



**AGENDA APPENDIX**  
**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday 28 May 2014**

AGENDA ITEM FOR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTION TO COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM DUE TO DOCUMENT SIZE.

THE ITEM IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE COUNCIL WEBSITE OR BY CONTACTING COUNCIL ON 03 5662 9200.

**E.1 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE (RV) STRATEGY**

Appendix 1 – Recreational Vehicle Strategy 2014

# Recreational Vehicle RV Strategy 2014



*South Gippsland  
Shire Council*





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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Recreational Vehicle (RV) Strategy sets an objective to promote South Gippsland Shire as an attractive region for Recreational Vehicle (RV – self-contained caravan and motorhome) users, by maximising marketing potential and economic return to local businesses and the community, protecting and preserving the environment and ensuring effective site management of Council assets.

Currently no South Gippsland town is equipped to achieve RV Friendly Town™ status due to the inability to meet certain essential criteria outlined by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA). These essential criteria include issues such as lack of free overnight parking and of accessible free dump points.

However, South Gippsland Shire can meet the objective of encouraging and managing visitation of RV users by increasing local infrastructure including developing additional signage, long vehicle parking and more options for free / low cost overnight stays. By adopting a Shire-wide approach, support can also be given to local commercial caravan parks and tourist operators to adequately satisfy the needs of the growing RV, caravan and camping market.

All research and indicators are demonstrating a large increase in the RV market through registrations and activity, especially in the growing retired baby boomer / self-superannuated sector. These indicators will have a significant effect on tourism in South Gippsland as the market for RV users increases. This strategy aims to maximise the benefits of this growing market through a co-operative and strategic approach with local businesses and the community.

This Recreational Vehicle (RV) Strategy supports the needs of caravan/ tourist park operators which service the needs of the traditional caravan/camping market across the shire. A number of free/low cost camping sites exist in the shire including the:

- Loch Recreation Reserve,
- Shallow Inlet Camping Ground,
- Bear Gully Camping Area within Cape Liptrap Coastal Park,
- Turtons Creek Camping Area within Turtons Creek Scenic Reserve,
- Council managed Bass Valley Camping Ground and Franklin River Reserve.

These areas are heavily utilised; particularly over the summer months and long weekends, when other commercial caravan parks are at full capacity.

By analysing the current RV market within South Gippsland, and identifying opportunities for increased growth of this sector, a series of actions have been identified.

These actions, aligning to objectives in the 2013-2017 Council Plan and the current Draft Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, will continue to support existing caravan park operators whilst growing the local RV market throughout the Shire.

## 2 INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

The caravan and camping market has evolved considerably over recent years and the availability of new self-contained recreational vehicles (RVs) and the increased domestic travel of 'grey nomads' has led to a change in the traditional caravan and camping market. Whilst the traditional market mainly utilises caravan and camping parks, the increase in RVs results in a trend towards low cost/free locations for overnight stays. RV users are self-contained, self-sufficient and do not require external toilet, shower and BBQ facilities.

### 2.1 Traditional Caravan and Camping Market

The caravan and camping market is guided by associations including the Victorian Caravan Parks Association, Caravan RV & Accommodation Industry of Australia (CRVA), and other industry bodies.

The traditional caravan and camping market includes:

- Self-contained vehicles (caravans, campervans and motorhomes)
- Non-self-contained vehicles (caravan, campervans and motorhomes)
- Tents

This market generally seeks full facilities including water, toilet, power and BBQ facilities each night in commercial caravan and camping grounds though many will accept lower service levels for benefits such as unique locations and between desirable travel destinations.

Tourism Victoria Caravan and Camping market profile year ending June 2013 states, 'Victoria received 2.3 million domestic overnight caravan and camping visitors for the year ending June 2013, accounting for an estimated 9.6 million visitor nights. Intrastate visitors were the key market, accounting for 85% of total domestic visitors. 71% of visitors to and within Victoria are aged between 25-64 years'.

The Prom Country Economic Impact and Visitor Profile 2013 outlines '44% of summer and 23% of autumn visitors to South Gippsland choose to stay in camping and caravan accommodation, whilst this is not a preferred option for most during the winter period.

### 2.2 Recreational Vehicle Market

The pure RV market refers to self-contained caravans, campervans and motorhomes which do not necessarily require the services provided by caravan or holiday parks. This market enjoys the freedom of stopping whenever and wherever they want and are capable of being independent for up to a week, requiring only a dump point, water and a place to stop.

Research regarding the niche RV sector is primarily collected by the CMCA compared to the overall caravan and camping sector which is documented through Tourism Research Australia.

The average weekly spends of RV tourists when travelling is \$500. This is generally spent on:

- Fuel \$210
- Expenses \$160
- Repairs/maintenance \$25
- Site fees \$51
- Other \$46

When simply stopped at a rest area, 78% will make purchases and spend around \$80. When staying or touring a region they are most likely to make a purchase on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> nights.

33% of CMCA members predominantly stay in caravan parks, 51% stay at a mixture of no frills sites and caravan parks, with the remaining 16% always staying at a no frills site and never at a caravan park.



*A self-contained recreational vehicle*

## 2.3 Recreational Vehicle Schemes

Recreational Vehicle Schemes are initiatives of the Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA) aimed at assisting regional areas to attract RV tourists. They identify common criteria which appeal to the RV market, encouraging short stays. These schemes are categorised as follows:

### 1. *RV Friendly Town™*

There are a number of criteria considered by CMCA when assessing the application for an RV Friendly Town™:

#### Essential Criteria

- Provision of appropriate parking within the town centre, including access to a general shopping area with groceries or fresh produce.
- Provision of short term (24/48 hour) parking for self-contained vehicles within the town precinct.
- Access to potable water.
- Access to a free dump point within the town precinct.

Although not essential, it is important to note that long term parking for self-contained vehicles, access to medical facilities and access to a pharmacy, are recommended when applying for RV Friendly Town™ status. The CMCA would provide the Council with two signs advertising the RV Friendly Town™ and promotion of the town on the Club website (subject to terms and conditions).

### 2. *RV Friendly Destination™- businesses such as wineries, cheese factories, specialist farms, hotels, clubs etc*

There are a number of criteria considered by CMCA when assessing the application for RV Friendly Destination™ status.

#### Essential Criteria

- A parking area where all size RVs are able to gain access and manoeuvre
- Provide overnight parking for self-contained vehicles

CMCA will offer RV Friendly Destinations™ specified signage at cost price plus promotion of the destination on the Club website (subject to terms and conditions).

Café Escargot in Mirboo North is the only RV Friendly Destination™ in South Gippsland currently advertised on the CMCA website, however with the appropriate Council permits in place, this destination and other businesses could be encouraged to enquire about joining this scheme.

### 3. *Leave No Trace<sup>R</sup>*

The CMCA has created a Self-Containment Code of Conduct for RV users called the Leave No Trace Scheme® which promotes environmentally responsible camping. This demonstrates to Councils that RV self-contained vehicles need not have a negative impact of a site, even if it has no facilities. Under this scheme, RV users adhere to strict guidelines relating to the vehicle's capacity for holding fresh, grey and black water allowing Councils to give access to controlled areas for RV self-contained users.



### 3 CURRENT SITUATION IN SOUTH GIPPSLAND

The South Gippsland Shire currently offers commercial caravan/camping parks as well as limited free/ low cost camping areas to cater for the RV market.

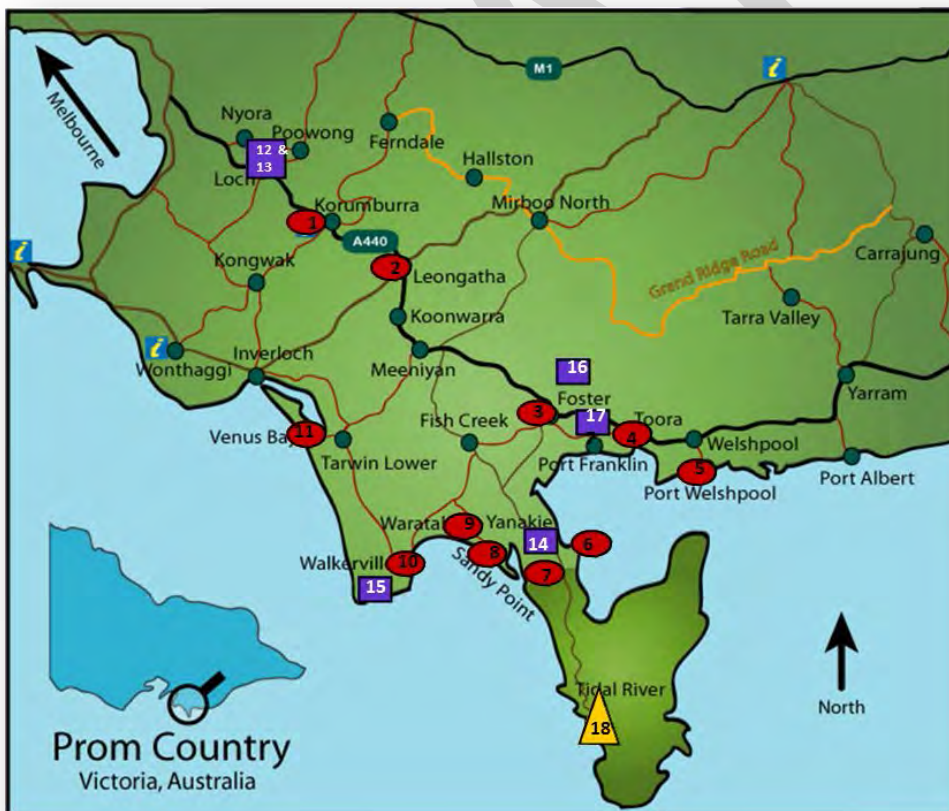
#### 3.1 Existing Caravan Parks and Low Cost/ Free Locations in South Gippsland

The map below outlines the location of all caravan parks and low cost/ free locations in South Gippsland.

**● Caravan Parks**

**■ Free/Low Cost Locations**

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Korumburra Tourist Park        | 12. Bass Valley Camping Ground                                     |
| 2. Leongatha Caravan Park         | 13. Loch Recreation Reserve  |
| 3. Prom Central Caravan Park      | 14. Shallow Inlet Camping Reserve                                  |
| 4. Toora Tourist Park             | 15. Bear Gully Camping Area within Cape Liptrap Coastal Park.*     |
| 5. Long Jetty Caravan Park        | 16. Turtons Creek Camping Area within Turtons Creek Scenic Reserve |
| 6. Yanakie Caravan Park           | 17. Franklin River Reserve   |
| 7. Shallow Inlet Caravan Park     |  |
| 8. Sandy Point Holiday Park       |  |
| 9. Waratah Bay Caravan Park       | <b>▲ National Park Camping</b>                                     |
| 10. Walkerville Foreshore Reserve | 18. Wilsons Promontory NP  |
| 11. Venus Bay Caravan Park        |  |



\* Please note – Bear Gully Camping Area will be a fee for service site within the implementation of the Victorian Government Regulatory Impact Statement, commencing 1 July 2014.

## 3.2 Current unauthorised sites

There are areas where camping occurs on an ad hoc basis. Some sites include:

- Coal Creek Community Park and Museum car park
- Koonwarra Recreation Reserve
- Yanakie Hall
- Agnes River wayside stop
- Foster North Lookout
- Tarwin River roadside, Tarwin Lower
- Mossvale Park

Increasing the awareness of current low/free cost sites locations and developing additional sites will assist to limit inappropriate usage and direct RV's to acceptable overnight locations.

Property Name	Rubbish Bins	Toilets	Water available	No camping signage erected
Coal Creek car park	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Koonwarra Recreation Reserve	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Yanakie Hall	Yes	Yes	No	No
Agnes River wayside stop	No	No	No	No
Foster North Lookout	Yes	No	No	Yes
Tarwin River	No	No	No	Yes
Mossvale Park	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

## 3.3 Authorised Sites

The low cost/free sites generally attract both self-contained and non-self-contained vehicles. These sites are heavily utilised between November and April as well as long weekends. The table below identifies the facilities at each of these locations:

Property Name	Rubbish Bins	Toilets	Water available
Bass Valley Camping Ground	No	Yes	No
Bear Gully Camping Reserve within Cape Liptrap Coastal Park	No	Yes	No
Franklin River Reserve	Yes	Yes	No
Loch Recreation Reserve	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shallow Inlet Camping Reserve	Yes	Yes	Yes
Turtons Creek Camping Area within Turtons Creek Scenic Reserve	No	No	No

*From time to time, the Loch, Korumburra and Mirboo North communities book out their facilities to the occasional club allowing access to their amenities.*

**SUMMARY:** Information regarding authorised site locations, facilities and regulations will be communicated through, however not limited to signage, the Visitor Information Centre network, relevant websites, apps and printed material. Detailed signage will inform visitors to the Shire about:

- Length of stay
- Fire restrictions
- Emergency contact numbers
- Facilities close by

### 3.4 Current Council Managed Sites

Below is an assessment of the current sites which are managed by South Gippsland Shire Council.

#### FRANKLIN RIVER RESERVE: Managed by South Gippsland Shire

*The approximate budgeted annual cost to manage Franklin River Reserve is: \$30,000 p/a at 2013 with increase use this may require more extensive maintenance.*

Criteria	Comment
Located in a town that does not feature a caravan park	Toora Tourist Park is located 3km from the reserve Neighbouring Foster and Port Welshpool also contain caravan parks
Dump point located in the town or nearby	Located in neighbouring commercial caravan/ tourist parks
Parking and access for larger vehicles	Sufficient space, though no established bays to minimise the impact on the environment
Safety from passing traffic	Located off the main road
Limited intrusion to private dwelling	No adjacent dwellings
Length of stay-maximum 48 hour	Length of stay currently unregulated
Approval of the land manager	Council manages the site
Compliant with a risk assessment	Periodic Risk assessment required
Site accessibility for large vehicles	Clear entrance and exit to the site
Appropriate site safety	Determined through site maintenance plan
Ability to generate economic return	Economic return likely through use of nearby towns



*Lengthy stays and fires not in provided fire places are management issues of Franklin River Reserve*

#### SUMMARY

Franklin River Reserve is located close to the townships of Toora and Foster, and although this site is not within a town itself, it does have a benefit to businesses in nearby townships. A popular reserve that can be further enhanced with informative signage complete with emergency contacts will ensure visitors commit to the regulations of the site.

## BASS VALLEY CAMPING GROUND: Managed by South Gippsland Shire Council

The approximate budgeted annual cost to manage Bass Valley Camping Ground is: \$15,000 p/a at 2013 with increase use this may require more extensive maintenance.

Criteria	Comment
Located in a town that does not feature a caravan park	Poowong and Loch do not contain caravan parks
Dump point located in the town or nearby	In Korumburra
Parking and access for larger vehicles	No established parking bays to minimise the impact on the environment
Safety from passing traffic	Located off the main road
Limited intrusion to private dwelling	No adjacent dwellings
Length of stay maximum 48 hour	Length of stay unregulated
Approval of the land manager	Council manages the site
Compliant with a risk assessment	Periodic risk assessment required
Site accessibility for large vehicles	Clear entrance and exit to the site
Appropriate site safety	Determined through site maintenance plan
Ability to generate economic return	Economic return likely through use of nearby towns



### SUMMARY

A small camping ground, Bass Valley Camping Ground has been in operation as a Council managed campsite since the 1950's. Extensive signage to and within this campground is recommended, ensuring that RV users continue to add benefit to the local area.

## 3.5 Dump Points

A Motorhome Dump Point is a properly designed facility intended to receive the discharge of wastewater from any holding tank or similar device installed in any RV. Installed as low to the ground as possible, they can allow access to large vehicles up to 20 metres in length. They are an essential aspect of the RV market allowing tourists to discharge wastewater in an acceptable manner to an approved disposal system.

### 3.5.1 Dump Point Locations in South Gippsland

The dump stations situated within South Gippsland are all 'privately owned', with the exception of Wilsons Promontory's Tidal River, managed by Parks Victoria and Long Jetty Caravan Park, managed by South Gippsland Shire Council.

Below is a list of current dump point locations:



#### South Gippsland Dump Point Locations

1. Korumburra Recreation Reserve—Free. Refundable key deposit
2. Leongatha Apex Caravan Park—Free for guests. Fees apply to the public
3. BP service station Mirboo North—Fees apply
4. Prom Central Caravan Park, Foster---Free for guests. Fees apply to the public
5. Toora Tourist Park—Free for guests. Fees apply to the public
6. Long Jetty Caravan Park Port Welshpool—Free for guests. Fees apply to the public
7. Venus Bay Caravan Park—Free for guests. Fees apply to the public
8. Tidal River—Free for guests

#### Potential Dump Point Location

9. Meeniyah township

## ■ Neighbouring Councils Dump Point Locations

10. Amaze N Things Holiday Park, Cowes—Available for guests only
11. Anchor Belle Holiday Park, Cowes—Available for guests, fee for general public
12. Beach Park Tourist Park, Cowes—Available for guests only
13. Big 4 Holiday Park, Inverloch—Available for guests only
14. Mollers Caravan Park, Inverloch—Available for guests only
15. Cape Paterson Caravan Park—Available for guests only
16. The Watertower, Port Albert—Available to the general public



**SUMMARY:** The approximate cost to install a dump point is \$5000-\$6000. After installation the running costs are minimal and relate to normal cleaning and servicing. The CMCA /KEA Campers Dump Point Subsidy Scheme provide approved applicants a Gough Plastics 'Dump Ezy' Dump Point for installation at a suitable location. The dump point must be free of charge to the public and accessible (at minimum) during daylight hours and display a plaque acknowledging the contribution of CMCA and KEA Campers. Korumburra and District Agricultural & Pastoral society were recipients of this scheme. Currently, the details of dump points in Korumburra and Mirboo North are listed on the CMCA website for RV users to access.

Council supports the Meeniyan community in its aims to install a public dump point.

Council encourages community groups to contact the appropriate organisations and land owners to establish if a proposed dump point in their community can be facilitated. Council will assist community groups in providing the relevant information required if they seek to install a dump point.

### 3.6 Long Vehicle Parking in Major Towns

Long vehicle parking bays are significantly longer than a regular vehicle bay. These bays allow parking of caravans, boats and longer vehicles which are otherwise difficult to accommodate. For a town to gain an economic return from the RV market, it is essential that long vehicle parking is located close to the town retail precinct.

Korumburra, Leongatha and Mirboo North are some of the towns in South Gippsland to have designated long vehicle parking bays, though many smaller towns and settlements can accommodate long vehicles.

#### 3.6.1 Designated Long Vehicle Parking

Parking which is line-marked in a designated area ensuring availability to long vehicles in centrally located areas providing easy access to the town shopping precinct and amenities. Directional and site signage, including a 2 hour time limit to be installed.

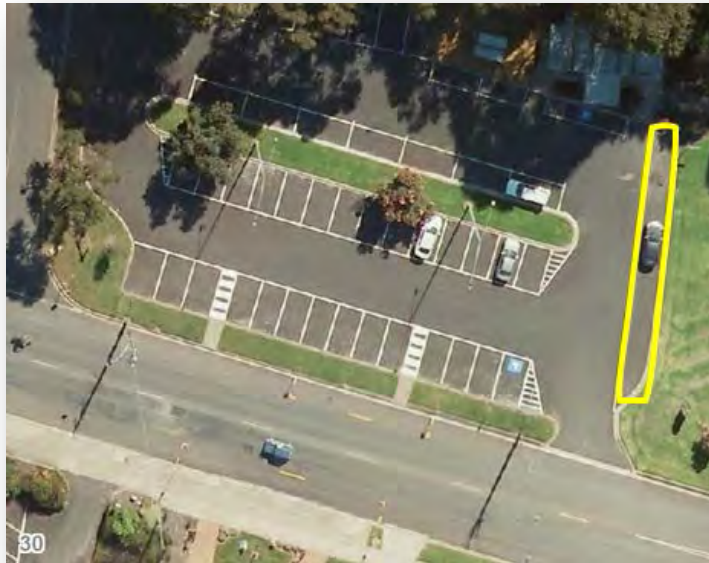
**KORUMBURRA:** Located in Little Commercial Street. Directional signage from Commercial St (South Gippsland Hwy), King St and Radovick St has been installed.



**TOORA:** Located on Toora Jetty Road.



**MIRBOO NORTH:** Located on the Corner of Baths Road and Ridgeway in the Baromi Park car park opposite the former Shire Hall.



**LEONGATHA:** Located on the South Gippsland Highway wayside stop, opposite the Leongatha Police Station.





Parking also located along the western side of Anderson Street from Alison Street to Smith Street.



**FOSTER:** Located on Main Street opposite the Foster Historical Museum with easy access to the Visitor Information Centre, town amenities and the retail precinct.



### 3.6.2 Available Long Vehicle Parking

Parking which is not line-marked however is usually within easy access to the town shopping precinct and amenities. These will be line marked and/or signposted where appropriate and directional signage to be installed.

**MEENIYAN:** Adjacent to the Great Southern Rail Trail on Tompkins Road, this gravel road is often utilised for its convenience to the retail precinct and town amenities.



**FISH CREEK:** Located beside the Great Southern Rail Trail, providing a central access point to town amenities and the retail precinct.



**POOWONG:** Located along Nyora Road, there are some opportunities for long vehicles to park.



### 3.7 Potential and identified sites

A number of sites have been identified as having potential to raise the profile of South Gippsland as an accessible tourist location with excellent amenities and facilities. Continued study and consultation is required to ensure that these and other potential sites will add economic benefit to the Shire whilst having minimum environmental impact.

#### 3.7.1 Potential Long Vehicle Parking

**LEONGATHA:** By increasing long vehicle parking along Smith Street, RV users are a short walking distance to public amenities and the retail precinct.



FOSTER: McDonald Street and Court Street were recommended as long vehicle parking locations through the community consultation period. These sites have been included in the Foster Parking Study and will be presented to the community for further consultation and approval.

Court Street, Foster



McDonald Street, Foster



### 3.7.2 Potential Dump Point

MEENIYAN: Council supports the Meeniyán community in its aims to install a dump point. Negotiation and final approvals with key stakeholders is currently in progress.

### 3.7.3 Potential Free/ Low Cost Camping

Council has investigated potential free/low cost overnight sites in South Gippsland. Research has included investigating potential RV sites on Crown land and discussing this opportunity with the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI).

It is the departments view that it is inappropriate for facilities supporting RV campervans to be placed on Crown lands that are directly managed by DEPI or a volunteer committee of management.

The department also does not support proposals which are not in keeping with the purpose for which the land has been reserved or where conflict might arise between a proposed new use with existing users.

## FISH CREEK

Council owns two recreational reserves in Fish Creek being Buckley and Terrill Park. The recreation reserves are managed by a Section 86 committee, Terrill Park Committee of Management. There is general community support for an RV site within the township to encourage business activity and visitation to the town and region. Recommendation of this strategy is that Council in conjunction with Terrill Park Committee of Management (COM) undertake a trial at the rear of Terrill Park which for some is known as the 'pony paddock'.

Terrill Park is located within the township of Fish Creek and is within walking distance to the town centre.

Trial Overview for Terrill Park	
1	Facilitated for six months over the peak tourist season
2	Available for RV self-contained vehicles
3	Council responsibility to: Maintain the designated area Rubbish collection Toilet cleaning
4	2 nights/48 hour maximum time limit
5	\$5 charge per vehicle
6	Secured honesty box system to collect the fee charged
7	Council staff member will collect the fees on a weekly basis
8	Visitors will be asked to fill in a survey which will assist in gathering economic data and visitor profile information.
9	Communication regarding the trial will be through the Prom Country Visitor Information Centres, Gippsland Visitor Information Centre Network and utilising the RV network. Information regarding this trial will be not be included in printed documentation.
10	Terrill Park COM responsibility to: Ensure the reserve remains open Monitor the activities at the reserve

At the conclusion Council and Terrill Park COM will evaluate the six month trial and assess the viability and governance structure if a RV site was to be established on a permanent basis.

## 4 RECREATIONAL VEHICLE STRATEGIES IN OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

RV strategies vary between Shires depending on the features and needs of the differing regions. It is important to note the following Gippsland based approaches.

### 4.1 Gippsland

**Wellington Shire Council:** With five RV Friendly towns and locations, 11 dump points and the promotion of over 50 free/low cost camping and Short Term Overnight Parking (STOP), Wellington Shire Council actively promotes the benefits of RV visitation to the Wellington region. Council Officers regularly attend consumer shows and events to promote benefits of the region to RV users and hosted the 2012 annual CMCA national rally.

**East Gippsland Shire Council:** The *RV Development Plan Framework* was adopted in 2010, in acknowledgment of the increased visitation of the RV market. East Gippsland currently has four designated free rest areas and eight dump points.

**Bass Coast Shire Council:** Bass Coast Shire does not have an RV strategy or any free camping sites: however, they do have a number of dump points located in commercial caravan parks.

**Baw Baw Shire Council:** Baw Baw Shire does not have an RV strategy, free camping, or dump points. The RV market is recognised in their Council *Draft Tourism Strategy* and the installation of dump points will be the first consideration when pursuing the RV market.

**Latrobe City Council:** Latrobe City Council does not have an RV strategy or public dump points and the key focus of their *Tourism Strategy & Action Plan* in 2013 is to concentrate on the corporate and events market.

### 4.2 Other Rural Victorian Councils

**Moyne Shire Council:** No free camping within this Shire, however, Council owned caravan parks provide free dump points.

**Glenelg Shire Council:** A variety of free camping sites within the Shire suitable for motorhomes and larger vehicles. There are also two commercial caravan parks providing dump points for tenants only.

**Moira Shire Council:**

- Five Recreational Vehicle Friendly Towns (RVFT)—Cobram, Yarrawonga, Nathalia, Numurkah and Strathmerton
- Two Recreational Vehicle Friendly Destinations(RVFD)
- Five free public dump points
- Established caravan parks located in all the RVFT with the exception of Strathmerton.

## 5 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

Although the RV market can be seen to bring an economic return to the region, the potential issues and challenges associated with low/free cost camping must be acknowledged.

**Impact on South Gippsland commercial caravan park owners:** Lengthy overstays of RV users in South Gippsland Shire's free/ low cost camping sites could affect commercial caravan parks close by if not properly managed.

**Regulatory requirements:** Council Local Law, Proposed General Local Law 2014, Section 16(1) states that "A person must not, without a permit, camp in a public place in a tent or caravan unless they are within a caravan park registered under the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, or an area determined by the Council to be available for camping purposes"

**Regulatory changes:** The introduction of the reformed Farming Zone, gazetted on 5 September 2013, allows further opportunity for land owners to apply for a permit allowing the development of new caravan/tourist parks within the region. If further sites are identified, they will be assessed in accordance with the South Gippsland Planning Scheme.

**Environmental Management:** Increased use of Council managed free/low cost sites raises issues relating to waste management and possible damage to flora and fauna. Council would be required to allocate funds to and/or find solutions that minimise cost and impact.

**Land Management:** In many cases, potential low cost/free sites are Crown Land, usually managed by Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI). Unless Council is the land manager, it is unlikely that any further potential sites will be approved for use because it appears that current State Government policy does not allow camping on Crown Land not reserved for the purpose.

**Council Management and Enforcement:** The development of new and existing rest areas and dump points carry an ongoing management and maintenance responsibility to Council. Site issues concerning visitor overstay, littering and poor behaviour by low cost/free camping users can be managed by the installation of signage and the introduction of management procedures.

**Risk Management:** All Victorian Councils and caravan/tourist park operators are required to protect site users and to minimise risk to themselves, Council and the environment.

**Competitive Neutrality:** Competitive Neutrality does not apply to non-business, non-profit activities of government.

This report is assessing the suitability of several sites, taking these issues and challenges into consideration.

## 6 FINDINGS/ DISCUSSION

'Baby Boomers' will reach their peak by 2021. It is clear that the domestic RV market will continue to grow as the RV lifestyle is a very popular retirement activity. In order for the South Gippsland Shire to benefit from the increase of this market, it is important that the RV demographic is adequately and appropriately provided for. This Recreational Vehicle (RV) Strategy identifies the current needs of the RV market in South Gippsland, the gaps that currently exist, and the measures to be taken to meet those needs whilst taking local issues into account.

RV owners regularly use formal caravan parks and by encouraging RV users via the shire large range of free/low cost sites, Council is actively supporting the commercial caravan/tourist park operators.

No South Gippsland town is able to meet the specified essential criteria required by CMCA for an RV Friendly Town as no town currently has both free camping and a free sewerage dump point.

Despite the inability to have RV Friendly Towns the CMCA system of RV Friendly Destinations allows for private business to achieve the status by providing overnight free parking may be possible in a number of locations subject to planning permission.

The major sewerred towns of Leongatha, Korumburra, Foster, and Toora all have caravan parks, with Toora situated in proximity to the free/low cost site of Franklin River Reserve.

The investigation and development of further free/low cost sites will be established in towns of South Gippsland that currently do not have caravan/camping facilities to attract visitors, development of sites in these towns will encourage visitation and bring an economic benefit to the towns. Mirboo North and Meenyan currently do not have a suitable free/low cost site able to be provided by Council.

South Gippsland Shire is a very attractive destination for RV users as a result of its villages, attractions and proximity to Melbourne. Council can enhance this good reputation through the provision of a new overnight stay location at Fish Creek and through the creation of official long vehicle parking close to the shopping precinct in our major towns.

Free camping is recognised as a necessary attractant for RV users to any area including to South Gippsland. Franklin River Reserve and Bass Valley Campground currently provide free low amenity overnight stays in locations that do not have a commercial camping alternative. Visitors are also encouraged to stay at high amenity caravan parks across the shire. This allows visitors to restock with water, dump sewerage tanks and experience the higher level shower etc facilities available at commercial sites. By including an additional site in Fish Creek we will create a network of sites and South Gippsland will continue to cater for the increasing needs of the RV market. Fish Creek is ideally located along the Great Southern Rail Trail and in proximity to Wilsons Promontory National Park. Fish Creek town currently does not have a facility that can cater for the caravan and camping sector.

Utilising appropriate communication channels will assist in promoting the RV facilities of the region and limit inappropriate usage and direct RV's to acceptable parking and overnight stay locations.

By taking a Shire-wide approach, effective measures can be taken to ensure that the needs of the RV market are met, protection and preservation through regulation of sites occur, and respectful processes are taken with existing caravan/tourist operators. A series of actions through a phased approach can be taken to fill existing gaps for the South Gippsland Shire.



## 7 ACTION PLAN

The following actions will help enhance the profile of South Gippsland as an attractive region to RV users. By completing the following actions, South Gippsland will be taking a pro-active approach towards encouraging greater visitation from the RV market.

1. **Maintain Bass Valley Camping Ground and Franklin River as a free site**

Maintain the current operation of these sites and ensure resources are provided to allow for a safe environment for the visiting public. Apply a maximum stay of 2 nights/48 hours.

2. **Endorse South Gippsland as an RV attractive Shire**

Council positions the shire as a destination that supports the appropriate usage of RV's by providing a network of free/low cost and commercial campsites at diverse location across the region. This will be achieved through promotion of the shire attractiveness to all RV users by working with the CMCA to utilise existing RV channels, Gippsland Visitor Information Centre network, Prom Country Regional Tourism and Destination Gippsland.

3. **Development of long vehicle parking in South Gippsland**

Long Vehicle parking to be properly line marked and/or sign posted where appropriate, directional and site signage to be installed. This will allow visitors to access the central shopping precinct and amenities of the town.

4. **Provide New Signage**

Signage including site signage is essential in managing RV use of the Shire's free/ low cost camping areas. A signage plan will be developed outlining the signs required for long vehicle parking, council managed sites and unauthorised sites if required. The provision of signage, including additional line marking will cost \$15,000.

5. **Inclusion of South Gippsland RV facilities in print and online**

Work with Prom Country Regional Tourism to include RV facilities in existing publications such as the Prom Country Official Touring Map, [www.visitpromcountry.com.au](http://www.visitpromcountry.com.au) website and Prom Country app.

Utilise existing traveller websites and online forums to distribute information regarding RV facilities, town amenities and regional information. Investigate the opportunities available through the CMCA.

Discuss the availability of RV facilities in the next edition of the Gippsland Caravan and Camping Guide facilitated by Destination Gippsland.

6. **Terrill Park Recreation Reserve Trial**

Council in conjunction with Terrill Park Committee of Management undertake a trial at the rear of Terrill Park recreation reserve for six months over the peak tourist season at a cost of \$12,000. A maximum stay of 2 nights/48 hours will apply. At the conclusion Council and Terrill Park Committee of Management will evaluate the six month trial and assess the viability and governance structure if a RV site was to be established on a permanent basis.

7. **Dump Point**

Council supports community groups in their aims to install a public dump point and encourages community groups to contact the CMCA to obtain information regarding dump points and the CMCA dump point scheme. Council recommends community groups communicate with the land owner and South Gippsland Water and ensure they meet their requirements and obtain the relevant approvals.

8. **Establish economic data and visitor profile of the RV market**

Collaborate with Gippsland Councils and Destination Gippsland to develop the appropriate mechanisms to obtain economic data, visitor profiles and industry feedback.

Strategic Planning and Development

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