somewhere to send it to for later collection.

Our park totes do get a lot of use, and as such will fail at some point. The common issues appear to be caps cracking or cap lugs breaking off resulting in leakage when the tote is being transported.

Please advise NHQ of any issues with your totes so that this can be rectified as quickly as possible.

Mowers

Mowers are an important piece of equipment for most of our RV Parks. The size and type of mower differs across the network and the brand usually depends on what is available locally.

Correct operation and maintenance of the mowers is critical to the ongoing management of the parks. Handover should highlight the proper operation of the mower to ensure the next Custodians are aware of how it works and what settings to have it on.

Many of our members have mechanical backgrounds and are willing to assist with servicing of the mower, whether this be checking belts, greasing, or changing oil filters and oil. This is very much appreciated.



Figure 3 Adrian Saw (T67524) servicing the mower at Geeveston

To avoid future issues with the mowers here are some tips:

- Always do a pre-start check (oil levels, belts, tyres, fuel, blades).
- Do not operate with the blades below setting 3 on the deck, the shorter you cut the grass the more chance of hitting stones, branches, roots, or picking up dirt and mud under the deck.
- Operate at full revs and a lower gear. Mower engines are designed to run at higher revs, so don't put it in a higher gear and lower the revs.
- Clean the mower after use and check for any damage or change to the machine.

- Record any services in the Custodian Folder for future reference.
- If unsure, ask someone in the park or call NHQ.

Whipper snippers

Each park will have a whipper snipper or brush cutter to assist with weed management and grass control around structures and fences.

Please check to see what type of fuel the machine takes. Where possible we purchase equipment that uses straight unleaded, that then requires oil in a separate tank. Otherwise you will have to mix oil with the fuel in the ration recommended for the equipment.

Please ensure that you do mix oil into the fuel if you have a two-stroke engine, or check the oil level if it is a four-stroke engine.

We recently had to replace a two-stroke whipper snipper because the engine had melter as a result of the oil not being added to the fuel.

As Custodians, you have agreed to look after the plant and equipment in the park. This does not mean that you have to do the maintenance yourself, but you should notify NHQ if maintenance is needed.

Personal Protective Equipment

Please ensure that you always wear the correct safety equipment when operating equipment at the park. If you cannot find the gear, let NHQ know so that we can resupply you.

Generally, you will have access to:

- Ear muffs
- Safety glasses
- Gardening gloves

We do not provide steel capped shoes and expect that you will wear closed shoes when operating mowers and whipper snippers.

CMCA aims to keep its volunteers safe when at our RV Parks, and we expect that our volunteers will also ensure that they are operating plant and equipment in a safe manner.

Custodian Profiles

Margaret Cook (W74379)

Margaret has been our Custodian at the Flax Mill Caravan Park in Boyup Brook WA several times now.

Margaret has undertaken many volunteer rolls within CMCA, so for her it was a natural progression to become a Volunteer Custodian at Boyup Brook. A love for helping others has led her to being involved in Chapter Management, Rally Volunteering and First Aid Coordinator for National, WA State and Solos Rallies. Margaret is currently the WA State Representative, and she is a past CMCA Board Member.

“I really enjoy my time as a Park Custodian and making sure members and guests have a good time when they stay at our wonderful park. I am looking forward to seeing two new parks opening in WA at some time soon, but as with all things in WA they are moving slowly.”

“In my previous life I was a nurse then changed to become an Early Childhood Educator, owning and managing my own Centre. When not volunteering for CMCA I look after all my chickens and my 2 Kelpies so my brother who looks after my property can go away for a break.”



Figure 4 Margaret Cook (W74379)

Eric and Therese Fleming (Q128962)

Eric and Therese are currently Park Custodians at Port Pirie.

Both Eric and Therese retired in 2019 and moved to Hervey Bay, Queensland from Banora Point in Northern New South Wales.

Eric and Therese purchased their first caravan in 2019 just before the COVID outbreak. Their travels were limited to short stays along the east coast of Australia. When travel restrictions came into effect, plans began for bigger longer adventures. The first long trip was to Tasmania in 2022. In June 2023 they began a four-month trip in their caravan to Western Australia.

Eric says he “served as a Submariner in the Royal Australian Navy from 1985 to 1996 and then joined the New South Wales Police. In 2008 I was medically retired from the police and decided to do a Law Degree. On completion I volunteered at several law firms before taking a full-time position working for New South Wales Health as a Senior Case Worker in child protection.”

Therese says she “worked as a Dental Nurse taking on full-time positions on each of Eric’s postings before I decided to become a Registered Nurse.”

“During our time together whilst serving in Defence and Police, we got to see a lot of Australia, but really did not take advantage of those postings to visit the local areas. Now we are travelling back to those areas to see what we missed and are getting to meet so many people of various backgrounds.”

“Australia has so much to offer the traveller and especially in those remote areas.”



Figure 5 Therese and Eric Fleming (Q128962)

Custodian vacancies for 2023 and 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, Humpty Doo and Charleville parks close at the end of October, whilst Sundance Farm at Batchelor has already closed for the wet season. Geeveston TAS is open again for the summer.

Gunnedah NSW: 16th January to 31st January 2024

Bundaberg QLD: 31 January to 3 April 2024

Railton TAS: 7 February 2024 onwards

Port Pirie SA: 1 April to 15 April 2024