

CUSTODIAN NEWSLETTER

Welcome to 2023 Edition 6

This edition's topic is *Do's and Don'ts for Custodians*

We get many questions at NHQ from our Park Custodians. Many of them relate to information that is provided in the Custodian Folder, or on-line training information and videos.

Did you know that there are tutorials in the Custodian Training information. This is the best way to see what you need to do in terms of the iPad, booking system, etc.

If all else fails, please call the friendly staff at NHQ, they will assist where they can.

We cannot cover all possible scenarios though, and some situations Custodians find themselves witnessing or being asked to manage we could never have dreamt of!

Do's

- Do ask for help when you need it, don't be afraid to seek assistance. You learn by asking and doing.
- Do seek support if you want to make the park you are staying at look or operate better, let us know your thoughts. If it sounds reasonable and is within our budget, we will support it.
- Do report concerns such as trip hazards, broken equipment, maintenance issues.
- Do promote the Club and its benefits to all who stay at the park. Always have on hand the *Benefits of Belonging* brochure that can be provided to anyone with questions about what they get from the Club.

Don'ts

- Don't assume; if at first you can't find the information in the Custodian Folder, call NHQ.
- Don't let the grounds get out of control, how the park looks is a reflection on the Custodians and the Club. If you can't manage this, please let us know at NHQ so that we can come up with a solution.

Please be mindful that our members and guests will access most of our RV Parks over time and they will notice when rules are being imposed differently by different custodians. You may think that being a little lenient at one park when it is a bit quiet, won't impact on anyone. But that guest will then stay at another park and be told something different, causing conflict for other Custodians.

Some classic examples that can cause concern:

- Allowing guests to wash their vehicles within the park grounds. Note, the rules do not allow this (unless there is a dedicated wash bay), and none of our parks have this facility. Guests are not to park outside the grounds and use the RV Park water supply to wash their RV either. The water is for use within the park to refill RV freshwater tanks and to keep the grounds alive. CMCA pays for the water our parks use.
- Allowing smoking and vaping outside their RV. Again, this sets a precedent at other parks when they move on. And the Custodians must adhere to this rule as well. If the guests must smoke, ask them to leave the park grounds whilst they are smoking.
- Allowing pets off their leads when away from their RV. Many guests will claim that their dog is quiet and would not hurt a flea. Even if that is the case, we must ensure the safety of all guests and other animals within the park grounds by having them on leads. Cleaning up animal mess is also something that needs to be checked on. Custodians must adhere to this rule as well.
- Allowing pets at Happy Hour. This is permitted if ALL those attending happy hour are OK with the pet/s being present. Even if the Custodian does not like animals, if a guest asks to have a pet with them, please ask all present first. Late arrivals at happy hour need to be consulted as well. This is not only a health matter but one where all guests should feel comfortable at happy hour. This should be handled with some care because we know that pets are a part of the family, and many will feel offended by not being able to bring their pets to happy hour.
- Guests in the park. Whilst we have no problem with guests visiting their friends in our parks, they need to see the Custodians on arrival, or the guest needs to advise the Custodians. The guest vehicle should be left outside the park grounds, if there is somewhere to park, so that they do not impact on other sites or traffic movements within the park.
- Being lenient on grey water set-ups on the RV. When things are quiet, it is easy for Custodians to think it is OK to be more relaxed about a guest's grey water set-up and maybe overlook some of the deficiencies such as no shut-off tap on the outlet or a container that does not seal. However, when that guest arrives at another CMCA Park, they may be told that they cannot stay because they don't meet the standards we have set. This will create some tension because they have been allowed to stay at another CMCA park previously. The current Custodians will be blamed for enforcing the rules when it should have been enforced previously.

- People may fib about their set-up when booking too, and this may not be apparent until they arrive at a park. Please handle this with some diplomacy, offer solutions and suggestions rather than a simple “you can’t stay here”. But in the end, if they are not willing to abide by our SCV rules, you are within your rights to refuse the stay and refund their site fees.
- Personal campfires. These are not allowed at any of our parks. We have a communal fire pit at most parks for guests to gather around. What we don’t want is uncontrolled fires throughout our parks. CMCA supplies firewood to many parks, at our cost. But some enterprising Custodians have approached local businesses who have pallets they are trying to get rid of, a free source of firewood.
- Fires under the shelter. This is not permitted. The firepit should be set up beside the happy hour shelter, not under the roof.
- Allowing external shower tents, external toilet tents or swags and tents under the awning. Although it is nice to be able to be accommodating to our guests, we do not allow these external activities within our parks. It is not a requirement to have a shower to be self-contained, but even so, guests are not allowed to have external tents.
- Allow guests to just store their RV at the park and pay site fees. We do not have a permit to operate a storage facility, therefore guests must be staying in their RV. If, during a stay period, the guests want to leave their van behind to do some touring that is OK, but they must be staying with their RV for the majority of the booking.

If you ever have something you are not sure about, please ask NHQ staff first. Making assumptions or being a bit more relaxed with the rules will only cause issues for the guests and custodians for future stays at our parks.

Custodian Profiles

Mike & Chris Gilbert (V115138) recently at Innisfail RV Park

Chris worked in administration for a number of health and housing organisations. Mike worked in the Marine industry. Servicing marine electronics and operating commercial vessels.

“We are both involved in other volunteering for Lions, Parkrun, Animal Aid and Coast Guard. We also try to keep fit, walking, bike riding, doing Parkruns and swimming.”

“We enjoy being CMCA Custodians when we are away on longer trips. It gives us a break from travelling and you meet some great people. It is also an opportunity to swap travel information. We will be doing more in the future in the southern states.”



Mike & Chris Gilbert (V115138) enjoying a trail walk

Tim and Sue Backhouse (V130260) currently at Humpty Doo RV Park

With a background in accountancy, Tim is retired, and Sue is still working and is extremely busy from July to September each year. “We can’t be constantly packing up and travelling at this time of the year, so after reading an email call out for park Custodians, we contacted Emily in 2022 about being custodians in Humpty Doo for July 2023 – September 2023”.

“Early May 2022, we hitched our caravan to our car and drove out the driveway in Wodonga to travel Australia. Original plans were for 12 months, which grew to 18 months, and became 2 years by the time we departed. It has since increased to 2 ½ - 3 years. Just like being on the road, the plans for the journey are constantly subject to change.”

“During our stay here at Humpty Doo, we have met over 1,000 guests so far and we have a month to go. 99.5% of them have been great with no issues.”



Tim and Sue Backhouse (V130260) on a night out in Darwin

Custodian required for 2023

Humpty Doo NT: 29th September – 31st October (close)

Ingham QLD: 9th October – 31st October (close)

Penola SA: 29th October – 10th November