



Delighted: Yarram and District Historical Society secretary Kate Remfry is delighted to be able to assist the Yarram Courthouse Gallery information centre by providing visitor information from the Yarram and District Historical Society rooms every Wednesday.



RV Friendly Facility Ready for Use

Donald became the 177th. dump site available to travelling campervans and motorhomes in Victoria, when the new facility at Apex Park was officially opened for business on Friday.

Among those gathered at Apex Park for the occasion were members of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), Jan South, Calvin Muller, of Warracknabeal, and Helena Granger, originally from just north of Canberra but now classifying herself a permanent on the road traveller.

As club members and regular users of similar facilities wherever they travel across Victoria and beyond, the trio was impressed with the location, in a central point close to and within easy walking distance of the town centre.

The dump site (Donald's second), came about following a suggestion from local businessman Colin Cullen, who had noted the benefits for local businesses at Nyah provided by the convenient location of a dump site.

CMCA has 66,000 members Australia wide, 18,000 of whom are full time on the road, creating a great need for the

dispersal of black water from their vehicles.

Donald 2000 and the Donald Chamber of Commerce and Industry had taken up Colin's suggestion and financed the installation of the dump point, which was recently completed by contractor Hardingham's Plumbing.

Speaking on travellers who would use the facility in the future, Calvin congratulated Donald 2000 and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a sentiment echoed by Buloke Shire Councilor Graeme Milne, who acknowledged the community's forward thinking and ability to get things done.

Donald's Apex Park offers travellers with an ideal location to stop, dump their black water and make use of the businesses in Woods Street before they head off on the next leg of their journey.

It's a win-win situation for all concerned.

Travellers can access the locations of dump points via the Geo-Wiki web site



• Pictured at the official launch of Donald's dump point were, left to right, Anne Mitchell (president of Donald 2000), Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia members Jan South, Calvin Muller and Helena Granger, Cindy Hirst (president of Donald Chamber of Commerce and Industry), and Leigh Hardingham from contractor Hardinghams Plumbing, which installed the new facility.

Foster keen for RV visitors

COULD Foster become South Gippsland's first Recreational Vehicle (RV) Friendly Town?

It's an aim the Foster Community Association (FCA) has been working towards for some time and given a funding opportunity, could well become.

Vivian Jones, secretary of the FCA said the group had been offered an opportunity to have a free dump site installed by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA).

But, given the shire's RV Strategy, which is set to be debated at the May 28 meeting, the hard work and funding arrangement could be for nought.

Council's proposed RV Strategy will be to support smaller towns like Fish Creek and Meenyan over

towns that have existing private caravan parks, and private dump sites.

However, Foster could move ahead with its own dump site at the Foster service station.

The service station owners have said they would monitor and maintain the site for free.

The FCA could still accept \$2000 in funding for the dump site from CMCA.

The only condition of funding would be that dumping would be free for any RV traveller.

The FCA would like to see the town develop further as an RV Friendly Town.

"Our proposal is to set aside part of the Station Park for overnight visitors," FCA secretary Vivian Jones

said.

"The problem is DEPI (Department of Environment and Primary Industries), who oversee Crown land, said South Gippsland Shire Council would need to take over management of the site.

"From there the Foster Station Park Committee could maintain the grounds as a committee of council.

"We need council to say to DEPI 'we'll take on responsibility'.

"In all, we estimate it would cost less than it would to set up than Meenyan or Fish Creek.

"Foster has all the facilities and people willing to do the installation and maintenance for free - we at least need to start the conversation."



Push to make Foster 'RV Friendly'

HOW best to deal with the caravan and camping sector is proving to be a contentious issue for South Gippsland Shire Council. Matters will come to a head at the council meeting today, with council due to vote on the Recreational Vehicle (RV) Strategy. The result is unlikely to please everyone.

The Draft RV Strategy was presented to Council last December and then went on public exhibition. Some of the feedback received during the community consultation period was incorporated into the final Strategy, but some, as was pointed out in a public presentation to Council last Wednesday, was rejected.

In her presentation, Acting Secretary of the Foster Community Association Viv

Jones spoke on behalf of the FCA in arguing the case for Foster to become a designated 'RV Friendly' town. She expressed bitter disappointment at the brick wall the FCA has come up against in its negotiations with Council over the use of a section of Foster Station Park for overnight RV parking.

She said that in 2011, when the Foster Station Park concept was formed, there was a proposal for an area of the park (which is Crown Land) to be set aside for overnight RV parking. The relevant state government department (then known as the Department of Sustainability and Environment or DSE) had no basic objection, but noted that as the land was reserved for the Rail Trail, it would be reluctant to give permission to a voluntary organisation such as the Foster Station Park Committee of Management taking charge and would need the shire to take responsibility.

"We approached Paul Stampton [Council's Manager Strategic Planning and Development] last July, asking for his support, not knowing a strategy was about to be prepared and were told to wait on the outcome. In the meantime, we worked very hard to achieve all the essential criteria required to become a recognised CMCA [Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia] RV Friendly Town," said Ms Jones.

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Push to make Foster 'RV Friendly'

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"We worked closely with Keith Moxam, Director of CMCA, who has agreed that because Foster has the basic criteria of access to a hospital, medical facilities, pharmacy, shopping and fuel supplies, he would supply and pay for installation of a dump easy point, and a local service station has agreed to house it and maintain it free of cost. We only needed Coun-

cil to agree to take responsibility for the vacant block of land. No land – no free dump point."

Ms Jones said that the FCA was disappointed in Council's apparent reluctance to consider Foster Station Park and discuss the matter with the relevant government department (now the Department of Environment and Primary Industries or DEPI).

"We understand Council's reluctance because of the cost that may be involved, but with agreements between all the interested parties we feel these costs would be minimal as the Foster Station Park Committee maintains the area at present."

Ms Jones said that RVs already dot Foster's streets on many nights

and there is, she asserted, a need for a more secure area for them. Foster Station Park fits the bill. She added that tourism is a mainstay of Foster's economy and RVs should be encouraged.

"All the shop owners we approached fully supported RV overnight parking at Foster Station Park, and their signatures were added to our submission," she said.



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"As ratepayers we are very conscience of Council's budget so therefore cannot understand Council's reluctance to support Foster's efforts, which could present them with a free camping and dump point, plus the added value of ongoing free publicity Australia wide promoting the Prom Country area."

In her eloquently argued address to Council, Ms Jones concluded: "On behalf of the Foster community, I urge you to reconsider your position and offer Foster the opportunity to become an RV friendly town, with the hope there will be many more to follow in the future, showing that South Gippsland is finally "open for business".

Afterwards, Coastal Promontory Ward coun-

cillor Mohya Davies told *The Mirror* that the management issues around Foster Station Park needed to be sorted out with DEPI, and only then could SGSC, the park's committee of management and the Rail Trail committee work towards consideration of the park as an overnight stopping point for RVs.

"I am hopeful that one day Foster can become an RV Friendly Town, but a lot has to happen first," she said. Cr Davies pointed out that the RV Strategy will be reviewed next year and suggested that would be an appropriate time to revisit the proposal and possibly amend the Strategy.