



# RVs welcome

THE Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) has officially declared Wingham an RV Friendly Town.

By promoting a partnership between recreational vehicle (RV) travellers and small towns, CMCA said it hopes to encourage the expansion of tourism related infrastructure and services, and also boost the economy of those small towns providing RV tourist specific amenities.

CMCA said the advantage of Wingham becoming an RV Friendly Town is that the business community will benefit from the spending of the mobile travellers.

The value of road based tourism in Australia is estimated to be \$7 billion per annum.

The idea to apply for Wingham to become an RV Friendly Town was initially put forward by Ron Sky (an experienced caravan traveller) at a Wingham Advancement Group (WAG) meeting about five years ago.

At the time there were a number of factors that prevented WAG from progressing with the project.

In order to qualify for the title, towns must successfully meet the needs of RV travellers and satisfy stringent criteria including:

- o Access to medical facilities, a pharmacy, a dump point and a general shopping area
- o Provision of appropriate parking
- o A Visitor Information Centre and vehicle service centre

At that time – and up until this year – there wasn't a CMCA approved 'dump point' in Wingham.

For the past two years WAG had been working with MidCoast Water to investigate possible 'Dump Points' around Wingham.

Wingham Riverside Reserve, near the toilets in Central Park, on East Combined Street near the en-

trance to the sewerage works and at Wingham Industrial and Sports Complex were all identified as

possible sites.

Unfortunately they all had technical problems.

However under the newly elected Wingham Showground Trust, a new CMCA subsidised 'dump point' was installed early this year at the showgrounds.

"Suddenly it was all possible provided Greater Taree City Council came on board," WAG president, Allen Valentine said.

"Chocolate frogs all round to the Trust for the initiative of getting a CMCA dump point," he added.

With the end in sight WAG got to work.

In June WAG approached Wingham Chamber of Commerce and Wingham Rotary Club to seek their support for the project and they agreed.

Manning Valley Historical Society president, Barbara Waters agreed to be the contact at the museum to satisfy the need for a 'local' Visitors Information Centre.

In July Ron and Leonna Sky and Allen were able to complete the last part of the application by compiling information on Wingham's business facilities.

Allen said he then liaised with Greater Taree City Council to submit the application which was approved by council's acting general manager Ron Posselt.

"All that remains now is for everyone in the community to make the RV travellers, and indeed all our visitors and tourists, very welcome," Allen said.

"After all, we are "The Friendly Town"!

For a current list of RV Friendly Towns around the country, visit the CMCA website [www.cmca.net.au](http://www.cmca.net.au).



Allen Valentine and Ron Sky with the official certificate declaring Wingham as an RV Friendly Town.



## Homes away from home

PENOLA'S McCorquindale Park will be filled with rows of motorhomes and happy campers this month.

Auswide Motorhome Club members are converging on the region for their 16th annual rally.

Around 50 motorhome owners will set up camp at the Eagles' home ground from October 7 to 13.

Organisers visited three areas in South Australia in July last year seeking a suitable site for the 2014 rally and decided on Penola.

McCorquindale Park management committee chairperson Damian Flint has worked alongside Wattle Range Mayor Peter Gandolfi to support the rally and provide a welcoming environment for the visitors.

Mr Flint said the rally would help boost tourism in the area.

"It will be a great event to host in the town and spread the word about Penola into other states," he said.

"We are hoping our local businesses

will benefit from the visitors."

The official opening will be on Tuesday afternoon and will be attended by Mr Flint and Mr Gandolfi.

Club members will take advantage of their surroundings and explore what the region has to offer.

The itinerary includes bus trips to Yallum House near Penola, along with The Sheep's Back Museum and world heritage caves at Naracoorte.

Never Too Old and Jill's Vintage have offered members 10pc discount on purchases while Penola Fantasy Model Railway has offered a discount on group bookings.

Bush poet Bob Mangor and the Heritage Singers will provide entertainment during the visit and Evelynne Bowden will offer small group tours of the town.

An open day will be held on Sunday, October 12, with the public welcome to visit McCorquindale Park to meet the visitors and inspect vehicles.



**ON THEIR WAY:** Members of the Auswide Motorhome Club will visit Penola for a week in October during their 16th annual rally.



## We could be an RV Friendly Town

Just further to Jean Rodwell's Letter to the Editor a fortnight ago about Mirboo North not having a RV Friendly sign, just perhaps what has happened at Foster recently could be copied here.

Last week's issue of *The Mirror* carries a piece about a 'dump point' being established at the local BP servo there.

A joint venture between the Foster Community Association, the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia and Evans Petroleum, the recently-

opened dump point is bound to attract recreational vehicles to the town.

While having a dump site doesn't automatically qualify for a town being a Recreational Vehicle Friendly town, it is certainly a big step.

If they can do it in Foster, why can't we do it in Mirboo North?

As Jean Rodwell points out in her letter, RV Friendly Towns are listed every month in Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia's national magazine.



# Irwin Shire in drive for recreation vehicle dollar

**Ian Cutler**

Irwin Shire is the latest local government authority in the Mid West to adopt an aggressive approach to attract travellers in fully self-contained vehicles into its town centre.

Only weeks after the City of Greater Geraldton council approved a draft non-commercial camping policy aimed at making

the City "RV friendly", the shire is moving to provide a 24-hour rest stop on Brand Highway opposite Irwin Crescent.

This will incorporate the waste dump point already operational on the site.

An officer's report to the council's September meeting said this would encourage visitors in fully self-contained vehicles to stay overnight, increasing visitor numbers and spending.

Irwin Shire's plan is well ahead of the City's, having put it out for public comment in July, and including a specific place to allow free overnight stopping.

The City's public comment period on its draft RV-friendly strategy ends on November 10.

Among other things, the draft suggests use of the Pages Beach carpark for overnight stays by

larger self-contained recreational vehicles, and the foreshore carpark behind the Sail Inn snack bar for campervans and small motorhomes.

The city council's August meeting agreed to advertise the draft for public comment, with councillors noting that Mid West shires which had adopted RV-friendly strategies could encourage travellers to bypass Geraldton.



## CLOSURE THREAT

# Illegal campers risk access to Freo moles

**Kent Acott**

Complaints about campervans parking illegally have prompted authorities to consider closing the gates to Fremantle's South and North moles at night.

But there is concern this last-resort measure will disadvantage fishermen who have been using the moles for decades.

As a result, Fremantle Ports and the City of Fremantle have been working together to find alternative solutions and have introduced more patrols and new sign that says overnight camping is illegal.

The North Mole is currently closed to allow damage caused by the winter storms to be repaired.

But when *The West Australian* visited the South Mole recently, there were several vans camping overnight.

One van owner said staying on South Mole was a "stop-gap measure" while he searched for part-time work on his around-Australia holiday.

Another said he had seen the warning signs "but there are so many vans here when I arrived that I did not think anyone was going to be prosecuted".

Matt Bufton, who has been fishing from the moles for more than 20 years, said campervans had been a problem for a long time.

He said there had been times when the moles had been temporarily closed to keep them out.

"They are pains," he said.

"We come down here to fish and they've taken all the parking

spots. And they're here all year round."

A spokesman for the city said officers were enforcing parking restrictions on the moles and issuing infringements to people who overstayed. According to the Fremantle Ports annual report tabled in State Parliament, the illegally parked campervans were one of the main causes of public complaints in 2013-14.

Other complaints related to vehicle traffic, safety and the Fremantle Passenger Terminal.

Out of 12 complaints about odour, 10 were related to livestock

vessels. The report said that when there was a cluster of complaints about an individual ship, the circumstances were always investigated.

Three complaints received in May about a livestock vessel visit resulted in an investigation that found that weather conditions had contributed to the smell experienced in central Fremantle.