



**A WELCOME** sign at Waikerie's new caravan and recreational vehicle rest stop includes a map of the town and a photograph of its river front.  
PHOTO: Supplied



## **Warragamba Dump Point Ready for Use**

Wollondilly Shire Council in conjunction with Council's Economic Development Advisory Group and Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia are currently installing three recreational vehicle dump points within its boundaries to encourage caravan users to visit Wollondilly and stay a while.

Self-contained tourism is on the increase and as such, we encourage the disposal of black and grey water and hard waste (rubbish) in a responsible manner. The dump point stations will provide the appropriate facilities for black and grey water disposal and discourage indiscriminate waste disposal and the ensuing environmental problems.

"We want to give self-contained travellers the opportunity to stay in Wollondilly and see our beautiful scenery and experience our country hospitality. The dump points have been strategically placed in Appin, Warragamba and Picton close to townships, entry and exit roads," says Mayor, Cr Benn Banasik.

The Warragamba dump point is now open for use and is situated at Warragamba Picnic Area, Warradale Road, Warragamba. The first completed dump point is situated in Appin Park, Appin and has been open since April. The Picton dump point is in the planning stages and the location for this will be released once the installation is complete.





## Grey nomads getting the dirt on the west

Soil scientists are making the most of travellers who go off the beaten track

**SONIA KOHLBACHER**

WHEN David and Betty Bowie head north on their next campervan adventure, they will be among a group of grey nomads collecting dirt for scientists at the University of Western Australia.

It's an ambitious plan to map the "soil DNA" of the vast state, something that could help scientists understand the impacts of various farm practices or the success of mine-site rehabilitation.

More than 2000 soil samples have been collected by caravanners, farmers and even toddlers since the university's MicroBlitz microbial study began in March last year.

Samples are returned to the university, where researchers then analyse and map the soil DNA of the state.

The Bowies, both 85, were co-opted into the program by their daughter Deborah, who manages the MicroBlitz project — she says that including travellers is a way of getting samples from very remote places that scientists are unlikely to get to.

"We've got from Esperance to Kununurra and all points in-between," Deborah Bowie said.

"People are really keen and it's quite unique for them, especially if they're going off-road — there's no one else taking samples from

that area. (We're) trying to create a microbial map of Western Australia and that'll be openly shared, openly sourced.

"We're also looking at specific questions such as mine-site rehabilitation; in agriculture, we're looking at different practices and the effect that has on the microbial communities."

The Bowies say Australia is so beautiful they feel no need to travel overseas.

Mr Bowie built the couple's campervan over a year-long per-

iod of weekends in the 1990s. Next year they will visit the state's north, where they will collect ground samples off the beaten track.

"I've been around (Australia) twice," Mr Bowie said.

"I'll be taking some samples for her (Deborah), anything to help them out.

"It all depends how far we go and the different places we go to.

"We usually have a look in the bush and have a look at the wildflowers and all that sort of stuff."



ROSS SWANBOROUGH

David and Betty Bowie are helping out daughter Deborah's MicroBlitz project by collecting soil samples on their travels through Western Australia



# Getting outside over the school holidays

THE school holiday short breaks campaign launched by Destination NSW recognises the unique and enticing holiday options offered by caravan and camping getaways.

The campaign also recognises the strong focus on family fun.

The regionally focused campaign, launched by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism and Major Events Andrew Stoner, not only showcases the fantastic holiday offerings of NSW, but also provides a one-stop shop at [visitnsw.com.au](http://visitnsw.com.au) where holidaymakers can search and plan their next caravan and camping getaway.

“With the spring school holidays less than a month away, this is a perfect time to think about a break at some of the amazing holiday parks across NSW that offer a real treat for families,” Caravan & Camping Industry Association NSW chief executive Lyndel Gray said.

“Many parks offer family-friendly features like pools, water-play areas and playgrounds, cafes and other resort-style facilities and activities.

“New developments in the industry include significant family-focused spaces like we are seeing in South West Rocks where a park is converting an old fishing trawler into the centrepiece of a castaway-themed water park.”

Ms Gray said NSW families are already highly engaged with the great outdoors and make up the

largest group of caravan and camping visitors in the state. Almost 35 per cent of domestic caravan and camping visitors are also part of a family group.

“The upcoming school holidays provide the perfect opportunity to hitch your caravan or camper trailer,

load up the motorhome or campervan, or pack up the tent and head out for a fantastic family holiday experience.”

For more information visit [visitnsw.com/schoolholidays](http://visitnsw.com/schoolholidays) or

[caravan-camping.com.au/  
ExperienceCaravanCamping](http://caravan-camping.com.au/ExperienceCaravanCamping).



**FAMILY FUN:** The great outdoors offer many opportunities for family fun on caravan and camping holidays.



# Campers boost to economy

THE caravan and camping sector's "outstanding results" over the past 12 months have contributed about 30 per cent of overall tourism growth in NSW, making it one of the state's fastest tourism growth sectors.

"Caravan and camping is now experiencing significant growth, punching well above its weight and making it a major contributor to the NSW economy," Caravan & Camping Industry Association NSW chief executive Lyndel Gray said.

"In the year to December 2013, close to 2.4 million people stayed in commercial caravan or camping accommodation in this state, delivering more than 11 million visitor nights.

"This is an additional 303,000 visitors to commercial caravan parks on the previous year, and an additional 727,000 visitor nights."

Ms Gray said these figures, which have come out of the release of the National Visitor Survey, represented an impressive overall growth of visitors, up 15 per cent and visitor nights, up 7 per cent.

"Of the overall number of caravan and camping visitors to NSW, 80 per cent are engaged in holiday and leisure activities that bring significant benefits for the broader tourism economy of regions," Ms Gray said.

"These results prove that caravan and camping is fast becoming a preferred holiday option in NSW,

particularly for families, who make up the largest group (34.4 per cent) of caravan and camping visitors to NSW.

"Caravan and camping visitors are contributing \$1.9 billion to the NSW economy and spending an average of 4.7 nights, which is 1.4 nights longer than the average for visitors to the state.

"In the last year the sector has lifted its economic contribution by more than 17 per cent."



**GOOD TIMES:** Many caravan and camping getaways have a strong focus on family fun.