

CUSTODIAN NEWSLETTER

Welcome to 2023 Edition 8

This edition's topic is *Entertaining our Guests*

Happy Hours are a great time to catch up with your guests and fellow travellers, share some stories and talk about what is going on around the region and the local town. We always get positive feedback from guests if there are some happy hours arranged or communicated, and we definitely get negative feedback from guests if there is nothing organised.

Whilst it is not a requirement to get involved in happy hours, it is great if Custodians are able to at least coordinate these events, by letting guests know what time to meet at the shelter and what to bring. It might simply be getting the firepit started or barbecue set up in place ready for the evening.

Drinks are not a requirement to attend happy hour, and this should be made clear to all. Some who do not drink may feel excluded otherwise. There are plenty of non-alcoholic drinks available too.

Some activities that our Custodians coordinate include:

- A Friday sausage sizzle or some other barbecue activity – this is always great to get people involved. Some custodians coordinate regular barbecues and may ask for gold coin donations or use cash from the collection of cans and bottles to fund the purchase of food, or even just ask everyone to bring something with them.
- Film night. I know some Custodians have their own technology that they are happy to use for guests for big sports events or movies.
- Campfire cook-up. There is nothing like a good damper or camp oven cook-up.

Other examples of activities in or around our RV Parks

At Charleville we have a regular local history enthusiast who provides a detailed story of a disastrous rail accident that occurred in 1956. Five people lost their lives when the passenger train “The Westlander” ploughed head on into the stationary “Western Mail” train. He includes models and pictures to convey to the guests what happened on that fateful day.



Figure 1 Rail crash presentation at Charleville

Boyup Brook CMCA Caravan Park has a very well-presented Flax Mill Museum on site, which guests are welcome to visit for free during their stay.



Figure 2 Flax Mill Museum at the CMCA Caravan Park

Humpty Doo Hotel puts on free Friday nibbles for the park guests, and happy hour is on every afternoon for those feeling thirsty.



Figure 3 Happy hour at the world-famous Humpty Doo Hotel

Port Pirie Football Club offers meals and drinks at members' prices for those staying at the CMCA RV Park. Friday night meat tray raffles are very popular with many trays finding their way back to the RV Park for Saturday happy hour treats!

Entertainers

We have many CMCA members with talents that they like to share. Don't be afraid to ask if anyone would like to provide some entertainment at a happy hour. Please note that this should be kept short so that attendees can still mingle and share stories. You don't want the entertainer to become unwanted noise!



Figure 4 A member providing music at Innisfail



Figure 5 Finska competition at Innisfail



Figure 6 Bundaberg volunteer barbecue supplied by CMCA

Money

How you fund these activities is up to you, but it should not come out of the Custodian pockets. Some examples include gold coin donations, everyone bring a plate, everyone bring their own dinners. If you collect the cans and bottles from the guests, this could be used to purchase food for the event too.

Communal fire pit

Most parks now have a communal fire pit of some description. We do not allow guests to have private fires within the parks, therefore the communal fire pit is provided for their use.

Firewood is expensive and we have tried a few options over the past years:

- Guests provide their own
- CMCA use contractors to supply
- Local businesses provide waste timber
- Local CMCA members provide wood

At Port Pirie a local business supplies the park with surplus pallets to break down and use as firewood, an inexpensive recycling option.



Figure 7 Pallets waiting for the fire pit at Port Pirie

Things to see and do

Check out the tourism sign at the RV Park, it will have listed the top things to see and do around the town and region. Let guests know this information is available and direct them to the local Visitor Information Centre where they can get even more information.

Make sure you experience what is to offer in the town and region as well. Experiencing something is the best way to share adventures with others. Talk to the Visitor Information Centre staff about famils (where they take local business operators on tours at discounted or free rates so that they can experience what is on offer to then refer guests to them).

The more our guests can see and do in the area, the more likely they are to stay longer.



Figure 8 Innisfail RV Park tourism sign

The town map shows local points of interest, and the map can also be used to reference where local services and trades are in the town.

Custodian Profiles

Stephen and Kimmy Moore (N130145)

Steve and Kimmy will be undertaking their first Custodian role at Boyup Brook WA later this year.

Steve and Kimmy are a retired couple who have been travelling full time on the loop since December 2022.

“We are new to being custodians. No pet but my best mate still comes with us in an urn. We love playing lawn bowls and golf, love to chat to other nomads around a nice fire and a few drinks.

We have been members of CMCA for a while now. Helped build the boundary fence for Ingham CMCA RV Park a few years back, and that got us into the CMCA family!!



Figure 9 Stephen and Kimmy Moore

David Fisher and Hazel Abbott (V136587)

David and Hazel have been Custodians most recently at Sundance Farm Batchelor NT and will spend some time at Port Pirie SA and Batchelor NT again in 2024.

David was a printer by trade working in a Newspaper for 30+ years. He then owned his own Gardening business for over 20 years. All in Victoria.

Hazel was an Enrolled Nurse for over 35 years, then was an Activities Co-ordinator for about 10 years. Since retiring they are permanently in a Caravan travelling around Australia. Home base is Kilmore Victoria.



Figure 10 David Fisher & Hazel Abbott

Perri Kaye (Q119902)

Perri has undertaken Custodian roles at Sundance Farm Batchelor NT, Penola SA, and Boyup Brook WA.

“What a wonderful life this is.” Says Perri. “After more than 37 years in IT I retired early and in early 2020 I sold up in Brisbane, bought my lovely home on wheels and have been travelling ever since.”

“Every now and again I like to stop in one place, volunteer as a CMCA custodian and get to meet and greet many different and interesting people. What a great way to make new friends, a number of whom I have caught up with on the road. Like I said ... what a wonderful life!”



Figure 11 Perri Kaye

Sherrill Leach (111371) & Lyn Portelli (63146)

Sherrill and Lyn are well recognised amongst many of our park guests as they have undertaken Custodian roles at Port Pirie SA, and Penola SA, and shortly Gunnedah NSW. They were also planning to be our first Custodians at Branxton NSW when it opened but those plans were put on hold when we hit some council planning issues.

Guests at Port Pirie know the great impact these two have when they are Custodians, and many look forward to their return each year.



Figure 12 Sherrill Leach & Lyn Portelli

Our Custodians come from all walks of life and backgrounds, but they share one thing in common, the love for travelling and the willingness to help out our great Club and its members.

It does not matter what your past life involved, if you are like our featured members above, and love meeting new people and immersing yourself in a new town for a while, talk to our staff at NHQ about filling vacancies across our RV Park network.

Current Custodian Vacancies in 2023 as at 26/9/2023

Ingham QLD – 8 October until 31 October (Close)

Penola SA – 29 October until 9 November