



Glenelg keen to attract travellers in recreational vehicles

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THE Glenelg Shire Council is pushing for tourist locations across the shire to become Recreational Vehicle Friendly Towns.

At the August meeting of council on Tuesday night it was decided that the council would apply to the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) to become a RV Friendly Town and to consider an application for Portland to become a RV Friendly Town after public consultation.

An RV Friendly Town is one that has met a set of guidelines to ensure they provide a certain amount of amenities, and a certain level of services for these travellers.

When RV tourists enter a town displaying the RVFT sign, they know they will be welcome, certain services will be provided for them that may not be available in other centres, and they will have access to a safe place to stay overnight, and possibly for a longer period.

According to the CMCA the essential guidelines:

- Provision of appropriate parking within the town centre, with access to a general shopping area for groceries and fresh produce;
- Provision of short term, low cost overnight parking (24/48 hours) for self-contained RVs, as close as possible to the CBD;
- Access to potable water; and
- Access to a free dump point at an appropriate

location.

Councillor Gilbert Wilson said at the meeting that could be fear from some tourism providers that people in RV's will come to town but not spend any money.

"But reports show they do spend," Cr Wilson said.

"I believe Portland should become a RV Friendly Town because the stories will attract people to Portland, word of mouth is stronger than any advertising campaign."

Councillor Anita Rank said there were no RV Friendly Towns along the Great Ocean Road, with the closest to Portland being Macarthur.

"We can leverage a point of difference to the Great Ocean Road," Cr Rank said.



Special deals for van parks

TRAVELLERS now have extra incentive to spend time in the Shire of Loddon, with the announcement that two local caravan parks can offer a special deal.

The parks at Wedderburn and Pyramid Hill have just been proclaimed "CMCA-Friendly", a status which allows members of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia to claim a discount on stopovers.

In return, the club promotes those caravan parks by including them in listings on its website and through information circulated to members.

There are now about 300 caravan parks around Australia accepted as CMCA-Friendly, including 60 in Victoria.

The system works alongside the club's "RV-Friendly Destinations" listing, which advises owners of recreational vehicles of locations which provide suitable short-term parking, accommodation and free dump points.

This has grown to include 239 approved stopovers, including Boort, Bridgewater, Wedderburn, Pyramid Hill and Simply Tomatoes at Yando.

CMCA director and Victorian representative, Keith Moxham said travellers could present their current membership cards at approved parks and receive a 10 per cent discount.

"Our members tend to go touring in rural areas such as Loddon - unlike customers at parks in such tourist hotspots as the Great Ocean Road and Bellarine Peninsula, which cater to the family holiday market," he said.

"That means we see our members spending more of their dollars in your

country towns.

"The organisation has a database called GeoWiki which clearly lists all the places people can go and one section in there covers all the parks deemed CMCA-Friendly.

"Members can download this information to their computer or GPS device."

Loddon Shire tourism manager, Robyn Vella said she was aware of many CMCA members being out on the road and campervan and motorhome owners were a key target audience for Loddon's tourism messages.

"The Wedderburn caravan park is basic and affordable, but is set in the town's former botanical gardens and offers all the infrastructure needed for a comfortable stay," she said.

"Being so close to the Loddon Visitor Information Centre, the park provides visitors with a great opportunity to obtain all the guidance they need to get out and explore what the shire has to offer."

Wedderburn Pioneers Caravan Park has three self-contained cabins, 60 powered sites and 25 unpowered sites, plus a camp kitchen, laundry facilities and a covered area with three barbecues.

Pyramid Hill Caravan Park manager, Marj Mooney said CMCA members would welcome the discount off their site fees.

"We get a few campervans and motorhomes coming through, probably because we're so reasonably priced," she said.

The park is within walking distance from the town centre and adjacent to tennis courts and the swimming pool.

It has 18 powered sites, 12 unpowered sites and a self-contained cabin.