



WELLINGTON

SHIRE COUNCIL

The Heart of Gippsland

Recreational Vehicle Strategy



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is a significant contributor to the Wellington Shire economy with an estimated value of \$69 million, with over one million visitors annually. Wellington Shire's proximity to Melbourne and location on the main touring route between Sydney and Melbourne, provides an attractive destination for Recreational Vehicle (RV) users.

Whilst the RV market is only one element of Wellington's tourism mix, Council recognises this niche market and the need to make informed decisions about how to effectively manage RV travelers.

RVs meet the needs of a diverse range of people from young families to retired couples due to their accessibility, convenience and afford travelers a unique way to experience the outdoors while still providing the comforts of home.

Council acknowledges that the significant majority of authorised low cost/free camping sites across the shire are located on national or state parks (Crown Land) and Council has no authority over these sites.

However, Council can influence the RV experience through:

- Infrastructure (long vehicle parking, dump points, signage etc)
- Targeted information including visitor information services and social media
- Educating RV travelers on how to minimise environmental impacts and sustainability
- Compliance activities
- Greater understanding of the size and value of the RV market

Adopting a balanced Shire-wide approach towards the RV market can ensure the support of local commercial caravan parks and tourist operators and have a positive economic impact on towns which do not have commercial caravan parks.

When developing Wellington Shire's long-term vision, a key driver identified is to 'Develop the visitor economy through innovative marketing programs and product development to attract people to the region to live, work and play.'

This Strategy aligns with this vision and will be the principal planning reference for Council to:

- Identify the current RV market in Wellington Shire and the measures to be taken to meet this expanding market
- Maximise economic opportunities
- Minimise negative social, economic and environmental impacts
- Promote Wellington Shire as an attractive region for RV users

The Strategy concludes with an action plan detailing the key activities Council will undertake to support RV tourism in Wellington Shire.



SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Target audience

RVs are referred to herein as self-contained recreational motor homes and caravans.

Self-contained RV is defined as a self-contained vehicle that has internal cooking facilities as well as a toilet, shower and sleeping facilities; plus water tanks sufficient for 48 hours use by the occupants for drinking and other purposes; as well as holding tanks for grey and black water.

This strategy is aimed solely at the self-contained RV market to guide Council's decision making on how to best manage the RV market across the Shire.

All other types of recreational transport are encouraged to seek full facilities at caravan parks and camping grounds.

1.2 Importance of tourism

The tourism industry makes a considerable contribution to Council's economy both directly and indirectly.

The tourism sector in Wellington Shire currently contributes:

- 864 jobs (6.08%) of total employment¹
- \$39.3m of total wages and salaries
- \$69.3m (2.97%) of total value-added²

Of the 1.04 million annual visitors to Wellington Shire, 357,000 were domestic overnight visitors, 674,000 domestic day visitors and 9,000 were international visitors. Domestic overnight travel has increased considerably (19.2%) in Wellington Shire since March 2016 to March 2017.

Council is attempting to strengthen its tourism offering through the development of key tourism assets in the region to ensure visitation continues to increase.

The visitor profile data for Wellington Shire is:³

Visitor Profile	Domestic Day	Domestic Overnight	International
Average stay (nights)	-	3	14
Average spend per trip (\$)	\$74	\$266	\$769
Average spend per night (\$)	-	\$85	\$54

¹ 2015-16, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Tourism Satellite Account

² REMPLAN based on the following source: 2015-16 ABS, Tourism Satellite Account

³ Tourism Research Australia Tourism in Local Governments 2016; Area Profile Wellington

1.3 Overall caravanning industry statistics

The following statistics provide further insight into the RV market:

- The Gippsland region acts as the first night in Victoria for many RV users.⁴
- 50% of RV users use a mix of non-commercial and commercial caravan park accommodation.⁵
- Victoria (2.8 million) retains the second highest market share of all domestic caravan and camping trips in Australia, representing 24%.
- 58% of RV users are in the 60 to 70-year age bracket, and travel for more than two months.⁶
- RV user market has the potential to generate economic activity averaging a weekly spend of \$500 and an average of 163 days of travel annually.⁷
- Most RV users travelling for more than two months only stay in one location for three days or less.⁸

SECTION 2 – RV SCHEMES

RV Schemes are aimed to assist regional areas attract RV tourists. Visitor Information Centre staff have reported a steady increase in the number of RV tourists visiting Wellington Shire and seeking RV specific advice.

Council has worked with industry representatives, including business and tourism associations, chambers of commerce, Wellington Regional Tourism, and other tourism bodies, to increase the levels of RV visitation to the region, resulting in greater visitor expenditure in towns that may otherwise not have enjoyed regular tourism visitation.

Some of the more recognised schemes are categorised below.

2.1 CMCA RV Friendly Town™ program

The RV Friendly Town™ program is an initiative by Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA). An RV Friendly Town™ is a location that has applied and met CMCA's set of guidelines to ensure they provide a certain number of amenities and a certain level of service to RV users. The RV Friendly Town™ program is easily identifiable through a CMCA roadside 'RV Friendly' sign. There are five RV Friendly Towns™ in Wellington Shire: Heyfield, Rosedale, Maffra, Sale and Yarram.

2.2 CMCA RV Friendly Caravan Parks

Caravan parks can promote themselves as RV Friendly and by working with CMCA can provide CMCA members with a 10% discount; and in return their caravan park will receive promotion targeting CMCA members.

⁴ Understanding the free/low Cost Camping Recreational Vehicle Traveller: an Exploration of Actions and Attitudes; Hardy et al; April 2014

⁵ BDO Australia, Economic Benefit Report, October 2012

⁶ The camping habits & economic value of 'free-camping' travellers, February 2017

⁷ CMCA 2009 member survey

⁸ The camping habits & economic value of 'free-camping' travellers, February 2017

2.3 CMCA RV Friendly Destination™

Businesses in the tourism industry (such as wineries, cheese factories, hotels/clubs, etc.) can apply for an CMCA RV Friendly Destination™, if they meet the necessary assessment process through application.

Businesses which successfully meet the RV Friendly Destination™ criteria and pay a nominal fee, are provided with a CMCA 'RV Friendly Destination™' sign and their business is promoted on CMCA's website.

At the time of writing this strategy, there are no RV Friendly Destinations in the Wellington Shire.

2.4 CMCA Leave No Trace®

CMCA members are required to sign up to a Leave No Trace® Code of Conduct based on CMCA's policy, the promotion of environmentally responsible camping and that RV users 'leave nothing behind but their tracks'.

2.5 VicParks Community Welcomes RV Travellers

The Victorian Caravan Parks Association's (VicParks) 'Community Welcomes RV Travellers Program' promotes towns, destinations and regions as being places that actively encourage recreational vehicle travellers to visit them. Participating towns also display a 'Community Welcomes RV Travellers' sign.

VicParks also produces the only whole of state annual drive destination guide with 130,000 copies distributed in Victoria and nationally through Victorian Visitor Information Centres and major Caravan & Camping shows. A copy of this guide can be found at each of our Visitor Information Centres or can be downloaded from the VicParks website.

SECTION 3 – EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The RV user market, as defined in this Strategy, refers to vehicles that can stay at sites with no facilities.

3.1 Commercial caravan parks

Some caravan park operators in Wellington Shire have adapted to the RV market providing low cost options including unpowered and/or powered site with no facilities. Some have installed power meters onto each site and charge for power, and have the provision of a dump point. This provides the RV user with a low-cost option, a safe place to park and access to other park facilities.



The table below lists each commercial caravan park in Wellington Shire.

Location	Commercial Park	Privately Owned/Managed	On Crown Land
Dargo	Wonnangatta Caravan Park	•	
Dargo	Dargo River Inn	•	
Glenmaggie	Blores Hill Caravan Park		•
Glenmaggie	Lake Glenmaggie Caravan Park	•	
Glenmaggie	Montana Caravan Park	•	
Glenmaggie North	Paradise Valley Camping Park	•	
Glenmaggie	Wallaby Rise	•	
Meerlieu	Roseneath Park	•	
Licola	Licola Caravan Park	•	
Loch Sport	Loch Sport Holiday Park		•
Loch Sport	90 Mile Beach Holiday Retreat	•	
Maffra	Maffra Golf Club	•	
Port Albert	Port Albert Seabank Tourist Park	•	
Rosedale	Rosedale Caravan Park	•	
Stratford	Stratford on the River Tourist Park		•
Sale	Sale Motor Village		•
Sale	Sale & District Ag Society Inc.		•
Seaspray	Seaspray Caravan Park		•
Tarra Valley	Best Friend Holiday Retreat	•	
Tarra Valley	Tarra Valley Caravan Park Fernholme	•	
Valencia Creek	Valencia Creek Caravan Park	•	
Woodside	Woodside Beach Holiday Park		•
Woodside	Woodside Central Caravan Park	•	
Yarram	Yarram Holiday Park	•	
Yarram	Windmill Caravan Park	•	

The introduction of the reformed Farming Zone, gazetted on 5 September 2013, allows further opportunity for landowners to apply for a permit allowing the development of new caravan/tourist parks within the region. Applications are assessed in accordance with the Wellington Shire Council Planning Scheme.

3.2 Existing authorised low/free camping sites

There are approximately 50 low cost/free authorised camping areas located in Wellington Shire, with various locations along 90 Mile Beach, Golden Beach, Seaspray and the Honeysuckles.

Most of the camping areas are located on national or state parks (Crown Land), and Council has no authorisation over these sites.



3.3 Existing authorised RV sites

Wellington Shire supports five no cost RV-specific short-term stops:

Location	Toilets	Rubbish Bins	Water	Length of stay	Free/Low Cost
Wharf Street, Port Albert	Yes	Yes	Yes	24-hr	Free
Willow Park, Rosedale	No	Yes	Yes	36-hr	Free
Frenches Park, Maffra	No	Yes	Yes	48-hr	Free
Heyfield RV Site, Heyfield	Yes	Yes	Yes	48-hr	Free
Tarra River, Yarram	No	No	No	No Signage	Free

3.4 Committees of Management – Crown Land

A community Committee of Management is a group of volunteers who are elected to manage, operate and maintain a facility for the community. Committees of Management manage most of Wellington Shire's recreational reserves.

It is important to note that Council:

- has no authorisation over national or state park camp sites (Crown Land) that offer free camping;
- does not receive revenue generated from low cost camping in reserves managed by Committees of Management; and
- encourages Committees of Management to contact Victoria Police if people are breaking the law on the reserves.

3.5 VicRoads Rest Areas

VicRoads Rest Areas aim to reduce fatigue-related incidents by taking a holistic approach to rest stop areas across Victoria. Rest areas on country roads are important as they provide safe places to sleep. Rest areas can also provide a range of amenities such as toilets, food and driver information.

There are currently nine VicRoads Rest Areas in Wellington Shire:

Location	Cars/Trucks	Toilets	Picnic Tables	BBQ	Rubbish Bins	Water
Albert River Reserve	Cars/Trucks	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Yarram	Cars only	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Flynn	Truck	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Rosedale	Cars only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Glenmaggie	Cars/Trucks	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Stradbroke	Trucks	No	No	No	No	No
Stratford	Cars/Trucks	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Munro	Cars	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fernbank	Cars/Trucks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

VicRoads recognises that towns provide a range of commercial facilities including fuel, food, and drink. As a rule, VicRoads will encourage road users to use in-town facilities. VicRoads Rest Area Strategy 2010 states: *'There is an extensive network of rest areas and freeway*



service centres on the Victorian road network, with approximately 120 of these suitable for heavy vehicles. A range of local facilities also exist, providing further opportunities for all drivers to rest. Local councils and the private sector have a key role in the provision of these facilities, which offer an opportunity to support regional growth through the promotion of local attractions and services.'

Councils only authorisation over VicRoads Rest Areas relates to livestock.

Council does not have the authority to move on travellers in VicRoads rest areas and is only permitted to remove vehicles on council managed roads.

SECTION 4 – COUNCIL OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTIONS

4.1 Long vehicle parking (day time)

Long vehicle parking bays are significantly longer than a regular vehicle bay (approximately two parallel car parks, per long vehicle park). These bays allow parking of caravans, boats and other longer vehicles which are otherwise difficult to accommodate.

CMCA have indicated that for a town to gain an economic return from the RV market, there should be a provision for long vehicle parking close to the town's retail precinct and amenities to ensure that the economic impact is felt locally.

Smaller towns in Wellington Shire generally have parking available which is not line-marked. RVs usually can park within easy access to the town shopping precinct and amenities.



- *Council can increase the frequency of RV travellers stopping in towns across the shire by providing adequate short-term parking within a short walk from shopping precincts.*



- *Implement findings from the Port Albert Parking Review and improve RV access into a dedicated RV park in Wharf Street.*
- *As part of the streetscape works within Stratford and VicRoads safety works, RV parking will be developed in Stratford within a short walk of traders on Tyers Street.*
- *Additional long vehicle parking will be promoted at Port of Sale and signage will be installed by mid-2018.*
- *Overflow parking area on the southern side of the Port of Sale will to sealed by Council by 2020.*
- *Long vehicle parking currently exists in Sale CBD in the shopping centre car park on the western side of Reeve Street. This will be better promoted via improved signage.*

- *Review/improve current signage to LVP in Sale.*
- *Conduct a review of Long Vehicle Parking in each town within WSC and improve supply and access to Long Vehicle Parking where deemed inadequate.*

4.2 Dump points

An RV dump point is a properly designed facility intended to receive the discharge of wastewater from any holding tank or similar device installed in an RV. Dump points are an essential aspect of the RV market allowing tourists to discharge wastewater in an acceptable manner to an approved disposal system.

Below is a list of current dump point locations within Wellington Shire. This list does not include privately owned dump points.

Town	Location	Responsibility
Sale	Visitor Information Centre	Wellington Shire Council
Sale	Sale Agricultural Showground	Sale & District Agricultural Society
Sale	Port of Sale	Wellington Shire Council
Port Albert	Boat Ramp, Wharf Street	Wellington Shire Council
Yarram	Yarram Recreation Reserve	Wellington Shire Council
Maffra	Maffra RV Stop	Wellington Shire Council
Heyfield	Heyfield RV Stop, Macfarlane St	Heyfield Tourism Association
Rosedale	Bowling Club, Dawson Street	Rosedale Bowling Club
Hollands Landing	Public toilets adjacent to boat ramp	Gippsland Ports
Loch Sport	Boat Club, Charlie Street	Gippsland Ports

Opportunities

Council will determine the suitability and viability of dump points on land owned and managed by Council. The development of new dump points carry ongoing management and maintenance responsibilities. Council will balance the need for additional dump points with the demand and cost of ongoing maintenance and associated costs.

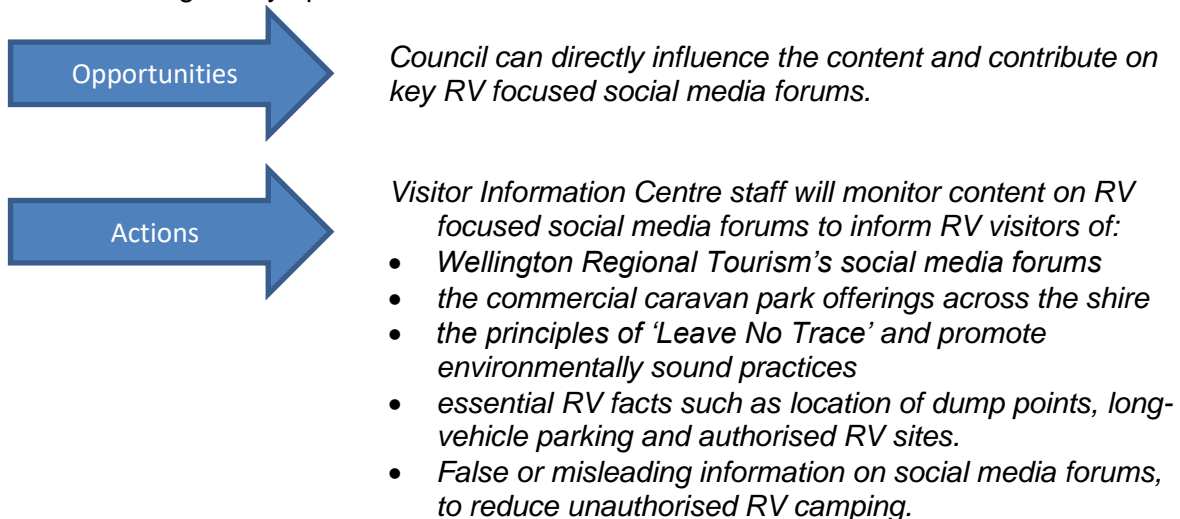
Actions

Council will:

- *investigate the demand and technical feasibility of installing a dump into a septic system at Golden Beach.*
- *encourage community groups and/or business associations to contact the appropriate organisations and landowners to establish if a proposed dump point can be facilitated within the community.*
- *Relocate the dump point at the former Visitor Information Centre in Forster St Sale to another convenient location.*

4.3 Social media

When selecting locations to stay overnight, RV users seek information from several resources (this includes websites, mobile phone apps, discussion boards, blogs, books and through word of mouth). These sources provide extensive information highlighting and/or rating specific RV sites and facilities. Council recognises that online camping applications (such as WikiCamps) provide a flow of information which circumvents traditional information channels. Information obtained from these resources allows the RV user to choose one of several overnight stay options.



4.4 Wellington Shire's commercial caravan parks

Commercial caravan parks offer a full range of camping options that suit the RV market. Although the RV market can bring an economic return to Wellington Shire, the issues and challenges associated with low/free cost camping must be acknowledged and addressed.

Wellington Shire's commercial caravan parks are small businesses operated under strict regulations to ensure the health and wellbeing of its visitors. Operators pay both Council rates and registration fees.

Commercial caravan parks are inspected for compliance with legislation related to:

- Visitor amenities, ablutions
- Cleanliness of sites, rental cabins and vans
- Potable drinking water supplies
- Basic fire safety measures
- Emergency management plans
- Maintenance of grounds, provision of lighting and general access
- Refuse disposal
- Wastewater management
- Structure compliance
- Recordkeeping

In 2012 the Caravan, RV & Accommodation Industry of Australia (CRVA) commissioned BDO Australia (research consultants) to create an Economic Benefit Report that considers the economic impact that commercial caravan parks have on their region from the spending undertaken by the park and park operators. It found that for every \$1 of park income, \$1.38 of local economic activity is generated.



It is vital that commercial caravan parks remain viable and continue to have a positive economic impact on the community. From 2017, Council will directly manage the Visitor Information Centre in Maffra and Sale. This provides Council officers an opportunity to directly interact with RV visitors and an opportunity to actively promote commercial caravan parks to RV visitors.

Council can also set parameters around the establishment of new RV facilities to avoid unfair competition with existing commercial caravan parks.



Council adopt a set of criteria to assist with the assessment of proposals seeking to establish RV facilities on Council owned or managed land. This will ensure new RV facilities funded by Council do not unfairly compete with existing businesses. (See 4.10 - Considerations for new RV sites).

4.5 Environmental impacts and sustainability

Wellington 2030 Community Vision states 'Wellington's natural environment and landscape is clean, diverse, beautiful, accessible and protected.'

It is vital that this Strategy aligns with the Community Vision so that residents and visitors can enjoy the scenic and protected environment.

Wellington Shire's natural environment is subject to increasing levels of recreation and tourist pressure. An RV market which is not appropriately managed will result in environmental impacts including soil, erosion and compaction, damage to vegetation and destruction of flora and fauna.

Increased RV activity on Council managed land raises issues relating to waste management and impacts on the local environment.



Council to actively promote the principles of 'Leave No Trace' amongst RV users.

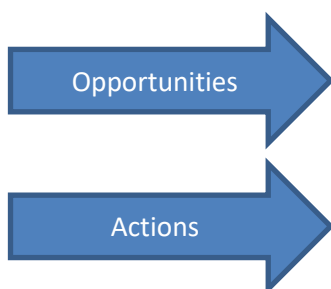


- *Council will provide 'Leave No Trace' signage for RV sites at Wharf St Port Albert, Willow Park Rosedale, Frenches Park Maffra, Tarra River and the RV site in Heyfield.*

- *Council officers and volunteers working at the Shire's three Visitor Information Centres will:*
 - *promote the 'Leave No Trace' philosophy when RV users enquire about authorised no-cost RV specific sites.*
 - *provide content on RV specific social media forums and WikiCamps promoting 'Leave No Trace'.*
- *Council will design RV stops to minimise impacts to water bodies and native vegetation. For example, upgrades at Willow Park Rosedale will be designed to limit vehicle parking close to the Latrobe River, to minimise erosion and water pollution.*

4.6 RV Site Timeframes

Generally, authorised RV locations across Wellington Shire do not have consistent timeframes for visitation length of stay.



Council could adopt consistency with timeframe limits for RV users at RV sites across the Wellington Shire.

- *Council will ensure each RV site accurately defines the allowable length of stay and have uniformity at each site.*
- *Local Laws will continue to monitor RV sites to ensure RV users are abiding by the stipulated allowable length of stay timeframe.*
- *Following the audit, Council will introduce consistent, clear signage across all Council managed RV parks which includes and promotes:*
 - *Consistent stay times (maximum 48 hours in a 30 day period)*
 - *Description and images of vehicles permitted to stay in the RV Park*
 - *Map of other RV and Caravan parks (with contact information) within the Council boundary*
 - *Dump point locations*
 - *Pets Policy*
 - *Leave No Trace Policy*
 - *Local Laws apply – Finable amount listed*

4.6a Unauthorised camping and compliance

Camping can sometimes occur on Council land which is not designated as a free camping site. Despite installation of 'No Camping' signs the issue has not been alleviated. A distinction needs to be made between the word 'camping' and 'parking'. While parking is leaving a vehicle unattended for a short period, 'camping' refers specifically to using a vehicle's facilities overnight.

Regulatory requirements highlight the prohibition of camping on many Wellington Shire sites including the following:

Local Law 3-2011 5.1.11 Behaviour in Municipal Places:

'A person must not in or on a Municipal Place: Act contrary to any signage authorised and installed by Council.' (e.g. a no camping sign)

Local Law 4 – 2011 6.5 Camping and Caravans on Roads:

'a) A person must not Camp in a Caravan on a Road unless the area has been designated by Council as being available for this purpose. Initial areas so designated by the Council, which may be modified from time to time, are set out in Schedule 7 (clause (b)).'

b) A person must not keep, erect or place a tent on any Road.'

Local Law 4 – Standards S6:

- '1. If a person has disengaged the Caravan from a vehicle and or has extended the stabilisers on the Caravan and/or has extended the awning and/or has placed furniture or other facility outside the Caravan and/or erected a tent; they would be considered to be setting up Camp.*
- 2. If a person has not set up Camp, but is sleeping in a Caravan or other form of temporary accommodation and has stopped for longer than eight hours, they would be considered to be Camping.'*

Schedule 7:

'Camping areas – road designated as being available for caravans.

*Wharf Street Carpark, Port Albert – Carparks as indicated by yellow line marking.
Overnight stays limited to a maximum period of 24-hours.'*

It is important to note a person can camp on private land for up to 28 days in a calendar year and not require a permit, however if an Authorised Officer wants to include any conditions outlined in Council's Local Laws a permit can be issued to impose those conditions.



Council will regularly monitor Council owned or managed land to ensure compliance.



Council's Local Laws staff will continue to respond to complaints relating to unauthorised camping as they are received. Response timeframes are determined by Council's

Customer Service Charter. If locations of unauthorised camping become problematic Council will consider investigative measures, signage options and redirecting travellers via social media platforms .

- *New signage will inform travellers of suitable overnight locations*
- *Include signage on public toilets to inform campers they are not to camp nearby but instead to visit local caravan parks or designated RV stops*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The moving on of vehicles on VicRoads managed roads is the sole responsibility of VicRoads and/or Police

The moving on of vehicles on Council managed roads is the responsibility of Local Laws with the following considerations

Local Law 4, Environment clause 6.5 Camping and Caravans on Roads states:

- a) A person must not camp in a Caravan on a Road unless the area has been designated by Council as being available for this purpose. Initial areas so designated by the Council, which may be modified from time to time, are set out in Schedule 7.
- b) A person must not keep, erect or place a tent on any Road.

Note: **Definition of camp** = means and includes camping in tents, caravans, or similar temporary accommodation.

Definition of camping = means to make or set up a camp, including erecting or occupying a caravan, tent or any temporary form of accommodation, for the purpose of staying for a period of time.

Refer Local Law 4 – Standards S6 listed above.

Generally speaking, Local Laws Officers have a duty of care to take into account and support travellers that may require a 'rest, revive, survive stop'.



4.7 Welcoming RV visitors

The Shire's visitor economy can benefit from the RV market. Council's tourism partner Wellington Regional Tourism conducts promotions and campaigns targeting the market to increase awareness of attractions within the region and encourage visitation. The market should be welcomed to the area and accommodated through a combination of suitably equipped commercial caravan and motor home parks, long parking spaces and designated free camping areas.

Opportunities

An increase in visitation and length of stay from the RV market contributes to the objectives of Council and Wellington Regional Tourism. If RV travellers are not actively welcomed into Wellington Shire, overnight stays and associated economic activity will be lost to other locations. The RV market represents an economic opportunity for traders across the Wellington Shire and adds vibrancy to towns.

Actions

Council will welcome RVs by promoting:

- *a network of commercial and free/low cost campsite options via Visitor Information Centres in Maffra, Yarram & Sale; and*
- *the Victorian Caravan Parks Association's (VicParks) 'Community Welcomes RV Travelers Program'.*
- *Easily accessible list of Free RV camps within WSC – printed, Central Gippsland website as well as promoted throughout RV markets*

- *Council will seek accreditation for RV Friendly Town status and promote local businesses and locations which achieve RV Friendly Destinations.*

- *Council will work collaboratively with Wellington Regional Tourism and Business & Tourism Associations to promote the Wellington Shire's RV offering through:*
 - *websites, online forums and apps*
 - *tourism networks including Gippsland Visitor Information Centre networks, Destination Gippsland, Business & Tourism Associations, etc.*

- *Council will upgrade the RV park at Willow Park, Rosedale in 2018.*

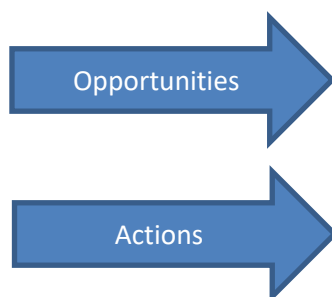
- *Council will work directly with Maffra Business and Tourism Association to determine how the Maffra RV Park can best cater for periods of peak demand.*

- *Conduct a review of Long Vehicle Parking in each town and improve supply and access to Long Vehicle Parking where deemed inadequate.*

- *Council will continue to review and improve the visitor experience at Council's VIC's including improved access and visibility, provision of information and staff training.*
- *Get Port Albert accredited as an RV friendly town as with five others in Wellington*

4.8 Signage

Signage is essential to clearly identify RV facilities and services. Signage located in areas that attract RV users improves traffic movement, reduces environmental degradation and allows visitors to better access into township precincts and amenities.



For Council to determine the RV signage needs. Appropriate signage can reduce environmental degradation, improve traffic flow and ensure major events accommodation needs are catered for.

Council will:

- *undertake an audit of all existing RV signage across the Wellington Shire and prepare a gap analysis and RV signage hierarchy to ensure adequate signage provision.*
- *implement the findings of the RV signage audit.*
- *ensure signage at all authorised RV sites clearly outlines time limits, 'Leave No Trace' responsibilities and promotes nearby commercial caravan park facilities and dump points.*
- Following the audit, Council will introduce consistent, clear signage across all Council managed RV parks which includes and promotes:
 - Consistent stay times (maximum 48 hours in a 30 day period)
 - Description and images of vehicles permitted to stay in the RV Park
 - Map of other RV and Caravan parks (with contact information) within the Council boundary
 - Dump point locations
 - Pets Policy
 - Leave No Trace Policy
 - Local Laws apply

4.9 Understanding the RV Market

The economic value of the RV market in Wellington Shire requires further investigation. This data will help validate Council's future infrastructure planning and visitor economy activities.



For Council to collaborate with Wellington Regional Tourism and Destination Gippsland Limited to develop appropriate mechanisms to obtain economic data (ie. visitor length of stay and expenditure), visitor profiles (ie. visitor demographics and psychographics) and industry feedback.



*Council will:
investigate the RV market further and distribute RV industry findings and data to industry partners including Wellington Regional Tourism and Destination Gippsland Ltd; and*

- advocate that the proposed Gippsland Destination Management Plan being developed by Destination Gippsland Limited, investigate the value of the RV market to Wellington and Gippsland more broadly.*

4.10 Considerations for new RV sites

It is proposed that Council adopt a set of criteria to assist with assessment of proposals seeking to establish RV facilities on Council owned or Council managed land. The following assessment criteria is proposed to be used in conjunction with all local and State planning and environmental requirements.

These criteria have been adapted from draft criteria developed for Baw Baw Shire Council by consultancy TRC Tourism Pty Ltd.

- New RV facilities/areas funded by Council should not unfairly compete with existing caravan park operators
- New RV facilities should only be located on sites that can support RV activity without degradation to the site's values
- RV activity should not displace local/community values
- A diversity of camping and RV experiences should be provided across Wellington Shire/region
- All camping and RV settings should be high quality and managed appropriately to the setting
- The safety of campers, community and environment is paramount

Criteria to consider by Council in relation to proposal for new RV tourism facilities:

Impact on community

- Is there community support for the development? Including residents, businesses, land managers/service providers?
- Will the proposed RV parking/accommodation site impact on existing use of community facilities such as sporting grounds, open space and recreation assets, residential amenity and peaceful enjoyment?
- Is the proposal likely to result in over-use of community facilities (toilets, parking, rubbish bins) without additional management resources available to ensure public safety and sustainability?
- Will RV parking clash with regular events (how frequently are they held? How will this be communicated with RV campers? How will campers be made to move on if necessary?)



Impact on existing businesses

- Is there an existing business that is likely to be negatively impacted by the introduction of a free camping site/RV dump?
- Do existing local businesses have facilities that visitors could utilise instead of developing new facilities? (e.g. Pay per use of dump?) Do existing businesses allow casual use of their facilities?
- Will the proposed RV facility support local businesses – generate more expenditure within the local area, create interest in stopping and spending more time in the region?
- Will the proposed area work for through-Shire traffic or regional touring routes, or dilute messages about touring routes?

Maximising use of existing assets

- Will the proposed facilities address a gap in existing assets? Consider within Wellington Shire and neighbouring areas?
- Will the proposed facilities meet a demand that is currently greater than supply, or reduce the use of existing assets?
- Does the need align with a greater need of an existing market or is it an emerging market that needs a broader consideration?

Management of sites

- Does Council have sufficient resources to manage the site, or a partnership with local business groups to manage the site?

For consideration – recommended rules/guidelines for any free camping:

- Duration limits – up to 48 hours maximum
- Will the proposed facilities address a gap in existing assets? Consider within Wellington Shire and neighbouring areas?
- Will the proposed facilities meet a demand that is currently greater than supply, or reduce the use of existing assets?
- Does the need align with a greater need of an existing market or is it an emerging market that needs a broader consideration?
- What services will be provided, and at what cost?
- Is there an existing dump points or facilities that could be used instead (free of charge or fee-for-service basis)?
- Is the local community driving the proposal and committed to its management?





Council will apply this assessment criteria in conjunction with all local and State planning and environmental requirements, when determining the need for any additional RV facilities on Council owned/managed land.

SECTION 5 – CONSULTATION PROCESS

Council sought input from a range of community and industry stakeholders in the development of this strategy.

Stakeholder & Community Engagement	Consultation Means
Wellington Regional Tourism	Meeting and email
Parks Victoria	Consultation email
Destination Gippsland	Consultation email
Victorian Caravan Parks Association	Meeting and email
Business & Tourism Associations (BTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale BTA • Maffra BTA • Heyfield Traders and Tourism Inc • Yarram Traders and Tourism Inc • Loch Sport BTA • Rosedale Chamber of Commerce • Stratford 	Consultation email
Tarra Territory Tourism	Consultation email
Caravan & Campervan Association	Consultation email
Port Albert Community Groups	Community newsletter
Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia	Consultation email
Golden Paradise Ratepayers' & Residents' Association	Consultation email
TRC Tourism Pty Ltd	Meeting

SECTION 6 – ACTIONS

The following table summarises proposed actions arising from this Strategy. Council will commence each action within two years of endorsement of this strategy.

Opportunity	Actions
Long vehicle parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement findings from the Port Albert Parking Review and improve RV access into a dedicated RV park in Wharf Street. • As part of the streetscape works within Stratford and VicRoads safety works, RV parking will be developed in Stratford within a short walk from the traders on Tyers Street. • Additional long vehicle parking will be promoted at Port of Sale and signage is being installed by mid-2018. • Overflow parking area on the southern side of the Port of Sale will to sealed by Council by 2020. • Long vehicle parking currently exists in Sale CBD in the shopping centre car park on the western side of Reeve Street. This will be better promoted via improved signage. • Review/improve current signage to long vehicle parking in Sale. • Conduct a review of Long Vehicle Parking in each town within WSC and improve supply and access to Long Vehicle Parking where deemed inadequate.
Dump points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the demand and technical feasibility of installing a dump into a septic system at Golden Beach. • Encourage community groups and/or business associations to contact the appropriate organisations and landowners to establish if a proposed dump point can be facilitated within the community. • Relocate the dump point at the former Visitor Information Centre in Foster St Sale to another convenient location.
Social media	<p>Visitor Information Centre staff will monitor content on RV focused social media forums to inform RV visitors of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellington Regional Tourism's social media forums • the commercial caravan park offerings across the shire • the principles of 'Leave No Trace' and promote environmentally sound practices • essential RV facts such as location of dump points, long-vehicle parking and authorised RV sites • false or misleading information on social media forums, to reduce unauthorized RV camping
Wellington Shire's commercial caravan parks	<p>Adopt a set of criteria to assist with the assessment of proposals seeking to establish RV facilities on Council owned or managed land. This will ensure new RV facilities funded by Council do not unfairly compete with existing businesses. (See 4.10 - Considerations for New RV sites).</p>
Environmental impacts and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 'Leave No Trace' signage for RV sites at Wharf St Port Albert, Willow Park Rosedale, Frenches Park Maffra, Tarra River and the RV site in Heyfield. • Council officers and volunteers working at the Shire's three Visitor Information Centres will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ promote the 'Leave No Trace' philosophy via social media and when serving RV users regarding authorised no-cost RV specific sites.

Opportunity	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provide content on RV specific social media forums and WikiCamps promoting 'Leave No Trace'. • Design RV stops to minimise impacts to water bodies and native vegetation. For example, upgrades at Willow Park Rosedale will be designed to limit vehicle parking close to the Latrobe River, to minimise erosion and water pollution.
RV Site Timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will ensure each RV site accurately defines the allowable length of stay and have uniformity at each site. • Local Laws will continue to monitor RV sites to ensure RV users are abiding by the stipulated allowable length of stay timeframe. • Following the audit, Council will introduce consistent, clear signage across all Council managed RV parks which includes and promotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistent stay times (maximum 48 hours in a 30 day period) ○ Description and images of vehicles permitted to stay in the RV Park ○ Map of other RV and Caravan parks (with contact information) within the Council boundary ○ Dump point locations ○ Pets Policy ○ Leave No Trace Policy ○ Local Laws apply
Unauthorised camping and compliance	<p>Council's Local Laws staff will continue to respond to complaints relating to unauthorised camping as they are received. Response timeframes are determined by Council's Customer Service Charter. If locations of unauthorised camping become problematic Council will consider investigative measures and signage options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New signage will inform travellers of suitable overnight locations • Include signage on public toilets to inform campers they are not to camp nearby but instead to visit local caravan parks or designated RV stops
Welcoming RV visitors	<p>Council will welcome RVs by promoting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a network of commercial and free/low cost campsite options via the Visitor Information Centres in Maffra, Yarram and Sale; and • the Victorian Caravan Parks Association's (VicParks) 'Community Welcomes RV Travelers Program' <p>Seek accreditation for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RV Friendly Destinations • Friendly Towns Status <p>Work collaboratively with Wellington Regional Tourism and local Business & Tourism Associations to promote the Wellington Shire's RV offering through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • websites, online forums and apps • tourism networks including Gippsland Visitor Information Centre networks, Destination Gippsland, Business & Tourism Associations, etc. <p>Council will upgrade RV park at Willow Park, Rosedale.</p> <p>Work with Maffra Business and Tourism Association to determine how the Maffra RV Park can best cater for periods of peak demand.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will upgrade the RV park at Willow Park, Rosedale in 2018 • Council will work directly with Maffra Business and Tourism Association to determine how the Maffra RV Park can best cater for periods of peak demand

Opportunity	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a review of Long Vehicle Parking in each town and improve supply and access to Long Vehicle Parking where deemed inadequate. • Council will continue to review and improve the visitor experience at Council's VIC's including improved access and visibility, provision of information and staff training. • Get Port Albert accredited as an RV friendly town as with five others in Wellington
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an audit of all existing RV signage across the Wellington Shire and prepare a gap analysis and RV signage hierarchy to ensure adequate signage provision • Implement the findings of the RV signage audit • Ensure signage at all authorised RV sites clearly outlines time limits and 'Leave No Trace' responsibilities • Promote nearby commercial caravan park/s and their facilities and promote local dump points • Following the audit, Wellington Shire Council will introduce consistent, clear signage across all Council managed RV parks which includes and promotes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistent stay times (maximum 48 hours in a 30 day period) ○ Description & images of vehicles permitted to stay in the RV Park ○ Map of other RV and Caravan parks (with contact information) within the Council boundary ○ Pets Policy ○ Leave No Trace Policy ○ 'Local Laws' apply
Understanding the RV market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the RV market further and distribute RV industry findings and data to industry partners including Wellington Regional Tourism and Destination Gippsland Ltd. • Advocate that the proposed Gippsland Destination Management Plan (GDMP) being developed by Destination Gippsland Limited, investigates the value of the RV market to Wellington and Gippsland more broadly.
Considerations for new RV Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will apply the assessment criteria on page 13 and 14, in conjunction with all local and State planning and environmental requirements, when determining the need for any additional RV facilities on Council owned/managed land.