

Non-Compliant Camping Case Studies

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Caravan Industry
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3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

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Department: Economic Development & Tourism **File No:** F16/618

Division: Environment & Development **Trim No:** IC17/222

Appendix:

1. Minutes - Winchelsea RV Monitoring Group February 2017 (D17/14574)

Officer Direct or Indirect Conflict of Interest:

In accordance with Local Government Act 1989 – Section 80C:

Yes

No

Reason: Nil

Status:

Information classified confidential in accordance with Local Government Act 1989 – Section 77(2)(c):

Yes

No

Reason: Nil

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to report on the findings of the 12 month Winchelsea RV Friendly trial and consider the continuance of RVs on the designated area.

Summary

Under Community Amenity Local Law 1 of 2011, the Barwon Riverbank area in Winchelsea between Mercer Street and the Railway Bridge was designated to allow sleeping in self-contained recreational vehicles, self-contained caravans or self-contained motorhomes overnight for a maximum of 48 hours during the trial period which commenced on 1 April 2016 for 12 months.

A monitoring group was established during the trial period to establish a monitoring program testing whether the trial would achieve the following key outcomes:

- a) Attract more tourists and generate economic benefit to Winchelsea.
- b) Increase the perception of Winchelsea being friendly and welcoming, particularly to RV vehicles.
- c) Not result in a reduction in public amenity due to noise, access, damage to the area and litter.

The monitoring group has ceased on 31 March 2017 with the cessation of the trial. The generous time contribution of the group over the past 12 months is acknowledged.

It was found that the Winchelsea RV trial generated a modest economic benefit, increased the perception of the town as more friendly and welcoming and there was not a significant increase in impact on the local amenity of the trial area on the Barwon Riverbank. Resident support for RVs staying short-term in the Barwon River Reserve increased, however a small number of local residents surveyed during the trial remain unsupportive.

A major factor limiting the trial's ability to generate more visitors and spending was an extended site closure of five months due to flooding.

The range of options available to Council include:

- Cease trial and don't permit RV overnight stays in the Barwon River Reserve
- Designate the Barwon River Reserve as a year-round RV Friendly 48 Hour Stop
- Designate the Barwon River Reserve a seasonal RV Friendly 48 Hour Stop
- Create an RV Friendly Winchelsea through partnership with local businesses and cease to provide an RV Site on the Barwon River Reserve.

It is likely that regular flood events will limit year round vehicle access in future making it an unsuitable site for year-round access. Providing a seasonal site may reduce the potential for damage to the reserve. The continued use of the river for RVs over a longer term may need to be reviewed as the population of Winchelsea grows.

Although an improved perception of the town doesn't have a value in economic terms, positive perception can translate to future visitation. There is merit in considering a 3-5 year designation allowing RVs and Caravans to stay short term overnight on a seasonal basis from 1 December to 30 April.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Note the report summarising the Winchelsea RV Friendly trial.
2. Receive and note the minutes of the Winchelsea Monitoring Group February 2017 meeting.
3. Acknowledge the cessation of the Winchelsea RV Trial and monitoring group and the contribution of the community members.
4. Under Community Amenity Local Law 1 of 2011, designate the Barwon River Reserve, Winchelsea in the area between Mercer Street and the Railway Bridge to allow sleeping in self-contained recreational vehicles, self-contained caravans or self-contained motorhomes overnight for a maximum of 48 hours on a seasonal basis between 1 December and 30 April commencing December 2017.
5. Review the designation of use in April 2020 with recommendations on whether the use continues or not.
6. Allocate \$10,000 in the 2017/18 Budget for the maintenance of the Barwon River Reserve and review annually while RV usage continues.

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

Report

Background

On 23 February 2016 Council approved a one year trial allowing short term stays for RVs in a section of the Barwon River Reserve. This was done in response to a petition from Growing Winchelsea Inc. requesting Council declare “Winchelsea an RV friendly town by allowing free camping along our beautiful Barwon River, thus attracting tourists and contributing to the economy of our town.”

Under Community Amenity Local Law 1 of 2011, the Barwon Riverbank area in Winchelsea between Mercer Street and the Railway Bridge was designated to allow sleeping in self-contained recreational vehicles, self-contained caravans or self-contained motorhomes overnight for a maximum of 48 hours during the trial period which commenced on 1 April 2016 for 12 months.

Council also resolved to work with Growing Winchelsea Inc. and interested stakeholders to establish a monitoring program during the trial period, including quarterly meetings and key triggers for early cessation of the trial, if required.

At the completion of the trial, Council requested that a report be provided to the April 2017 Council meeting with recommendations on whether the use continues or not. This report summarises the findings from the monitoring program during the trial period and proposes a recommendation moving forward.

Discussion

The Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial provided an opportunity to test the notion that Winchelsea would attract tourists and benefit economically by allowing a free RV site on the Barwon River.

Following the Council meeting, a Monitoring Group was established under an agreed Terms of Reference. The Group met quarterly and group membership consisted of:

- Two Winchelsea Ward Councillors: Cr McGregor & Cr Wellington
- One Growing Winchelsea Representatives: Stuart Fountain (President)
- One business representative: Jacqui Doyle (Café La Hoot)
- Two Community Representatives (one for and one against the proposal).

The minutes of the February 2017 meeting are attached for reference.

The purpose of the group was to establish a monitoring program and review data collected during the trial period and assess status of the trial against expected outcomes.

The envisaged outcomes from the original petition by Growing Winchelsea and previous Council Reports can be summarised in three key sections as seen below. These will be discussed in more detail in the report.

- a) Attract more tourists and generate economic benefit to Winchelsea
- b) Winchelsea would be perceived as more friendly and welcoming, particularly to RV vehicles
- c) Potential reduction in public amenity due to noise, access, damage to the area and litter.

A major factor limiting the trial’s ability to generate more visitors and spending was an extended site closure due to flooding. As can be seen in Table 1 below, the site was open for 3 months from 1 April 2016 and then closed for a period of nearly five months. The trial site was closed on 22 July, open for a period of three days in September and then closed again until 2 December 2016. The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) previously advised the area is subject to flooding 1 in every 2 years.

Timing	2016									2017		
	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Status	RV Site Open			Closed due to flooding						RV Site Open		
Estimated use	1 vehicle per night	1 vehicle every 2 nights	No access to site						1 vehicle per night			

Table 1: Timeline of Winchelsea RV Site Opening / Closure and estimated usage

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial



Figure 1: Barwon River Reserve flooded September 2016

Other broader factors relevant to changes in visitation patterns to Winchelsea to be considered include:

- an extended period of roadworks and road closures on the Great Ocean Road from September 2016 diverting traffic inland or discouraging coastal visitation
- completion of road works in Winchelsea and the duplication of the Princes Highway to Geelong completed in December 2015 providing better access to Winchelsea
- a growing number of commercial tour operators ‘reversing’ their traditional Great Ocean Road tour route along the coast in the morning and travelling through Winchelsea in the morning en-route to the 12 Apostles.

Key Trial Findings

a) Attract more visitors and generate economic benefit

It was estimated in the 23 June 2015 Council report that the site may attract visitor numbers in the range of 10 – 35 vehicles per week provide a modest economic benefit in the order of \$49,000 to \$175,000 per annum. This range was calculated based on an average of five RVs using the site for two nights on a weekend or if an average of five RVs used the site per night for the duration of the trial.

Monitoring of usage by RV vehicles indicates that in the first month of the trial an average of one vehicle per night used the site. In May 2016 this reduced to one vehicle every two nights. From December until the cessation of the trial period, the average was estimated at one vehicle per night. Using the averages above, it is estimated that around 185 self-contained RVs and caravans used the site for the trial period, generating an economic return in the order of \$17,760 (185* \$96 per RV).

This level of usage is supported by reports from Local Laws officers who observed the site 4-5 times per week and reported intermittent usage of the site by 1-2 vehicles for a night. The maximum number of vehicles observed staying overnight was six during the peak Christmas period.

The monitoring group established a business survey to measure whether the trial provided a noticeable increase in trade. The survey was conducted three times during the trial period at the end of June, September and February. The third survey was extended to cover the full summer period. A broad cross-section of Winchelsea businesses were selected including accommodation, hospitality and services.

In response to the question, “Have you noticed any change in turnover attributable to the RV trial?” the majority of businesses (73%) reported no noticeable change in turnover.

“Have you noticed any change in turnover attributable to the RV trial?”	
Yes	9%
No	73%
Don’t know	18%

Table 2: Winchelsea RV Trial business survey question

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

Some businesses who responded 'no' knew that users of the trial site purchased goods at their business but commented this did not affect their turnover to any real extent. The strong majority of businesses who responded to the survey were supportive of the trial.

Several common comments from business responses were:

- Extra customers coming from the site to purchase a coffee
- No extra income, but other shops appear busier
- Think it's busier because the Great Ocean Road is closed
- No, because it's been closed since July.

During the trial, a nearby Hotel continued to provide a small area for RVs and caravans to park on their property as has been done for a number of years. They allow visitors to stay for \$10 per night or for free if a main meal is purchased in the bistro. Over 95% of visitors paid for a meal instead of paying the \$10 site fee and the average expenditure was around \$50 per couple. This service was well used year round attracting at least two vehicles per week on average and several (3 - 4) on most weekends.

The Hotel RV area was not affected by inclement weather or flooding. The nearby dump point was seen as convenient. An analysis of Wikicamps found that RV travellers rated the Hotel site as 4.7 out of 5 and the then manager confirmed this initiative has managed to attract more people to the Hotel and to Winchelsea. Visitors planned to stay for one night but often stayed for several after arriving as they realised there was a secure place to leave any belongings, and Winchelsea was a good base to do daytrips along the Great Ocean Road. The Hotel has recently changed management. The previous management commented that she was considering expanding the number of spaces for RVs to use within their property. This would require a planning permit amendment. It is unclear whether the new management will pursue this.

The Caravan Park responded twice during the trial period to the business survey indicating a noticeable change in turnover attributable to the RV trial. From the June survey, they reported a reduction in visitation since the commencement of the trial period. In the September survey they reported an increase in "one night stayers" at their park since the middle of July when the site was closed. In response to the final survey, they stated their objection against the proposal alleging misuse of the area by RVs staying longer than 48 hours and contributing to an increase in rubbish and degradation of the reserve. In the "ten week period surrounding Christmas and New Year, [their] night-stay rate fell by 32% on last year and 22% on the year before."

An indicator of RV visitation to Winchelsea is the RV Dump Point near the Barwon Hotel. The local supermarket provided a record of usage. From August 2014 to February 2016, the Dump Point was used 18 times, or on average once a month. During the trial period, the Dump Point was used 86 times, or seven times per month, a significant increase in usage of this facility.

Surf Coast Visitor Information Centres received several enquiries about whether the trial site was open or closed during the 12 months. In general fewer visitors were aware of the Barwon Riverbank site when enquiring about free camping options on the Great Ocean Road. Many were aware of the Hotel site in Winchelsea and its 'main meal deal'.

Based on the information above, the trial generated a very modest economic benefit to Winchelsea below the lower end of the envisaged economic benefit. While some businesses noticed some customers were users of the RV site, their expenditure did not provide a noticeable increase in trade. A local Hotel was able to cater for RVs year round and generated a similar level of economic benefit for Winchelsea as the trial site, use of the RV dump point increased significantly, while the Caravan Park reported a reduction in visitation during the trial.

b) Visitor-friendly perception

Community consultation prior to the commencement of the trial identified many positive aspects of low-key visitation that is already occurring in Winchelsea. It was expected that formalising a site may provide a perception that Winchelsea is welcoming to travellers.

The RV Trial had a noticeable impact on the visitor friendly perception of Winchelsea. During the trial period, three letters of appreciation were received for providing an RV friendly site.

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

The RV Trial site was promoted on Wikicamps, an online app used by RV travellers to find and rate free camps. The site was rated as 4.1 out of 5 stars. Comments were mostly positive including:

- Lovely free camp area
- Great spot
- Great spot for big rig
- Had lunch at Café La Hoot – very good
- Thanks Winchelsea much appreciated
- Great spot...shops and pub in walking distance
- Wonderful site, plenty of space. Suits self-contained vehicles. Easy walk to IGA, butcher, cafes, pool, medical practice and pubs. Brekky and coffee at the old shire hall tea rooms very good.

Beyond supporting the RV friendly trial, the comments also point to the nature of expenditure taking place.

There were several comments attempting to clarify the definition of 'self-contained' for other users, a few complaints about Cockatoos and early morning trains and advice on accessing the dump point and drinking water.

Local nearby resident perception of the RV site improved during the trial period. The level of support for the allowing an RV site on the riverbank was 58% support prior to the trial. During the trial, resident approval increased to 79% support. 21% remained not supportive during the trial. Several comments from resident' responses were:

- Good to see people spending money in the town.
- I walk my dog twice a day, and often the people staying say what a lovely area it is
- Personally, I think it is a great idea and should continue
- We had people staying down the river comment on the fact it's the cleanest park they have stayed in
- People staying here is good for the businesses in town, their favourable comments attract more people to the area
- Lots of caravans using the site, they are quiet & respectful, met some lovely people on my walks.
- The parishioners attending St John Baptist Church heavily endorse the use of the Barwon River reserve for RV camping
- There were several comments that allowing RVs to use the site has discouraged undesirable behaviour of hoons doing 'burn-outs' or 'wheelies' in the area.

Based on the information above, the free RV Trial site had a positive impact on resident and visitor perception of Winchelsea and made the town perceived as more 'visitor friendly'.

c) Potential reduction in public amenity

Community consultation prior to the commencement of the trial also identified a number of concerns in relation to allowing an RV friendly site in the Barwon River Reserve including the unsuitability of the site, an increase in rubbish, a desire to keep it beautiful and untouched and feeling uncomfortable about sharing public space with campers.

Table 2 below provides a summary of nearby resident opinion on whether the RV Trial had affected the amenity of the area. The responses show that most residents did not believe the trial contributed to an increase in rubbish, noise or degradation of the Barwon River Reserve.

Impact on amenity	Yes	No	Don't know
Increased rubbish	7%	76%	17%
Increased noise	7%	83%	10%
General degradation of the site	14%	76%	10%
Any other impacts	21%	38%	41%

Table 3: Summary of 'amenity' responses from Winchelsea RV Trial Resident Survey

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

Noise and rubbish were not a major concern with 7% responding that RVs contributed to these issues, however double the number of residents (14%) were concerned about general degradation of the site by RVs. A summary of comments on this aspect of the trial include:

- It's lovely that people can camp, but they are in the park where we walk everyday and our rates go to maintain the park. I'd prefer it's kept as a park and no RV campaign even though the travellers are nice. I moved here for space
- Whole area is slowly losing grass
- Encourage day visitors to beautiful Barwon River, how can people enjoy walk along river, kick football or play games when area is being ploughed up by RV vehicles?
- Degradation especially occurred before the site was closed in winter
- Large vehicles tyres cutting up and muddying grassland
- Visually awful
- I feel like the park is now a camp ground and people stay longer than 48 hours
- Visual impact.

During the trial, caravans and RVs were observed in the Barwon River Reserve in winter when the ground was particularly wet (see Figure 2 below for some images taken by the monitoring group). There were numerous reports of tyre tracks through the reserve particularly during the wetter months of the year. The images were taken just prior to the extended site closure.

It is unclear whether the RV trial contributed to an increase in the number of tyre/vehicle tracks made in the Barwon River Reserve. Prior to the trial commencing, large wheel ruts were visible in several areas of the reserve and resident surveys expressed concerns with this area being used by 'hoons' for 'wheelies and burnouts'. Additionally, RVs and Caravans have historically stopped along the Barwon River during the day for lunch stops, tea breaks or access to the shops. The amount of damage from wheel ruts and tyre tracks did not appear to be any worse during the twelve months of trial compared to previous years.



Figure 2: Examples of wheel ruts and tyre tracks in the Barwon River Reserve (July 2016)

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

The matter of degradation of the reserve through the creation of large wheel ruts seems to be more an issue of all vehicle access to the reserve during wet periods as opposed to singling out RVs as only one user group. Possible solutions are to consider seasonal access for RVs, increase the amount of 'hard stand' areas to cater for all users of the reserve, or to consider ways to restrict access to vehicles during the wetter months when all vehicles might damage the grassed areas.

As mentioned earlier, 21% of local residents remain unsupportive of the trial. Council received a number of complaints from local residents indicating that there is still a level of negative feelings against the trial in parts of the local community.

Local laws visited the trial site approximately 4-5 times per week during the period of the trial and aside from a complaint on the first day reported no additional complaints of any inappropriate behaviour or usage of the site caused by RV users. Anecdotally the site is well patronised with regular usage and numbers have varied from single campers up to six campers using the site on any single occasion. There were no reports of the 'Wicked Camper' type of patronage, noting these seem to be more of an issue along our coastal areas. Rangers spoke to numerous campers and the response to the site has been good with plenty of favourable comments. The trial did not significantly increase the use of local laws resources. They have been able to integrate inspections of the site into their current commitment to other services to the Winchelsea community.

Monitoring Group

The valued contribution of the monitoring group should be noted. In particular the contribution of local community members who regularly attended meetings, provided feedback, visited the site to take regular photos, and assisted in survey formulation. Group members consisted of those who had initially raised concerns, voiced support and had a neutral position towards the trial. The monitoring group performed their role to a very high level. The function of the group ceased on the 31st March 2017.

The trial and monitoring group ceased on 31 March 2017. There are now a number of options for consideration, each with pros and cons:

	Pros	Cons
Don't permit RV overnight stays in the Barwon River Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses some resident's concern about RVs • Caravan park does not experience loss in visitation • Reduction in officer time and resources • Avoids problems with seasonal flooding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winchelsea not seen as strongly as 'RV Friendly' • Negative 'word-of-mouth' feedback amongst RV travellers • RVs likely to continue 'historic' use and park illegally • No increase in accommodation capacity for Winchelsea • Little potential for increase in visitation & expenditure over time from RVs
Designate the Barwon River Reserve as a year-round RV Friendly 48 Hour Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winchelsea perceived as friendly & welcoming • Increased visitation to Winchelsea • Modest economic benefit • Positive word-of-mouth • Some control over RV usage of site • Increased accommodation capacity for Winchelsea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with flooding and year round access • Possible negative impact on caravan park • Possible increased use of Council resources (officer time and maintenance budget) • Need for budget allocation to address vehicle access • May create an opportunity-cost as Winchelsea grows in terms of less accessible public space

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

<p>Designate the Barwon River Reserve a seasonal RV Friendly 48 Hour Stop from 1 December to 30 April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winchelsea perceived as friendly & welcoming • Increased visitation to Winchelsea • Modest economic benefit • Positive word-of-mouth • Some control over RV usage of site • Possible reduction in vehicle damage to site • lessens seasonal flooding • Less impact on caravan park than year-round operation • Increased accommodation capacity for Winchelsea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for budget allocation to address vehicle access • Possible confusion and complaints about when the site is open • Possible negative impact on caravan park • Possible increased use of Council resources (officer time and maintenance budget) • Need for budget allocation to address vehicle access • May create an opportunity-cost as Winchelsea grows in terms of less accessible public space
<p>Create an RV Friendly Winchelsea through partnership with local businesses and cease to provide an RV Site on the Barwon River Reserve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost to Council with less staff involvement and no requirement for budget • Supporting existing businesses who cater for RV travellers • Possible reduction in damage to Barwon River Reserve • Modest economic benefit • Existing services are rated highly and supports perception of Winchelsea as friendly • Supports increase in visitation and expenditure • Avoids problems with seasonal flooding • Businesses have more control over site conditions and usage • Businesses can promote other aspects of Winchelsea to visitors • Caravan park does not experience loss in visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible negative 'word-of-mouth' feedback amongst RV travellers for closing a 'free' site • Does not achieve expected outcome from Growing Winchelsea petition • No increase in accommodation capacity for Winchelsea • RVs likely to continue 'historic' use and park illegally

Table 4: Options for consideration relating to RV Overnight Stays in Winchelsea

Financial Implications

There is currently no provision in the draft 2017/2018 budget to formalise an RV Friendly Parking Area in Winchelsea. If supported, the proposal represents the provision of a new service to be provided by Council.

If RV usage of the Barwon River Reserve is to continue as it did during the trial period; with no establishment of a defined parking area, monitoring has shown that it may require a small budget allocation. It may be prudent to allocate a budget towards maintenance and improvements to the Barwon River Reserve including but not limited to: repairs to gravelled areas, signage, ground repairs, prevention of root compaction near large trees and beautification of the area. An ongoing allocation consistent with the duration of the use should be considered. It is recommended that \$5,000 to \$10,000 be allocated to the Barwon River Reserve maintenance for 2017/18. This figure may be revised down after the first year.

Council Plan

Theme 5 Development and Growth
Objective 5.1 Protect productive farmland and support rural business
Strategy 5.1.2 Work with local businesses

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

Theme	5 Development and Growth
Objective	5.3 Develop and grow sustainable year round tourism
Strategy	5.3.2 Facilitate product development to enhance the visitor experience and in particular develop off beach products both infrastructure and business.

Policy/Legal Implications

The entire site is Crown land (back to the alignment of Barwon Terrace) reserved for Public Purposes and is under the control of Surf Coast Shire (SCS) as the appointed Committee of Management (CoM). All Crown land regulations relating to the reserve were revoked in 2000 so there is no impediment from a regulation perspective that would conflict with the proposed RV Parking use.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning (DELWP) has no objection to the proposed use and Council is the CoM. No further approval is required from DELWP and if Council chooses to proceed, it can utilise local laws to control the activity.

The Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) have provided in principle support for the proposal.

No planning permit is required to create an RV Friendly parking area for self-contained vehicles in this instance.

Regulatory Considerations

Staying overnight in car parks and on the roadside is illegal and has been identified as an issue in Surf Coast Shire between Torquay and Lorne. Policing of illegal roadside camping and sleeping in vehicles is undertaken via Community Amenity Local Law 1 of 2011: 4.6 and 4.8.

An area can be designated under resolution of Council to be available for camping under section 4.6 of the Local Law. In deciding whether to grant a permit under this clause, Council must consider the following:

- a) The location of the land
- b) The statutory planning requirements relevant to the land
- c) The suitability of the land for camping
- d) The number of persons or other structures to be located or accommodated on the land
- e) The length of time the tents and other structures will be erected on the land
- f) The availability of sanitary facilities to the land
- g) The likely damage to be caused
- h) The likely impact on nearby residents
- i) Council policy
- j) Any other matter relevant to the circumstances of the application.

If there are significant concerns or complaints received by Council in relation to RV use of the site, then Council may remove the designation by resolution.

Other Regulations that need to be considered prior to implementing a facility are below:

- Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.
- The Land Act 1958.
- The Local Government Act 1989.
- The Country Fire Authority Act 1958.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.
- The Environment Protection Act 1997.

Officer Direct or Indirect Interest

No officer involved in the preparation of this report has any conflicts of interest.

Risk Assessment

Some risks identified in proceeding with the proposal and declaring an RV Friendly short-stay parking area in Winchelsea include the potential for complaints from local residents about the amenity of the area (noise, litter, access), additional maintenance and enforcement costs and an issue of competitive neutrality in relation to the existing caravan park operating in Winchelsea.

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

Given that the proposed area has a history of informal, self-contained vehicles staying overnight the risks are seen as relatively low as Council would be formalising a practice that has occurred for some time.

The degradation of the site that occurs by vehicle access needs to be considered as a broader aspect of planning for appropriate access to the reserve for all vehicles, not just RVs and caravans.

Social Considerations

Research on the RV & Caravan market suggests travellers choose a mix of commercial and free campsites during their travels. Providing a free RV Friendly short-stay overnight parking area in Winchelsea could increase the capacity for the town to appeal to all types of travellers.

Monitoring has shown the positive impact on the perception that Winchelsea is friendly and welcoming by providing a space for RVs to stay overnight in the short term. It is expected that allowing continued use of the site will continue to provide a moderate boost to the local economy in terms of increased spend in the local shops and a perception that Winchelsea is welcoming to travellers. It is possible that this may grow over time.

Other social considerations such as litter – caused by people camping, noise – caused by inappropriate gatherings (parties) or generators or lighting need to be factored into a decision.

The trial indicated that the presence of RV travellers in the Barwon River area had potential to moderate the social impacts listed above. It was reported that many RV travellers are responsible, respectful and aim to leave the area in the same or better state than they found it.

There may be a point in future as the Winchelsea population grows when there is more pressure placed on the site from competing uses. At this point, it may no longer be appropriate to allow RV users to stay at this location.

Community Engagement

Businesses and local residents were encouraged to provide feedback during the trial in the form of business and resident surveys conducted through the trial period. Any emails, letters or comments on Wikicamps relating to the Barwon River Reserve, Winchelsea RV Dump Point were also considered in the summary of this report.

Environmental Implications

Given the desire of the community for minimal infrastructure or changes to the Barwon River Reserve, and given this area has been used frequently by RV vehicles as a rest point it is considered that there are no environmental implications.

The Barwon Land and River Care Group did not report any significant concerns in relation to the proposal.

Communication

Growing Winchelsea Inc. will receive a letter advising of the outcome of Council decision. Winchelsea residents and the general public will be informed by a media release. If the use is to continue, new signage will need to be erected and Wikicamps will be updated.

It is proposed a letter of thanks be sent to the participating community members on the monitoring group.

Conclusion

This report has summarised the findings and observations of the Winchelsea RV Friendly monitoring group against the following envisaged outcomes:

- a) Attract more tourists and generate economic benefit to Winchelsea
- b) Winchelsea would be perceived as more friendly and welcoming, particularly to RV vehicles
- c) Potential reduction in public amenity due to noise, access, damage to the area and litter.

It has been shown that the RV Trial has attracted more tourists and generated a modest economic benefit, Winchelsea was perceived as more friendly and welcoming and there was not a significant increase in impact on the local amenity of the area.

3.3 Summary of Winchelsea RV Friendly Trial

Although an improved perception of the town doesn't have a value in economic terms, positive perception can translate to future visitation. There is merit in considering a 3-5 year designation allowing RVs and Caravans to stay short term overnight on a seasonal basis from 1 December to 30 April. This will require a maintenance budget of up to \$10,000.

It is likely that regular flood events will limit year round vehicle access in future making it an unsuitable site for year-round access. Providing a seasonal site may reduce the potential for damage to the reserve and increase the accommodation capacity for Winchelsea in the short term. The continued use of the river for RVs over a longer term may need to be reviewed as the population of Winchelsea grows.

2. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To strengthen the Murray's destinations through development of engaging visitor activities, investment in quality tourist infrastructure and appealing townships.

2.1. THE OPPORTUNITY

One of the main findings of the research and consultation is that many locations along the Murray do not offer a broad range of activities: this has been summarised as the need to develop tourism destinations.

By creating diverse experiences through a number of smaller product developments, increased visitation and an extended length of stay will be encouraged. Research indicates that this range of products and experiences is particularly important for the family market, which seeks a range of activities that appeal to both children and adults.

The development of a series of tourism destinations throughout the Murray Region is also important in promoting touring along the Murray. The more appealing destinations, particularly if they offer different and unique experiences, will provide a strong motivator for multi-day touring through the region.

The initiatives that align closely with the overarching theme of this report, making more of the river and the associated National Parks, are those that should be prioritised. These are:

1. Designated swimming areas;
2. Riverfront Accommodation;
3. Riverfront Dining; and
4. Tracks and Trails, particularly those that provide river experiences.

The implementation of many smaller projects in key locations will be as important to the long term development of the Murray Region's tourism industry as the prominent projects included in Tier 1.

2.2. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The destination development opportunities have been aligned to the product development opportunity segments included in Part 2, and are discussed below⁷.

The reason for including these here is to highlight their overall importance to tourism development in the Murray Region, and that specific projects that align with these initiatives should be strongly considered for support and/or funding.

These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the projects included in Tier 2 and 3, as they provide the basis for the creation of unique destinations along the river, offering a mix of experiences to meet a wide range of market segments.

2.2.1. THE RIVER

RIVER ACCESS

The need for improved and increased access to the river was a recurrent theme throughout consultation, with the need for more and upgraded boating facilities in key locations, fishing platforms, canoe landings, improved roads and trails for visitors to get to and experience the river and better visitor amenity once at the river.

This has also been included as a project, as a consolidated and strategic approach to river access may be successful in applying for regional development funding, and provide opportunities to promote the region as a water-based holiday destination.

DESIGNATED SAFE SWIMMING AREAS

There are several risk factors in swimming in inland waters and the Murray River in particular, including strong currents, submerged snags, variable water depths and boats and water craft on the river. The introduction of designated safe swimming areas on the

⁷ Note that there were no strategic initiatives identified in the History, Heritage and Culture segment.

rivers and lakes in the Murray Region may make the area more appealing to visitors, families in particular.

The provision of safe swimming areas will also provide visitors with the opportunity to develop confidence in the water, encouraging repeat visitation to undertake more adventurous activities.

TOURING ROUTES

The development of touring routes, which could be thematic along the river, or loops providing tourism product in key destinations may encourage more visitors to explore the Murray Region, and increase visitor yield.

2.2.2. NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS: NATURAL AND INDIGENOUS PRODUCT

TRACKS AND TRAILS

In addition to the Loddon Mallee Trails Network and those included in the Murray Valley Trail, the provision of tracks and trails along the rivers, through the Parks and Reserves and between the cities and towns will attract the increasing active tourism market. Cycling in particular is a rapidly growing activity.

CAMPING AND VISITOR FACILITIES

As many of the National and State Parks in the Murray Region have only recently been transferred over from State Forests, much of the visitor infrastructure requires upgrading to improve visitor amenity and also protect the environment.

This includes clearly defined camping and day visitor areas, toilets, roads within the park, signage and access to the water.

BIRD WATCHING INFRASTRUCTURE

Bird watching facilities have been identified as providing additional visitor activities, promoting increased length of stay in a variety of locations in the Murray Region, including:

- Millewa and Barmah National Parks, particularly Mathoura

- Balranald
- Kerang Lakes
- Hattah Kulkynne National Park

Specific projects include Reeds Bed Bird Hide, Moira Bird Hole, viewing platforms at Kerang Lake, and bird trails and hides at Balranald.

INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATION AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

There are many sites with important indigenous heritage in the Murray Region that are not recognised or promoted as visitor destinations. The Murray provides a more accessible location to access indigenous cultural experiences than Central Australia and there is an opportunity to increase visitors in specific target markets through product development and partnership with local communities.

2.2.3. GOLF

ACCOMMODATION AND CLUBHOUSE UPGRADES

There was a widespread view expressed throughout the consultation process that many of the Golf Resort accommodation and club houses need investment to succeed in an increasingly competitive market. Over the past ten years there have been many private golf course developments in close proximity to Melbourne, the primary origin of Murray Golfers. These developments, in areas such as the Mornington and Bellarine Peninsulas, are providing high quality courses and facilities within two hours drive of the city. With lower airfares, areas such as the Gold Coast and northern Tasmania now compete with the Murray in terms of cost and ease of access.

Although some clubs have invested in the facilities associated with the golf courses, many have not. In order to capture new markets, particularly the Baby Boomers, who are stereotypically more demanding than their predecessors, clubs need to refresh their accommodation and clubhouse facilities.

2.2.4. FOOD AND WINE

RIVERFRONT DINING

There is a need for more signature dining experiences across the Murray Region and particularly those that make the most of picturesque and unique locations on the river. Riverfront dining creates the opportunity for a signature river experience, and is an attractor to the region.

DINING QUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Much of the dining along the length of the Murray is similar in nature: large bistros based in clubs. Although these clubs and facilities are a major tourism asset to the region, it was noted in workshops that this lack of variety does not meet the preferences of many sections of the tourism market, due to the perceived quality and lack of variety on offer. Diversification into a range of cuisines, scales of operations and quality of offer may improve the perception of the Murray in some market segments, particularly those from the capital cities.

PROVIDORES

The product audit of the Murray Region has not identified one provider, specialising in the sale of local produce, although some VICs do sell pre-packaged produce such as preserves and local wines.

If providers specialising and marketing the high quality local produce along the river prove successful, it may encourage increased participation in tourism by the local agricultural industry.

LOCAL PRODUCE VANS

The concept is to have vans selling regional produce to tour the camping grounds, particularly during peak seasons. Anecdotally, campers may be more time poor than financially poor, indicating a business opportunity by providing quality local produce at their camp site.

The success of this operation may be linked to being supplied by a local provider.

FARM GATE SALES AND CELLAR DOORS

There is an opportunity to extend visitor stays and enhance visitor experience through opening up farms and vineyards for visitor experiences. These experiences may vary from road side purchases through to opportunities to meet the producer and see the farm in operation.

FOOD AND WINE TOURING ROUTES

Depending on the availability of farm gate sales and cellar doors, touring routes could be established to highlight the food and wine related experiences on offer in the region.

2.2.5. FESTIVALS, EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

HORSE RACING

Race meetings are held across the Murray Region, including Albury, Balranald, Berrigan, Corowa, Deniliquin, Echuca, Gunbower, Holbrook, Kerang, Manangatang, Mildura, Moulamein, Swan Hill, Tocumwal, Wentworth and Wodonga. Country race meetings are an opportunity to attract younger visitors into the region: in particular the *Victorian Look At Me* segment and the NSW *Groupies* market segments.

2.2.6. ACCOMMODATION

UPGRADE 3 AND 3 ½ STAR MOTELS

There is a very large number of 3 to 3 ½ star motels in the Murray Region that need reinvestment to upgrade them to meet modern consumer demands. This should include consideration of a change in accommodation stock to meet demand for other types where possible.

RIVERFRONT ACCOMMODATION

Outside of caravan parks, there is very little accommodation in the Murray Region with views of the river. Opportunities to establish a range of accommodation options making the most of the River are included in many of the riverfront masterplan exercises referred to in section 4, The River.

RV FRIENDLY TOWNS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Many towns in the Murray Region are considering or have become RV Friendly Towns under the guidelines set out by the CMCA. This includes free camp sites for up to 72 hours within close proximity to town centres, free dump points among other requirements. This created conflict when there is an expectation of free facilities in towns that have commercially operated caravan parks. Councils may also be contravening competitive neutrality legislation by providing free facilities in areas with commercial camping grounds.

This indicates that a strategic approach to RV Friendly Towns and the provision of RV infrastructure is required. Only towns without caravan parks and existing visitor demand should consider becoming RV friendly; other locations should consider providing RV facilities on a commercial basis, typically within existing caravan parks.

2.2.7. INFRASTRUCTURE

STANDARDISED SIGNAGE

The provision of standardised promotional and directional signage throughout the Murray Region would improve the visitor experience. Given the involvement of NSW and Victorian road management agencies, this may be realised through the introduction of a symbol to be used on all tourism related signage, rather than a distinct and shared sign design.

STREET SCAPING AND TOWN ENTRANCES

Many of the towns and regional centres do not look like tourism locations to people passing through on the main roads. Beautification of town entrances, with signage directing travellers to town centres and places of interest may lead to increased stopping and exploring. Some towns along the Murray may also benefit from enhanced street scapes, particularly in main streets.

7. RECREATION VEHICLES (RV'S) ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Portfolio:	Tourism and Major Events - Cr Nelson
Source	Planning & Tourism
General Manager:	Peter Bettess
Index Reference	Subject: Recreation Vehicles (RV's) issues and opportunities

Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the facilities available for Recreation Vehicles visiting Geelong.

Summary

- The City of Greater Geelong has been lobbied by the Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) over the past ten years to provide a low or no cost RV park with associated facilities to support overnight stays within the City of Greater Geelong.
- The RV lobby group maintains that the City of Greater Geelong is missing out on the economic contribution RV users make to the economy because at present no RV facilities are provided by the City. Therefore RV's either do not stay in the City or revert to illegal camping in the suburban streets or public recreation areas.
- The facilities required to support the establishment of an RV park in Geelong, and thus be considered and promoted as "RV Friendly" (registered trademark) includes: access to water supply, public toilets, blackwater dump point, links with public transport into City Centre and safe area to park. Based on CMCA criteria Greater Geelong should be regarded as an RV welcoming destination.
- The owners of the 26 commercial Caravan Parks (holiday parks) located in the City of Greater Geelong state that there is adequate opportunity and dedicated facilities within the current commercial parks to cater for RV's (see attached report).
- The City of Greater Geelong (as per State Legislation) ensures that commercial caravan parks comply with regulations relating to safety, amenity, environment and registration standards.
- The requirement for competitive neutrality has been embraced fully by some States of Australia (Tasmania and Queensland) in relation to Local Government establishing RV parks. Under the National Competition Policy should Local Government establish an overnight camping site for self-contained recreation vehicles, such sites must comply fully with same regulatory requirements provided by commercial caravan parks (fire, safety and environment) and charge the true market value for the provision of such services and amenities. It should be noted that compliance to regulations and full cost recovery principle amounts to many hundreds of thousands of dollars in both the establishment phase and ongoing management stage of developing and maintaining an overnight RV park.
- Geelong should improve it's standing with RV owners by encouraging visitation to the Municipality through the provision of dedicated parking options for RV's and through specific information packs to better assist and inform RV users of what they can do and where they can stay in Greater Geelong.

7. RECREATION VEHICLES (RV'S) ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (CONT'D)

- At a City of Greater Geelong Council meeting held on 12 March 2013, Council resolved to investigate the issues and opportunities associated with catering for the needs of Recreation Vehicle users in the City of Greater Geelong.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1) will promote Greater Geelong in partnership with the tourism industry (as per Council Tourism Policy) as a destination that welcomes RV's to the city and highlights the facilities and experiences that encourages visitation and increased length of stay;**
- 2) recognise the opportunity to better cater for the needs of RV's users visiting the City of Greater Geelong by providing dedicated short term parking options and welcome information packs that gives details of overnight and long stay options in the 26 commercial parks located throughout the Municipality;**
- 3) acknowledges that current commercial parks have the capacity and facilities available to cater for the current needs of RV users wanting to stay overnight in the municipality.**

Background

The Recreation Vehicle (RV) market has grown in members over the last ten years with their peak body, Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) indicating a membership of over 64,000 individuals.

The RV sector seems to be fragmented into at least three specific sub categories namely 'Grey Nomads' (people (often retirees) who spend their days travelling Australia with their RV being their residence for much of the year); International budget youth traveller (Wicked Campers – seeking experiences and wanting to minimise accommodation cost); and Up Market RV owners (seeking 'free camping' as a right).

'Free camping' for RV's has been met by 23 townships in Victoria and these townships have been designated as RV Friendly Towns by the CMCA.

The RV sector through its peak club CMCA has lobbied Local Government across the State and Nation to expand the concept of RV friendly towns (registered trade mark) by urging Local councils to establish no cost/low cost overnight RV camp sites.

At the same time that RV sectors have experienced growth so has the demand for and quality of commercial holiday parks increased significantly.

Commercial holiday parks account for 12% of accommodation and are a significant employer of staff within our region.

7. RECREATION VEHICLES (RV'S) ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (CONT'D)

A recent study by the Caravan, RV & Accommodation Industry of Australia (2012) found that on average each commercial park contributed \$1.2m to their local economy per year. Further to this, a recent report (2013) conducted by independent consultants BDO, interviewed 556 visitors staying at both commercial (339 visitors) and free campsites (217 visitors). The report compared the relative expenditure at each destination by both *free campers* and those staying in commercial parks. The study resolved that those staying in commercial parks spent approximately 4 times more at each destination. *Free campers* spent on average \$213 at each destination whilst commercial campers spent on average \$829.

As a result of meeting legislative and regulatory imposts, the cost of running a commercial park is significant with compliance costs for fire services alone exceeding \$100,000 per park. Further to this there are also significant costs associated with meeting environmental, health and planning regulations.

The management of running a commercial park that complies with all the requirements mandated by Local and State Government is a major business undertaking and the cost of compliance is reflected in the charge costs to users of the commercial parks.

The philosophy and demands of RV users in seeking free camping is at direct odds with commercial park operators who charge a fee structure that is inclusive of the costs to meet health and safety standards established by Local and State Government.

Local Government manages health and safety compliance in the commercial parks.

Commercial park operators with the support of their peak industry body (Vic Parks) have initiated legal challenges to Local Councils who introduce 'free or low cost' camping facilities that do not comply with competitive neutrality and National Competition Principles.

Discussion

Tourism is critical to the economic wellbeing of the City of Greater Geelong. Each year, tourism generates expenditure of over one billion dollars within the City and this expenditure supports over 3,355 jobs (Economic Impact Analysis – Geelong 2012 Compelling Economics)

Tourism is part of economic development and each initiative to expand tourism should be measured against an economic framework.

The City of Greater Geelong has established a partnership with the tourism industry through Geelong Otway Tourism (Tourism Policy).

Geelong Otway Tourism Business Plan focuses on yield (visitor expenditure, length of stay) not on volume (guest arrivals).

Through this philosophy (yield not volume) not all visitation is viewed as being beneficial to either the destination, the industry or the broader community.

When the issues of cost verses benefit, need verses the current capacity, the principles of competitive neutrality and the request for subsidy, it is difficult to mount a case from a tourism industry/economic development perspective to support the establishment of free/low cost overnight sites.

Geelong and the Bellarine are popular and strong tourism destinations that are well supported by industry, Local Government and the community.

7. RECREATION VEHICLES (RV'S) ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (CONT'D)

Whilst some destinations have felt the need to be RV friendly branded in an attempt to generate profile, this is not a strategy needed or supported by industry in Geelong.

Considering the current capacity to cater for RV's in the municipality, Geelong should be promoted and regarded as welcoming the RV sector.

Geelong can further enhance its reputation as being a welcoming city to RV users by providing better RV parking facilities within the city and by providing a welcome pack of information at Visitor Information Centres that details overnight camping options and the experiences and facilities that encourage overnight visitation.

Capacity

There are 26 Commercial Caravan Parks (Holiday Parks) located within the City of Greater Geelong. Three of these parks are located very close to the CAA (located in the Barwon Valley area). These three centrally located parks have 110 sites available (powered and non-powered). These standard sites accommodate vehicles up to 9 metres (30ft). Of these parks 30 sites are designed for the large RVs. Prices are approximately \$30 per night. Cheaper for non-powered and chain member discounts. All of these three parks have dump points (grey and black water discharge).

Sites are available all year with the exception of a 'few days' per year when the parks are completely booked out. Even then they can recommend other parks that are available in the region (not close to city).

Environmental Implications

The cost to Council to manage the environment impact from RV users staying overnight will be considerable.

The issues of garbage and waste water disposal (grey and black water) and the provision of toilets (cleaning) will need to be budgeted for on a full cost recovery basis.

It is the dumping of garbage and waste water that has lead to many of the conflicts between RV users and local communities throughout Australia.

The City of Melbourne and Townsville City Council have recently been very active in policing illegal RV camping and have extended the hours of bylaws offices to enforce the law and move illegal campers in to commercial caravan parks.

Financial Implications

The establishment cost to provide an overnight RV park that meets the legislative requirements to address environmental, health and safety and registration standards would total many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The industry benchmark used to establish a compliant site is \$10,000 per site. Thus a small site capable of taking up to 20 RV's is estimated to have an establishment cost of at least \$200,000.

Further to this an annual budget would be required to manage and maintain the site. It should also be noted that the economic contribution by individual self-contained RV's is minimal with their major cost being the purchase of fuel and supermarket supplies. By comparison to other sectors of tourism, RV's are considered to be low yield particularly when the real cost of service delivery to support the sector is taken into consideration.

7. RECREATION VEHICLES (RV'S) ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (CONT'D)

Policy/Legal/Statutory Implications

Competitive Neutrality Principles (CNP's)

The CNP's are designed to prevent unfair competition between government (Local, State, Federal) and privately owned businesses by ensuring that all government bodies involved in the delivery of services within the same competitive market as private operators (in this case the provisions of overnight camping services for self-contained RV's) do so on fair and equal terms with those private operators.

Council is required to appropriately apply the CNP's and should adopt what is known as a full cost attribution model in determining the cost of providing that service.

This means that Council must charge a price for the service that reflects the actual cost incurred as well as those costs that the Council would have incurred if it were a private operator.

It should be noted that if Council fails to comply with the above principles the option of a legal challenge from the commercial parks and their peak industry body is highly likely.

Alignment to City Plan

Aligns with the "Growing Our Economy" Strategic Direction in the priority area of Greater Geelong as a leading city for tourism.

Officer Direct or Indirect Interest

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Tourism Manager, City of Greater Geelong, who is also the Executive Director of Geelong Otway Tourism.

Geelong Otway Tourism in partnership with the Victorian Tourism Industry Council has been active and vocal as an industry based partnership advocating for commercial parks as the most appropriate location for RV's to stay overnight in the region.

No other officer involved in preparing the report has a conflict of interest.

Risk Assessment

The City of Greater Geelong will be at potential risk of legal action initiated by the commercial parks if the City fails to comply with competitive neutrality and national competition principles.

If Geelong doesn't address parking issues and does not promote itself as a destination that welcomes the RV sector then Geelong will be bypassed by RV users and be known as an RV unfriendly destination. This risk and opportunities are understood by the tourism industry.

Social Considerations

Not all RV owners can afford to stay in Commercial parks and will thus continue to stay overnight in residential streets or public open space.

7. RECREATION VEHICLES (RV'S) ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES (CONT'D)

Human Rights Charter

The Human Rights Charter has been considered in the preparation of this report.

Consultation and Communication

Following the consideration and the adoption (or otherwise) of the recommendations in this report, further communication with Geelong Otway Tourism will be required to initiate both a regional (G21) and state wide (VTIC) consideration of the issues raised in this report.

A media release will outline Council resolution and the reasoning being the action taken.

ITEM	TVSC5		
	TOURISM AND VISITOR SUB COMMITTEE		
DATE	12 June 2018		
PREV REFS	TVSC	TVSC2	11/07/2017
	Council	NOM7	23/10/2017
	TVSC	TVSC2	14/03/2018
HEADING	RV Park at Pioneer Park		
AUTHOR	Clint Watchman, Coordinator Urban Policy, City Development		
CITY PLAN LINKS	<p>2.2 Have a community that is knowledgeable about our natural environment and embraces a sustainable lifestyle.</p> <p>2.4 Have urban and natural spaces that are adaptive to future changes in climate.</p>		
SUMMARY	<p>In response to Council’s resolution of March 2018 (2355/2018), the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) has provided a proposal for the establishment of an RV Park in Pioneer Park (see attachment 2 response from CMCA – 2018). The CMCA proposal involves the park being developed at no cost to Council, a nominal lease for the land being negotiated, a maximum of 50 sites and a CMCA volunteer providing oversight at the park.</p> <p>In addition as a response to a further Council resolution in March 2018 (2420/2018) staff have prepared a costs estimate to install and manage an independent dump point adjacent to the Pioneer Park toilets.</p> <p>The CMCA have indicated that financial support of \$1,800 could be provided for supply of a dump point unit as part installation of a dump point adjacent to the Pioneer Park toilets. Installation of a stand-alone RV dump point in this location is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$50,000 to establish plus \$1,600 per annum for maintenance. This may fluctuate however in response to unknown usage.</p> <p>Free to use RV dump points are currently available at OTR on Port Wakefield Rd, and the council facility at St Kilda, and a new RV dump point at OTR on Waterloo corner Rd may be established (subject council approval and development timelines) within two years.</p> <p>An RV Park at Pioneer Park has the potential to bring some financial benefit to the Salisbury City Centre with tourists spending money at the local shops and services. However this is not able to be quantified and there are risks associated with the proposal which</p>		

Council should consider outlined in this report which, on balance, have led to a recommendation to not proceed further with these proposals, including but not limited to costs uncertainty, commercial impacts, and statutory and consultation processes and time frames.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the use of Pioneer Park for a RV Park or Non-commercial caravan park not be pursued further.
2. That the investigation of other sites for the use of an RV Park or Non-commercial caravan park not proceed, having consideration to existing and proposed Council RV facilities available at St Kilda, and commercial RV park and caravan park facilities available within the Council area.
3. That the CMCA be thanked for their proposal and advised of Council's decision.
4. A further report be brought back to council if the Caravan Park and Motorhome industry undertake detailed investigation and feasibilities that identifies suitable alternative sites and operations models within northern Adelaide that may facilitate the development of a non-commercial RV/caravan park.

ATTACHMENTS

This document should be read in conjunction with the following attachments:

1. Letter to CMCA - April 2018
2. Response from CMCA - April 2018
3. Potential Location RV Dump Point
4. RV Dump Point Options A & B

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In early 2017, the Salisbury Business Association requested, as part of a number of projects and initiatives it wished to pursue with Council, for Council to consider locating an RV Park in Pioneer Park.

1.2 At its meeting on 27 March 2017, Council resolved:

1.2.1 *That a report be brought back outlining possible Recreational Vehicle sites in the City of Salisbury with a focus on the CBD*

[Resolution Number 1656/2017]

1.3 At its meeting on 11 July 2017, the Sub-Committee considered a report that evaluated five site options, namely Happy Home Reserve (West), Happy Home Reserve (East), Pioneer Park (West), Woodman Green and Salisbury Oval. The Sub-Committee recommended a preference for an alternative site in Pioneer Park (other than Pioneer Park West) and resolved:

- 1.3.1 *That Pioneer Park is endorsed for further investigation as a location for a Recreational Vehicle (RV) site in proximity to the Salisbury City Centre.*
- 1.3.2 *That investigations be undertaken to identify the cost of installing and maintaining signage and infrastructure to comply with the requirements of the RV Friendly Destination program, a more robust understanding of the impact on the St Kilda facility and commercial operators, and ongoing management and maintenance requirements, compared with the benefits of and demand for such a facility in Salisbury City Centre.*
- 1.3.3 *That a further report be brought back to Council detailing the outcome of those further investigations.*

[Resolution Number 1900/2017]

- 1.4 At its meeting on 25 September 2017 Council received a deputation from the operator of Highway One Caravan Park concerned about the impact of the proposal on his business along with queries regarding costs and planning matters. Council resolved:

- 1.4.1 *A report be brought back addressing the issues raised during the deputation by Mr Schammell and Mr Hutchinson, in particular site location, scope of works, cost details and planning advice.*

[Resolution Number 2029/2017]

- 1.5 At its meeting on 23 October 2017, Council resolved:

- 1.5.1 *That the report regarding the Recreational Vehicle Site in the Salisbury City Centre, as requested by a decision of Council on the 25 September 2017, be provided prior or at the meeting of Council in February 2018.*

[Resolution Number 2086/2017]

- 1.1 That report requested by Council arising from the above resolutions, which outlined legal advice from Norman Waterhouse lawyers regarding an appropriate process to enable the site to be used as an RV Park as well as revised costings, was provided to the February 2018 meeting of the Tourism and Visitor Sub-Committee, however it was not considered due to the Sub-committee being inquorate. As such consideration of the report was deferred to the 14 March 2018 meeting of the Sub-Committee. At that meeting the Sub-Committee resolved:

1. *That the report be noted.*
2. *That a detailed feasibility assessment and design works be undertaken prior to Council making a decision on whether to proceed to public consultation on establishing an RV Park at Pioneer Park or Happy Home Reserve, with the feasibility assessment and design work to consider, but not be limited to, the following issues:*
 - 2.1. *Preparation of a concept design for a “Basic” level RV Park for Pioneer Park or Happy Home Reserve, Salisbury.*
 - 2.2. *Further validation and refinement of preliminary engineering and cost assessment of the concept design in terms of construction feasibility and estimated costs.*

- 2.3. *An assessment of options for funding, procurement and delivery of an RV Park in Pioneer Park or Happy Home Reserve.*
 - 2.4. *An indicative project time line taking into account statutory processes and requirements under the Local Government Act 1999 and Development Act 1993.*
 - 2.5. *A consultation Plan.*
 3. *That consultants be engaged to undertake the preparation of a concept design for a "Basic" level RV Park on Pioneer Park or Happy Home Reserve, and for costing of the concept design.*
 4. *That a further report on the feasibility assessment be brought back to Council for further consideration by June 2018 or earlier if available.*
- 1.2 At the 26 March 2018 meeting, Council, when considering the Sub-Committee's recommendation, resolved:
1. *That the report be noted.*
 2. *That until such time as formal correspondence has been received from the CMCA for the establishment of an RV park in the city centre precinct and environs, that the matter be deferred.*
- [Resolution Number 2355/2018]
- 1.3 At the same meeting, Council further resolved that:
1. *That staff report back on providing an RV dump point at the Pioneer Park toilets for inclusion in the budget for 2018/2019 (resolution 2419/2018).*
 2. *That Council write to CMCA seeking their interest in contributing financially for the dump point.*
- [Resolution Number 2420/2018]
- 1.4 A letter has been sent to the CMCA on both matters arising from the March 2018 Council meeting and a response has been received (provided as Attachment 1 Letter to CMCA April 2018 and Attachment 2 Response From CMCA – April 2018).
- 1.5 Both of the resolutions from Council's 26 March 2018 meeting are addressed in this report.

2. CONSULTATION / COMMUNICATION

2.1 Internal

- Team Leader and Manager Infrastructure Delivery
- Coordinator Facilities Management
- Senior Environmental Health Officer
- Coordinator Property
- Team Leader – Planning, City Development

2.2 External

- Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA)
- Peregrine Corporation (OTR Port Wakefield Road)

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The RV sector is a growing part of the tourism market in Australia with over 650,000 registered vehicles in the country. Both the Salisbury Business Association and the Campervan Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) have expressed a desire to establish an RV park adjacent to the Salisbury City Centre.
- 3.2 The establishment of an RV park adjacent to the Salisbury City Centre would create a point of difference for the precinct, being the first non-commercial RV parking area to be established in metropolitan Adelaide. It is claimed that this point of difference would make it a destination for RV owners and there would be an economic benefit for the Salisbury City Centre as a result of the spending that would occur as a result of the increased visitation. It should be noted that these claims are based upon observed experience with RV parks in other locations around Australia. No research or analysis exist specifically in relation to Salisbury City Centre, which, as noted above, is different to other locations in that it is a city centre location in an area that is not in its own right a tourist destination. Accordingly the economic benefits at this stage have not been able to be quantified.
- 3.3 In response to Council's resolution, the CMCA has provided a proposal for the establishment of an RV Park in Pioneer Park. The CMCA proposal involves the park being developed at no cost to Council, a nominal lease for the land being negotiated, a maximum of 50 sites, and a CMCA volunteer providing oversight at the park. The CMCA have provided a generic cost estimate of \$80,000 to establish an RV Park, and \$25-30,000 per annum operating costs
- 3.4 The CMCA's proposal states that the full business case and design of the park will not proceed without at least the "in-principle" support of the City of Salisbury and an indication that development consent is possible on the land. The RV Park would include timber post and rail fence, entrance gate, concrete pad for the custodian, shelter, and landscaping. In addition electrical supply could be sourced from the power pole and transformer installed if necessary. In terms of risk management, vehicles can be moved at short notice and the RV Park closed leading up to or during any flood events.
- 3.5 The CMCA has indicated that although Pioneer Park is the preferred location other locations would be considered if they provided superior outcomes when compared to Pioneer Park.
- 3.6 The State Government and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) jointly prepared a directions paper in May 2012 that reviewed the pricing methodology for council recreation vehicle overnight camping services as a response to a council request due to complaints from private caravan site owners.
- 3.7 Previous reports on this matter have extensively canvassed the site characteristics and approval process to utilise the identified portion of Pioneer Park as an RV Park. The following paragraphs briefly summarise these matters.
 - 3.7.1 *The site is located on the eastern side of Commercial Road within Salisbury City Centre. The land is zoned Open Space within the Little Para River open space corridor.*

- 3.7.2 *The site is owned by the Minister for Sustainability Environment and Conservation and is under Council's care and control. Council would be required to seek the Minister's approval for the use of the land as an RV Park. It is unknown at this stage if the Minister would consider this as an appropriate use and what limitations or requirements there may be if it was.*
- 3.7.3 *An RV Park would need to meet minimum engineering and safety requirements which would be assessed in detail during development assessment and include but not limited to access to the site and circulation within in it, an appropriate sewerage dump point, electrical and potable water connections and fencing to delineate the site.*
- 3.7.4 *Council may also wish to undertake site suitability investigations such as a contamination audit to minimise the risk to council.*
- 3.7.5 *A cost estimate has been prepared by staff and is estimated to be in the order of \$600k to develop the site to meet appropriate engineering and safety requirements. These breakdown of costs are estimated to be:*

Item	Cost (\$)
Dump Point	\$25-50k
Dump Point Water Connection	\$5k
Fencing	\$20k
Access Ramp (7m wide Asphalt + Grade Correction and entry modifications)	\$105k
Internal Gravel Driveway (250mx6mx\$250/m2)	\$375k
Signage	\$5k
Rainwater Tank Removal	\$10k
Service Connections (Water to Site, Sewer and Electrical TBD)	\$50k

- 3.7.6 *If an internal gravel driveway was not required the costs of establishment could be significantly lower. These cost estimates however have been based on a qualified contractor building a gravel track to an appropriate standard for RV useage.*
- 3.7.7 *While CMCA has indicated that their experience suggests that the development costs for an RV Park are approximately \$80k it is difficult to determine if these are like for like examples with equivalent constraints and infrastructure requirements. The above also considers additional costs the CMCA would not be expected to fund including removal of old rain water tank, installation of footpath on South Terrace, and removal of gravel mound.*
- 3.7.8 *An RV Park would require planning approval. "Caravan parks" and "tourist accommodation" are considered non-complying with the Open Space Zone. An RV Park is not clearly defined as either but could be considered a form of "tourist accommodation" depending on the level of infrastructure proposed and therefore it would also be considered non-complying.*

- 3.7.9 *Council could choose to consider the application as “merit” however this may be challenged by a third party and Council may be advised to reprocess the application as non-complying.*
- 3.7.10 *The proposal would require Category 3 public notification which allows for representation in support or against the proposal and the right to appeal a decision. This is a potential risk given Council received a deputation from the operator of Highway One Caravan Park at its 25 September 2017 meeting.*
- 3.7.11 *If Council provide in principle use of Pioneer Park for an RV Park the next steps, from a process an approvals perspective include:*
- *Write to the minister Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation requesting the site be used for the establishment of an RV Park.*
 - *Amend CLMP (if the Council wishes to minimise associated risk) – requires public consultation.*
 - *Approach to market seeking expressions of interest (should Council opt not to pursue or enter into exclusive dealings with the CMCA).*
 - *Public consultation in relation to proposed lease.*
 - *Decision to grant lease/permit under sections 200 and 202 and by-law 3.*
 - *Development application.*
- It is estimated that this process may take 18-24 months including caretaker period if all proceeds smoothly.*
- 3.8 There is a significant difference between Council costs estimates and CMCA costs estimates, which is potentially a product of the difference in standard and quality of engineering and infrastructure provision under the two costings.
- 3.9 In progressing the matter Council essentially has potentially three decisions to make. Firstly whether it wishes to progress with the development an RV Park at all. Secondly, if it chooses to progress with the concept whether it is best located at Pioneer Park or at an alternative location. Finally, if it chooses to progress with the concept whether it enters into exclusive dealing with the CMCA or undertakes an open market approach (noting there is likely to be a very limited field of organisations willing to develop and manage a non-commercial facility of this nature).
- 3.10 The decision on whether to proceed rests on an acceptance that there are insufficient facilities for RV tourists in the immediate area, the economic benefits are sufficiently large and impact on existing facilities.
- 3.10.1 There are a number of commercially operated caravans parks within 20km of the Salisbury City Centre including Windsor Gardens Caravan Park, Highway 1 Caravan and Tourist Park and Adelaide Caravan Park. In addition Council provides an RV parking area at St Kilda with \$235K allocated to relocating this as part of the Stage 2 St Kilda masterplan and there is anecdotal evidence of informal RV parking arrangements at other facilities in addition. The CMCA proposal states that RV Parks such as the one proposed provide a solution to a gap in the market place while the deputation from Highway One Caravan and Tourist Park claimed that the development of an RV Park would divert trade from that facility.

- 3.10.2 While it is generally accepted that there is an economic gain from increasing visitation to an area, the data on expenditure by RV tourists is contested. At the lower end of the scale, research by BDO for the Caravan, RV and Accommodation Industry of Australia in 2013 found that commercial campers spend, on average, \$576 per location (excluding accommodation cost) compare to \$213 by non-commercial campers. The average daily spend for commercial campers is \$73, versus \$53 for non-commercial campers. The CMCA's data is more bullish claiming its members spend an average of \$770.00 per week (or \$110 per day) when travelling on the road.
- 3.10.3 It is difficult to make a robust economic assessment based on the conflicting data, uncertainty over what the impact of an RV Park in Pioneer Park would have in attracting new visitors to the area, the average length of stay in Salisbury, the extent to which daily expenditure is spent in Salisbury or further afield, and the level of diversion of clients away from existing facilities (both commercial and non-commercial). That being said if we take the CMCA's view that the average occupancy at the RV parking area will be 25 vans, if we use the figures generated by BDO and the CMCA, the economic spend is potentially between \$483,625 and \$1,003,750 per annum, noting not all of this will be captured locally.
- 3.10.4 Among the matters raised in the deputation by Highway One Caravan Park, one of the larger tourism industry operators in Salisbury, was the potential to divert users of that facility to the new facility. The development of non-commercial, low cost or free campgrounds within the vicinity of existing commercial caravan parks has been identified as an issue of serious concern to the caravan park industry as documented within SA Parks Policy Paper - A Guide for Management of Camping Area in South Australia (March 2014). The policy paper advocates in its policy number 2 that the provision of free low cost camping should only be established at a distance of more than 20km from existing commercial facilities. While this is not an "official" policy document it is worth Council considering that the industry has done some work in this area and there could be a risk in progressing an RV Park at Pioneer Park and further representation it may receive.
- 3.11 Should Council proceed with providing in-principle support to an RV Park, a determination would need to be made whether Pioneer Park is the best site. This matter was canvassed in the report provided to the Tourism and Visitor Sub-Committee in July 2017. It should be noted that the CMCA proposal leaves open an option to consider alternative locations should they provide "*superior outcomes when compared to this proposal.*"
- 3.12 In earlier reports on the RV Park, the role of the CMCA as a potential operator of the RV Park operators was not highlighted as no decision had been made on whether to enter into an exclusive arrangement with them or some other operator or to approach the market more broadly. The resolution of Council and the subsequent response from the CMCA necessitates a decision to be made as to whether Council seeks to exclusively engage with the CMCA to progress that proposal, or test the market.

- 3.13 The benefits of directly engaging with CMCA would be that CMCA have proactively engaged with council through the TVSC, that an approach to market would not be needed which would save time, and that CMCA have extensive and proven experience in managing low cost facilities throughout Australia.
- 3.14 The risks associated with exclusively engaging with CMCA would include potential legal representations from commercial caravan park operators in relation to sole negotiations or competitive neutrality and that council may not secure optimal value and lease conditions due to CMCA's low cost model.
- 3.15 An over-arching consideration is whether there is likely to be any market interest in the operation of an RV Park in Salisbury City Centre beyond the interest expressed by the CMCA. This is also relevant to the commentary in paragraph 3.2 of this report highlighting the absence of reliable data relating to economic impact of such a proposal in this location.

Commercial Road Dump Point

- 3.16 Council has also resolved that staff report back on providing an RV dump point at the Pioneer Park toilets for inclusion in the budget for 2018/2019 and that Council write to CMCA seeking their interest in contributing financially to the dump point. It is inferred that the intention of this motion was to enable the exploration of an alternative option for attracting RV travelers to Salisbury City Centre should the proposal for an RV Park in Pioneer Park not proceed.
- 3.17 The Pioneer Park toilets are located near Commercial Road in Salisbury City Centre near the Water Wheel Museum. The location includes a pull-over area off Commercial Road that accommodates small and large vehicles. This area is currently used as a lay-by for public buses. See Attachment 3 - potential location RV pump point.
- 3.18 Site constraints and opportunities include:

Constraints

- 3.18.1 No viable existing main sewer adjacent the location noting the limitations of the existing public toilet sewer connection outlined below. The closest connection point is near OTR south of the site uphill on Commercial Road.
- 3.18.2 The site does not cater for a gravity sewer system due to the levels and would require a pump and sewer connection or holding tank and collection. A traditional septic system using soakage and/or irrigation is not a viable option in this location due to the proximity of the site to the Little Para River.
- 3.18.3 The closest pumping chamber is located at the nearby toilet block.
- 3.18.4 The nearby toilet block pumping chamber and associated infrastructure will not accommodate additional usage and would require upgrading.
- 3.18.5 Locating the RV dump point immediately next to the toilets would be impractical as there is limited vehicle access and turnaround area.
- 3.18.6 A dump point in close proximity to the pedestrian access track to the Waterwheel Museum could be considered unsightly, and impact adversely on the amenity of the linear park and walking trail.

Opportunities

- 3.18.7 Vehicle access and short term layover for use of a dump point is acceptable based on low usage volumes. However if the RV dump point became a high usage facility a further traffic assessment may be required.
- 3.18.8 The site is located next to Salisbury City Centre providing ready access for RV users to the facilities and services available in the Centre, and the provision of a dump point may attract RV users into the centre (noting however that demand is unable to be demonstrated or quantified at this time). The proposed site is also located close to the Little Para River and the parkland setting it provides.
- 3.19 The cost to connect a dump point with pump to the closest existing sewer main at the top of Commercial Road is estimated to be in excess of \$450,000 and therefore this option has not been investigated any further.
- 3.20 The current toilet block is serviced by a collection chamber, pump and electrical connection, Sewage is pumped from this location periodically to a mains sewer connection uphill on Commercial Road. To utilise this system for an RV dump point the collection chamber, pump and electrical board would require upgrading to cater for additional loads. Contents of the RV dump point would also require pumping up to this location due to grades from the proposed location alongside the Commercial Road access road (See Option B Attachment 4 RV dump point options A & B). This option (Option B) would cost in the order of \$95,000 to establish and approximately \$5,000 per annum for quarterly inspections and pump electrical charges.
- 3.21 Initial investigations indicate that the most cost effective way to deliver a dump point at Pioneer Park is to establish a stand-alone system that is serviced by a holding tank. This would require manual emptying and ongoing inspections at an estimated ongoing cost of \$1,600 per annum. See Option A, Attachment 4 RV dump point options A & B.
- 3.22 Option A would require infrastructure including a dump point unit, holding tank (holding tank requires regular pumping into a collection vehicle and inspections), potable water tap and hose for cleaning the outside of the unit, concrete slab, bollards and signage and an alarm and notification system.
- 3.23 A waste water engineer would be required to design the system and prepare a report to ensure the requirements of the On-Site Waste Water System Code as prescribed under the Public Health Act are met, and approval can be granted by an Environmental Health Officer.
- 3.24 The estimated cost for Option A would be \$50,000 plus the ongoing maintenance estimated at \$1,600 per annum.
- 3.25 It is difficult to determine the usage of the system and therefore the maintenance costs could fluctuate.
- 3.26 CMCA has responded to Council advising they would provide a dump point unit valued at \$1,800. This is the unit cost only and all other costs to install and service the unit would be borne by Council.
- 3.27 OTR on Port Wakefield Rd currently provide a free-to-use dump point which is within 15 minutes drive from Pioneer Park and Salisbury City Centre.

- 3.28 An application for an OTR on the Corner of Waterloo Corner Road and Port Wakefield Road is currently being considered. OTR has indicated the new service station will include a free to use RV dump point. This location is a 10 minute drive from Salisbury City Centre.
- 3.29 OTR has indicated they would be unlikely to pursue an RV dump point at the Commercial Road service station given it is not a major transit style station. In addition they have indicated their current approach is to install them in major new stations where appropriate access, movement and sewage design can be considered during the planning and design stage of the service station.
- 3.30 OTR has experienced inappropriate use of their unlocked free to use dump point on Port Wakefield Road such as the dumping of paint. Inappropriate dumping is a risk Council may face with a new RV dump point at Pioneer Park which would require review of the access and monitoring if issues arose.
- 3.31 In addition, Council currently provides a free to use RV dump point at St Kilda. Access to this dump point is controlled with key access required.
- 3.32 Council may choose to not proceed with providing an RV dump point at Pioneer Park, upon consideration of the information in this report, for the following reasons:
- 3.32.1 The costs of establishing an RV dump point at Pioneer Park are estimated to be \$50,000.
 - 3.32.2 The dump point would require ongoing monitoring and maintenance estimated at \$1,600 per annum. This may fluctuate however in response to unknown usage.
 - 3.32.3 It is difficult to determine how much usage the dump point would attract as a stand-alone RV service facility (ie separate from a RV Park) given its distance from major arterial roads, tourist attractions, or camping sites and RV parks.
 - 3.32.4 Free to use RV dump points are currently available at an OTR service station on Port Wakefield Rd, and the Council facility at St Kilda (with controlled access via a key access system). In addition a new RV dump point at an approved OTR service station on Waterloo Corner Rd/Port Wakefield Road may be established (subject to development timelines) within two years.
 - 3.32.5 The cost estimate has been based on a system that does not require a key or permit to access. If vandalism or inappropriate dumping occurred Council would be required to resolve the issues which may include additional costs for monitoring and surveillance systems and/or a lock and permit system requiring additional administration.
 - 3.32.6 If an RV Park was to proceed a dump point would be provided within the new RV Park. A separate system at the Pioneer Park toilets would not be required.
 - 3.32.7 If an RV Park was not to proceed a stand-alone RV dump point is not recommended due to establishment and ongoing costs, potential ongoing risks, and the relatively close distance of existing free-to-use dump points along Port Wakefield Road as a major transit route.

4. CONCLUSION / PROPOSAL

- 4.1 An RV Park at Pioneer Park would potentially bring some financial benefit to the Salisbury City Centre with tourists spending money at the local shops and services. **However this is not able to be quantified.**
- 4.2 Pioneer Park is owned by the Minister for Sustainability Environment and Conservation. It is unknown whether the proposal would be supported by the Minister.
- 4.3 Installation of a stand-alone RV dump point at Pioneer Park near the toilets would cost in the vicinity of \$50,000 to establish plus \$1,600 per annum for maintenance. The CMCA have indicated an ability to provide \$1,800 towards the costs.
- 4.4 This option would not be required if Council choose to proceed with an RV Park at Pioneer Park. If council choose not proceed further with an RV Park at Pioneer Park this option is available, however it is not recommended for reasons outlined in this report.
- 4.5 The process to establish and operate a RV Park at Pioneer Park includes some risks that may ultimately mean the project does not proceed and that Council need to consider in making a decision on this proposal:
- 4.5.1 There is a significant variation in cost between CMCA's costs estimates and Council's, noting however that the CMCA proposal in its current form proposes that there be no costs to Council in the establishment and operation of the proposed RV Park, based upon a generic cost estimate by CMCA of \$80,000 to establish an RV Park, and \$25-30,000 per annum operating costs.
 - 4.5.2 A low cost "non-commercial" RV Park within Salisbury City Centre would be within close proximity to existing commercial operations. The industry has not undertaken any demand assessment to determine if a low cost facility is required and where such an offering may be best located, or at what time it may be opened to cater for identified demand.
 - 4.5.3 Council will undertake its Green Infrastructure Strategy over the next 18 months which may identify a community use for the Pioneer Park land.
 - 4.5.4 The process to establish an RV Park at Pioneer Park would take 18-24 months and would potentially require significant Council resources including financial and administrative.
 - 4.5.5 Council has received a representation opposing the development of an RV Park at Pioneer Park in the initial stages which suggests there may be ongoing opposition from parties with a commercial interest.

CO-ORDINATION

Officer: EXECUTIVE GROUP
Date: 05.06.18



7.4.2 RV Friendly Infrastructure

File Number: 00.00

INTRODUCTION

This report discusses the growth in recreational vehicles, motorhomes and caravans in Australia over the past decade and the subsequent lobbying for the Shire to become 'RV Friendly' accredited and to provide the associated infrastructure requirements of this traveling market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That;

- 1. the provision of a public dump point in Bright is not supported.***
- 2. a welcome pack be developed for RV, Motorhome and Caravan travellers that will be promoted by the Alpine Shire Council Economic and Community Development department and made available through the Visitor Information Centres and Council operated tourism websites which will outline the location of dump points across the Shire.***

BACKGROUND

Over the past four years the Economic Development Department has been actively lobbied by the Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) and numerous passionate individuals for Council to develop RV friendly overnight parking areas and public dump points.

These lobby groups are concerned that the Alpine Shire Council has been missing out on a significant economic benefit by not providing these services or promoting itself to this growing market.

Similarly passionate lobbying has also been undertaken by the Alpine Shire's 18 registered commercial caravan parks opposing the position of CMCA with their position based on the fact that all Bright based commercial caravan park operators offer dump points to their visitors and adequate services exist in Mount Beauty and Myrtleford.

Camping or caravanning is very popular amongst visitors to the Alpine Shire which is reflected by the 18 commercial caravan/camping parks that operate across the Shire. Supplementing the provision of camping spaces provided for by the commercial caravan/camping park operators are over 21 free camp grounds that operate primarily on state government managed land at least 10km's from the commercial camping grounds.

Becoming an accredited 'RV friendly' town requires infrastructure upgrades including parking and dump points which when completed would require council to manage the ongoing maintenance and cleaning, signage, security and monitoring.



ISSUES

Growing Market

The tourism market is the largest industry in the Alpine Shire and the contribution made by this industry underpins the economic vibrancy of the Shire. The RV, motorhome and caravanning market continues to grow and it is critical that the Alpine Shire develops a reputation as a welcoming community for these travellers. Appropriate infrastructure and marketing investment will contribute to a welcoming environment for this market. The development and availability of a RV welcome pack detailing where services can be accessed including free and commercial camping and dump points would help create a welcoming environment for these travellers.

Free Camping

The provision of free camping is at odds with the commercial park operators who charge fees that cover the costs of providing quality facilities that they are required to provide in order to meet health and safety standards that have been established and enforced by Local and State Government.

Competitive Neutrality

Some States in Australia have fully embraced competitive neutrality which means that if Council was to implement camp grounds or overnight parking it would subject itself to the same regulatory requirements and fee structures that commercial operators are subject to. In meeting the requirements of competitive neutrality Councils would also be required to charge true market rates for the service. This is a key point for the commercial park operators in the Alpine Shire and has been raised by their peak body, Caravan Industry of Australia.

Dump Points

Dump points allow for the easy and sanitary disposal of grey water and mobile toilet waste into the waste treatment system. Many RV, motorhomes and caravans have a cassette arrangement that all current dump points in the commercial caravan parks adequately service. Some larger vehicles have larger waste storage tanks and disposal of grey water and mobile toilet waste occurs via a hose that is attached to the waste storage tank. These vehicles, due to their size have access issues in many older caravan parks that were not designed to cater for such large vehicles. Compounding the access issue is their inability at times to get close enough to the dump point to effectively empty the tank. The CMCA and other lobbyist believe that the most practical solution is for the provision of public dump points that can be driven up alongside in areas such as large public carparks (adjacent to public toilets) or sporting grounds. There is one commercial caravan park in Bright that will accommodate large vehicles.



North East Water

During the consultation phase North East Water notified Council of the requirements for the installation of a dump point. The requirements are,

- Signed agreement from North East Water authorising the installation, and
- Dump point location to be observable and/or monitored to ensure unauthorised discharges to sewer do not occur; and
- Locked when not in use.

These conditions would require Council to locate the dump point in a location where Council staff has the ability to monitor and control and charge for the use of the dump point

CMCA

During the consultation phase of this project CMCA changed their view of requesting free or low cost overnight parking/camping in recognition that there was no support for this from any of the Chambers of Commerce and that there was adequate availability of commercial and free campgrounds within the Shire. Given this collective position there is no requirement to investigate this issue any further.

CMCA maintain that there is a need for Council to provide a free dump point. Their assessment concluded that Bright is the logical location for a public dump point given its proximity to other public dump points, the high volume of tourist traffic and the benefits that could follow in becoming an 'RV Friendly' town.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in this report would not have any policy implications for Council.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

If Council was to support the implementation of a public dump point, Council would incur some minor infrastructure costs of approximately \$3500 for the installation and connection of the dump point to the sewer system. Council officers would be required to investigate the most appropriate location for the dump point and consideration would need to be given to the recurrent costs of maintenance, cleaning, charging for and monitoring of the dump point.

CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation has been undertaken as part of this project. Individual consultation sessions have been held with CMCA and the Bright and Districts Caravan Group, Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty Chambers of Commerce and individual caravan park operators. CMCA, the Chambers of Commerce and the Bright and Districts Caravan Parks Group were given the opportunity to present their position to Council in December 2014.



CONCLUSION

The tourism market is the largest industry in the Alpine Shire and the contribution made by this industry underpins the economic vibrancy of the Shire. The RV, motorhome and caravanning market continues to grow and it is critical that the Alpine Shire develops a reputation as a welcoming community for these travellers. Appropriate infrastructure and marketing investment will contribute to a welcoming environment for this market.

The provision of free or low cost overnight parking areas would be an unnecessary investment on Council's behalf given the volume of high quality commercial and free campsites that are available across the Shire. This position is shared by all parties. Given this collective position there is no requirement to investigate this issue any further.

The provision of a public dump point in Bright would be an unnecessary investment on behalf of Council given the commercial caravan park operators are providing this service as part of their service delivery. The caravan park operators have installed these facilities at their costs and the small amount charged to non-customers is deemed adequate and would reflect the charges Council would need to levy if it was to provide this service. The commercial caravan park operators have health and safety standards that they are required to comply with which ensures a quality experience is being made available to all travellers.

The development and availability of a RV welcome pack detailing where services can be accessed including free and commercial camping and dump points would help create a welcoming environment for these travellers.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the following officers declare that they have no interests to disclose in providing this report:

- Director Sustainable Development
- Manager Community and Economic Development

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 7.4.2 (a) Bright and District Tourist and Holiday Park Group Submission
- 7.4.2 (b) Requirements for Installing a Dump Point – North East Water
- 7.4.2 (c) RV Friendly Towns Guidelines (RVFT Guidelines)

BACKGROUND

The Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), as a not-for-profit national representative member organisation aims to provide a broad range of services to its 70,000 members. This includes a monthly magazine *The Wanderer*, digital platforms including CMCA website, Geowiki, online forums and a members' market and programs such as RV Friendly Towns and RV Friendly Districts.

The RV Friendly program provides locations across Australia for road-based travellers to rest, replenish supplies and dispose of waste responsibly. Low cost overnight camping for these travellers is also important because research shows that commercial caravan parks are not the first preference for CMCA members. CMCA is also working with commercial parks to expand the offering of low cost alternatives within existing parks under the Dollar Wise and RV Friendly Van Park programs.

CMCA RV Parks are the latest in a suite of accommodation options to be provided to the road-based tourist, and CMCA members specifically. RV Parks provide a low-cost option for members in towns on known touring routes. The parks provide a basic camping area for RVs to park for up to 5 nights, a dump point nearby, potable water supply to top up tanks and proximity to a retail centre to replenish supplies. The short-term goal of CMCA is to have 20 RV Parks operational by the end of 2020.

CMCA has already established and opened RV Parks in Ingham QLD, Railton TAS and Euston NSW. Construction of another park in Bundaberg is currently nearing completion for opening in May 2018 and council consent has been gained for a park in Penola SA.

CMCA continues to identify possible locations for further RV Parks and works closely with local councils to achieve the best outcome for both its members and the local communities involved.

ISSUES

Road-based tourism is a growing visitor economy segment with over 650,000 registered vehicles in Australia at present. This number is growing each year and the proportion of self-contained vehicles is increasing over time. As the number of self-contained vehicles increases, so does the need for lower cost (and lower serviced) parks. Those who invest substantial capital into these vehicles do not seek out high cost caravan parks but rather look for low cost alternatives in regions where they have an experience.

Traditional caravan parks are morphing into parks that provide more on-site accommodation to meet the needs of the travelling families, who have less time to stay but desire a higher standard of accommodation.

CMCA RV Parks provide a solution to a gap in the market place, the parks are low cost with minimal improvements, are located on strategic touring routes and provide an opportunity for the road-based traveller to experience the local community as well as mixing with other like-minded people.

The non-commercial RV Parks are operated on a low-cost basis for users, with any operational shortfalls met from CMCA member funds. A CMCA trained volunteer caretaker (custodian) provides oversight at the park, manages access and ensures that the park rules are adhered to.

The parks are installed at no cost to the host Council. A nominal lease for the land is negotiated, rates (if applicable) are paid by CMCA and all maintenance is undertaken at CMCA cost.

Income for the park is generated from overnight fees. Currently most parks operate with a \$3.00 per person per night fee, with a maximum of 5 nights stay at one park in any 21 day period. With a maximum of 50 sites and an assumption of 50% occupancy, the parks generate insufficient income to cover all operational costs.

12.7	FREEDOM CAMPING TRIAL
Division:	Executive Unit
Director:	Anthony Schinck
Author/Position:	Anthony Schinck - Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Council meeting held on 13 August 2014 Council resolved (R262/14) to undertake a 12 month trial of freedom camping at Pioneer Park. The rationale for the trial was based on extended discussions with representatives of the Campervan and Motorhome Club Ltd (CMCA) and Caravan Park owners.

In arguing for freedom camping opportunities it was put forward to Council that there is a perceived lack of suitable product for Recreational Vehicle owners who prefer not to stay in caravan parks as these parks do not meet their needs. The trial was an attempt to balance these requirements with the arguments put forward by the caravan park owners that considered free camping would have a detrimental impact of their commercial viability and potential create a range of difficult compliance problems. In doing so it agreed to undertake the trial according to a number of conditions.

It was agreed that if at any time it could be demonstrated that the trial was resulting in a damaging impact upon the financial viability of caravan parks (or any one of them), or is there was a miss-use of the site the trial may be cancelled. Since this time a substantial submission has been received from the owner operators of two of Ballarat largest privately owned caravan parks providing evidence that the Freedom Camping Trial has resulted in a decrease of site nights and also putting forward that there have been a number of site breaches of the operating conditions. The CMCA have been provided the opportunity to respond to the evidence put forward and also have provided additional information.

This Report puts forward the information received from both the caravan park owners and operators and the CMCA and draws a conclusion that the trial has impacted beyond the conditions establish and recommends to cancel the trial.

Council deferred consideration of this matter in June 2015 in order to hear in detail and consult more fully with each of the parties being the CMMCA and caravan park operators. At Council's Assembly meeting of Wednesday 2 September Council had the opportunity to meet with and hear from each of these parties. Subsequently Council has requested that the matter now be brought back into the Council chamber for consideration.

Public Representations:

Ms. Rosie Dunn made a public representation.
Mr. David Looker made a public representation.
Mr. Grant Tillett made a public representation.
Mr. Keith Moxham made a public representation.
Ms. Adrienne Cove made a public representation.

RESOLUTION:

Council resolves to:

- 1. Undertake further discussions with the Supervisory Team and Campervan and Motorhome Club Ltd on alternative models and locations for operating freedom camping opportunities in Ballarat before**

10. PE.7 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) OVERNIGHT CAR PARK AND DUMP POINT

Officer: **Kylie Lethbridge, Manager Economic Development & Tourism**

Council Plan Relationship:

Relates to priority area:
Enhance the social and economic environment

Synopsis:

At the Ordinary Council meeting in December 2013, Council resolved to designate an area for overnight car parking at the Kyneton Mineral Springs Reserve for caravans and motorhomes. Council also resolved to make Kyneton the RV Friendly Town with a free dump-point at the Kyneton Mineral Springs Reserve.

To support a RV Friendly Shire, long-vehicle parking bays and signage were installed in Woodend, Gisborne, Romsey and Lancefield.

Since that time, the overnight parking and use of the dump-point has grown in popularity which has led to the need for more regular extraction than originally estimated and therefore an increase in cost.

Given the costs for additional extractions which are not budgeted funds, the dump point was closed in July 2017 while a number of options were assessed.

In addition, Regional Development Australia has expressed an interest in supporting Council to investigate the demand for and potential provision of an RV Park/camp ground in the Macedon Ranges which could provide a dump point.

It is concluded that the dump point should be reopened to support tourism. This will require additional funds to be committed to extract the sewage and minimize environmental risk. In parallel, Council officers will commence the RDA funded study into the need for, and potential location of, a new facility. This approach will address the immediate requirements and investigate the longer term options available to Council.

Officer Recommendation:

That Council:

- 1. Commence the RDA funded RV facilities study;**
- 2. Reopen the dump point until the study is completed and all options have been assessed;**
- 3. Allocate an additional \$8,000 this financial year to extract and maintain the dump point; and**

**10. PE.7 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) OVERNIGHT CAR PARK
AND DUMP POINT**

- 4. Communicate outcomes of this report broadly to the CMCA,
industry stakeholders and community.**

10. PE.7 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) OVERNIGHT CAR PARK AND DUMP POINT (Continued)

Background

The RV Friendly program is an initiative of the Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) which has 70,000 members.

According to the CMCA, there's an estimated 620,000 registered RV's in Australia with RV tourism having significant benefits to the economy.

For a town to be classified as a RV Friendly Town it must meet the following guidelines:

- ✓ 48 hour parking for RV's within 5km's of the town;
- ✓ Free dump-point;
- ✓ Medical and pharmacy (24 hours);
- ✓ Vehicle repairs;
- ✓ Fresh groceries, supermarket etc;
- ✓ Parking within town centre for RV's – close to shops.

The development of opportunities associated with RV's was an action in the Macedon Ranges Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2011-2016.

The opportunity was given priority as Council had only just made the decision to close the Kyneton Caravan Park and further investigation was recommended to fill the gap in local facilities.

Since then the demand for these facilities has increased, the Lancefield Caravan Park has closed, the trend in "RV-ing" has changed and the increase in festivals and events has illustrated the need to provide for temporary camping in the shire.

To pursue the opportunities presented, Officers worked with our region's CMCA representative to identify possible locations for an RV Friendly town and supporting facilities in the shire.

A number of options were investigated in close consultation with relevant businesses that may have been impacted e.g. existing caravan parks.

After carefully considering the options, Council decided that:

1. Kyneton would be the RV Friendly Town and the Mineral Springs Reserve recommended as the designated area for overnight camping (up to 48 hours), and a dump-point.
2. To support an RV Friendly Shire, long-vehicle parking bays and signage were installed in Woodend, Gisborne, and Romsey and Lancefield.

Kyneton was then declared the 200th RV Friendly Town by the CMCA and a celebration and media launch was held at the Kyneton Visitor Information Centre on 11 September 2014.

10. PE.7 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) OVERNIGHT CAR PARK AND DUMP POINT (Continued)

Since that time, the overnight parking and use of the dump-point has grown in popularity which has led to the need for more regular extraction than originally estimated and therefore an increase in cost.

Given the costs for additional extractions are not budgeted funds, the dump-point was closed in July 2017 while a number of options were assessed, which are detailed below:

Option one

- Reopen the dump point in its current location and allocate \$15,000 per annum for pump outs and maintenance.
- The Mineral Springs has been included in the Safer Communities funding application to install CCTV cameras so any matters of vandalism or inappropriate use can be monitored.
- Upgrading the infrastructure at the Kyneton Mineral Springs Reserve to a larger, more sophisticated treatment facility would not be approved according to the current EPA Code of Practice conditions.

Option two

- Leave the over-night parking at the Mineral Springs and relocate the dump-point.
- Several options that have a direct connection to reticulated sewerage have been identified for possible relocation of dump-point. These include:
 - The Visitor Information Centre.
 - Kyneton Showgrounds.
 - Kyneton Saleyards.
 - Quarry Reserve.
- Cost of relocating the dump-point is estimated at \$20,000, depending on the site however all require further investigation and discussions with stakeholders and residents.

Option three

- Since scoping the options noted above, discussions have been held with Regional Development Australia regarding funding an investigation into all opportunities for the establishment of an RV Park/ camp ground e.g. one facility that provides for RV's, caravans, glamping etc.
- This study is expected to be finalised by May 2018 and will provide options and advice in regard to location, size, scale and type of facility required to meet current and future demands, including the dump-point.

Conclusion

The aim of the RV Friendly program is to generate broader economic benefit to the region. Based on current research, CMCA members spend an average of \$770 per week when travelling.

**10. PE.7 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) OVERNIGHT CAR PARK
AND DUMP POINT (Continued)**

While the popularity of the RV Friendly facilities at the Kyneton Mineral Springs has led to an increase in costs for maintenance and extraction, it has demonstrated that the site is well accessed by RV visitors to our region.

The options as outlined above, including the possible relocation of the dump-point, have been undertaken in consultation with relevant Council departments and our region's CMCA representative.

It is concluded that the dump point should be reopened to support tourism. This will require additional funds to be committed to extract the sewage and minimize environmental risk. In parallel, Council officers will commence the RDA funded study into the need for, and potential location of, a new facility. This approach will address the immediate requirements and investigate the longer term options available to Council.



8.2.2 Petition - Provision of a Public Dump Point in Bright

File Number: 1615.00

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to inform Council and respond to a petition in support of the provision of a public dump point in Bright.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

- 1. Does not support the provision of a public dump point on public land in Bright;*
- 2. Commits to upgrade the existing dump point at the Myrtleford Holiday Park to meet industry best practice;*
- 3. Continues to facilitate paid public access to the dump point at the Myrtleford Holiday Park;*
- 4. Investigates the provision of a dump point to be co-located with new amenities in Tawonga South; and*
- 5. Advises the main proponent of the petition of Council's decision.*

BACKGROUND

A petition in support of the provision of a public dump point in Bright was tabled at the March 2018 Ordinary Council Meeting.

The petition contains 2,056 signatures collected between September 2015 and early 2018 and states:

Bright in North-East Victoria is looking for your support to establish a public dump point that can be used by motorhomers and caravaners visiting the area. There are no dump points in the area suitable for large RV's in any of the caravan parks.

Signatories to the petition provided a postcode. Of the 2056 signatories to the petition, 154 provided a postcode in Alpine Shire.

ISSUES

Free camping

Council is supportive of free camping within designated free camping areas. To support the sustainable use of these designated free camping areas by responsible campers, as the preferred option Council endorses the provision of dump points within or adjacent to tourist parks on a fee-for-service basis. Commercial tourist park operators charge fees that cover the costs of providing quality facilities which meet health and safety standards that have been established and are enforced by State and Local Government.



Adequacy of existing dump point facilities in Alpine Shire

In the vicinity of both Bright and Myrtleford the provision of dump points which are accessible to the general public is sufficient to cater to the demand from the significant majority of RV users, even during peak tourist periods. Tourist park operators have advised that they do not deny members of the public access to their dump points, even during busy periods. During busy periods there may be delays, or users with portable waste tanks may be required to park a short distance from the dump point and wheel their portable cassette to the dump point. Whilst acknowledged to be inconvenient, this reflects the reality of travelling to a popular tourist destination during a peak visitor period when infrastructure across the Shire is under heavy demand.

The only users which appear poorly catered to across Alpine Shire are those operating very large RVs with integrated waste tanks which require emptying through a hose, and need to park immediately adjacent to a dump point to dispose of waste. These vehicles can be up to 19.5m in length, with a turning circle up to 35m. The free public dump point in Dinner Plain can accommodate these vehicles, however the tourist parks were generally not designed for these large RVs. Due to the restricted space, tight corners and obstructions such as trees and buildings, operators of these vehicles can find accessing existing tourist park dump points challenging.

Upgrading existing tourist park dump points to the standard required to accommodate very large RVs may result in the loss of camping sites for park guests. This would be unattractive for commercial park operators, particularly considering the limited additional income which would result from very large RVs being able to access their upgraded dump point on a fee-per-use basis.

Council is the Committee of Management for the Myrtleford Holiday Park. It has an existing dump point but does not meet industry best practice. Tenders have recently been sought for the lease of the Park to commercial operators, and the opportunity exists to negotiate into a lease agreement defined capital upgrades to the park infrastructure, as well as specific terms under which the park is to be operated. Given this opportunity and the current gap in the provision of dump points catering for very large RVs, it is recommended that Council negotiates into any future lease agreement an upgrade of the existing dump point to industry best practice, and includes in the lease agreement the requirement to maintain ongoing paid public access to the dump point. This would provide a dump point publicly accessible to all RVs located close to the northern entry / exit points into Alpine Shire, to complement the existing public dump point in Dinner Plain near the southern entry / exit point into the Shire. In the event that the Myrtleford Holiday Park is not leased, Council should consider implementing the proposed upgrades as part of its annual capital works program.

There are no dump points in the Kiewa Valley which are available to the general public. Whilst the availability of free camping sites in the Kiewa Valley is limited and demand for a dump point accessible to the general public is low, given the growth in the RV market it is recommended to investigate opportunities to co-locate a dump point with new amenities currently being considered for Tawonga South.



Operational considerations

North East Water has provided a standard dump point agreement which owners/occupiers are required to sign in order to secure permission to connect to the North East Water sewerage infrastructure (attachment 1). The agreement includes the following within the 'conditions to connect':

- The occupier must maintain a log book to record details of customers discharging to the dump point. Upon request, this log book must be made available to the Corporation.
- The dump point is managed/supervised during daylight hours to ensure only domestic type waste is discharged (i.e. caravan black/grey water – caravan toilet, shower and kitchen wastewater) and securely locked after hours at all times.

These requirements impose an operational cost on the owner of the facilities. The most cost-effective way in which to implement a new dump point complying with these requirements is to co-locate with existing facilities which are already managed / supervised during daylight hours. Council endorses the provision of dump points within or adjacent to tourist parks with public access on a fee-for-service basis, where responsibility for meeting the requirements of North East Water sits with the tourist park operator.

Implementing a new dump point based on use of a septic tank rather than connection to existing sewerage infrastructure would generally be less cost-effective. The capital cost to install facilities, and the operational costs associated with managing/supervising the operation and periodic emptying and disposal of waste, would exceed that of a system connected to existing sewerage infrastructure.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report and the recommendation are in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1989*.

This report is consistent with the following strategic objective in the Council Plan 2017-2021:

Strategic objective 7: A thriving and connected community.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

An upgrade to the dump point in the Myrtleford Holiday Park to meet industry best standards has not been scoped, however would be less than the estimated \$15,000 cost to implement a new dump point meeting industry best practice. In the event that this capital investment is negotiated into the conditions of a Holiday Park lease and the project subsequently delivered by the new operators, the capital and ongoing operational cost would be reflected in the lease income received from the park operators, rather than as a direct cost to Council. In the event that Council were to deliver the upgrade, provision would need to be made in a future capital works budget.

The cost to implement a new dump point in Tawonga South would be determined when access to suitable land has been secured to establish new amenities, and the project is scoped in detail.



CONSULTATION

The proponent of the petition was consulted to discuss the background to the petition.

Consultation was carried out with tourist park operators with dump points located in their parks. There are eleven dump points within Alpine Shire, with an additional dump point planned for installation in the Big4 Porepunkah Caravan Park during 2018. One free public dump point is located in Dinner Plain, and five dump points located in tourist parks are available for public use for a fee of \$5.00.

Table 1: Dump points in Alpine Shire

Name	Location	Access	Charge to public
Big4 Bright Holiday Park	Bright	Guests + public	\$5.00
Bright Pine Valley Tourist Park	Bright	Guests + public	\$5.00
Bright Holiday Park	Bright	Guests + public	\$5.00
Myrtleford Holiday Park	Myrtleford	Guests + public	\$5.00
Arderns Caravan Park	Myrtleford	Guests + public	\$5.00
Big4 Porepunkah Holiday Park	Porepunkah	Guests + public (planned)	\$5.00 (planned)
Dinner Plain Scrubbers End	Dinner Plain	Public	Free
Bright Riverside Holiday Park	Bright	Guests only	-
Riverview Caravan Park	Bright	Guests only	-
Bright Pines Holiday Park	Bright	Guests only	-
Bright Freeburgh Caravan Park	Freeburgh	Guests only	-
The Park Mount Beauty	Tawonga South	Guests only	-

CONCLUSION

A petition with 2,056 signatures has been received in support of the provision of a public dump point in Bright. Following review of the current provision of dump points across Alpine Shire, and an assessment of the operational considerations associated with the installation and operation of a public dump point, the provision of a public dump point in Bright is not supported. Considering the adequacy of existing dump points across Alpine Shire, recommendations have been put forward to upgrade the dump point in the Myrtleford Holiday Park, and to investigate the provision of a dump point in Tawonga South.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under Section 80C of the *Local Government Act 1989*, the following officers declare that they have no interests to disclose in providing this report.

- Chief Executive Officer
- Director Assets

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 8.2.2(a) Petition cover letter - public dump point
- 8.2.2(b) North East Water dump point agreement



Letters to the editor

IT'S all very well for the council to take a half-page advertisement in the local paper (paid for by ratepayers) to tell everyone what the people using the "council rest area" think about it.

But what about asking the town residents and ratepayers and the paying tourists what they think about the "council rest area"?

Of course if you ask people who have stayed in the middle of town for \$5 if they think the rest area is good they are going to say yes!

I am the owner of the park immediately next to this "rest area" and since no one from the council has thought to ask me, let me tell you what tourists paying to stay in my park think about it:

"This free camp pollutes the environment. I have seen people emptying their waste buckets in the bushes and using the bush land as a toilet."

"Rest area is not policed, it is in the centre of town and degrades the township and surrounding area."

is not properly policed, we have had a swag and several combi vans over the last week and many caravans that have no provision for waste water.

The preferred place for people to stop is as near as possible to my park fence even, though a sign directs them not to park in this area. There is a sign which points out they are not to park near my fence, but people continue to park along my fence - that should be monitored and enforced.

This is not a free camp as it is constantly being called. It may be free (or very low cost) to the people who stop there, but it is certainly not free to the ratepayers of Cooktown.

It costs them in monetary terms and it costs them in terms of what the town looks like with vehicles strung out through their town parked along the side of Adelaide Street in full view with their washing hanging out

major change that I can see is the introduction of man and his search for money without any concerns for the environment.

What I am getting at in this whinge, is that when you burn the countryside

I don't really know what happens, but as soon as it stops raining up here and the grass dries out, people want to start burning everything. Who authorises this?

Do the local inhabitants have any say in this? Won't

When was the last wildfire in this area? When and

and their tables and chairs spread along the town's open spaces.

Just in rubbish removal alone, the ratepayers are looking at funding the removal of five bins a day.

At \$13.67 a bin, that is about \$68 per day. The rubbish truck comes round every day.

Is it costing ratepayers \$68 a day, seven days a week for rubbish?

Water is free to people stopping here, and no charge is made for sewerage - unlike the Cooktown ratepayers who pay for every service, whether they want it or not

and pay for these services to be provided to people using the council rest area.

Why is this council "rest area" in the middle of town? All other towns that provide free camping do so on the outskirts of a town.

There are businesses in town who believe their takings have increased because of this rest area in town.

We will find - surprise surprise - that the council considers this to be a huge success and we will have many more vehicles next year with more pollution, expense and loss of the open

water that falls on their property. I think all landowners have a responsibility to make every effort to contain all

Well, the free camping is not overflow it is at the expense of the caravan parks so they are not necessarily extra people.

Maybe these businesses would like to think about reducing their prices so that people have more money available to pay to stop at a van park?

Or think about how they would feel if the council, who don't need to do proper costings, let alone make a profit, set up a fishing tour at the boat ramp for a fraction of what they charge, or set up a cafe in the middle of town charging 50c for a coffee?

So, if you don't want this free camping in the middle of town to continue, make your views known otherwise next year.

We will find - surprise surprise - that the council considers this to be a huge success and we will have many more vehicles next year with more pollution, expense and loss of the open

water that falls on their property. I think all landowners have a responsibility to make every effort to contain all

every effort to contain all

space in town.

Elizabeth Peck
Cooktown Orchid
Travellers Park

Cooktown RSL Memorial Club
INCORPORATED
127 Charlotte St, Cooktown



Ph: 4069 5780 • Fax: 4069 6080
Email: cooktown.rsl@bigpond.com

Friday Nights

- Relax, enjoy a cold beer in airconditioned comfort
- Friday Night Courtesy Bus
- Bar Snacks, 5pm • Pokies
- Plus... Members Draw (you must be here to win)

This week: \$1200!
Drawn between 7.30pm - 8.30pm.

• Cooktown Amateur Turf Club Raffles here on Friday night! Great prizes.

Meals are back....

★ Best value in town!

KENO IS HERE!

Continued Page 4 >>

Cooktown Bowls Club

Warren Entsch MP would welcome any Delegations at the Bowls Club this Saturday from 2pm. Please contact the