

AccomNews
The essential industry guide

2024 CARAVAN & HOLIDAY PARK

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT



Stuart Lamont hails record-breaking National Conference industry milestone

By **Grantlee Kieza OAM**,
Industry Reporter

The Australian caravan industry is chalking up one milestone after another along its rapid upward trajectory.

That's the opinion of Chief Executive Officer Stuart Lamont, who presided over a record-breaking 2024 National Conference of the Caravan Industry of Australia Association (CIAA) on the Gold Coast in May.

With close to a million caravans, mobile homes and campervans already registered in Australia, Stuart sees continued growth over the next few years and the opportunity for caravan parks throughout Australia to become major electric vehicle charging stations.

The National Conference at the RACV Royal Pines Resort from May 15 to 17 drew 1086 delegates and 115 exhibitors, and Stuart says it was further confirmation of the strength and support of "a great industry".

"We wanted to make sure that there was a real groundswell of enthusiasm and excitement about where we sit as an industry and the future opportunities," he said.

"Our national conference was a vibrant event and we set record numbers with the largest number of delegates ever. We wanted it to be an amazing event so that people would lock it into their diary for the future and we've done that with 100 extra delegates coming annually for the last five or six years.

"We had exhibitors from federal departments; we had people talking about accreditation compliance; we had water-slide makers; the builders of houses, cabins and tiny homes; we had cab chassis and electrical systems, and almost everything in between.

"It was a real showcase and we wanted people to be exposed to the giant ecosystem that is the caravanning industry in Australia."



Stuart Lamont presenting BIG4 Bendigo Marong Holiday Park with the ReviewPro People's Choice Award



Stewart Lamont presenting the Richard Davis OAM Award to Craig Fretwell



Stuart Lamont moderating a session at the 2024 National Conference of CIAA

Stuart has just returned from a long holiday with wife Bebe that took in the French Open tennis in Paris, the Greek islands, a Virgin cruise, a visit to Istanbul and Northern Turkey and then home through Singapore.

"It involved a lot of cities, a lot of airports and a lot of crowds, and while it is great to get away there is nothing quite like home," he said.

"That's one of the reasons people love our industry so much. With

a campervan or motorhome or caravan, the base foundation for a vacation is pretty much stable and it's usually just a quick pack up and move on to the next destination. It's far better than tramping around airports, going through security, waiting for the next flight, and so forth."

His latest data says there are more than 900,000 caravans, campervans and motorhomes registered in Australia, but the

uptake is so rapid that he wouldn't be surprised if the number was now above a million.

"People love their RVs and caravans, they love the lifestyle it represents the ability to go out and explore and spend time with their family and get closer to nature," he said. "It offers so much freedom and Australia is your oyster - we have some of the greatest locations in the world.

"Caravans and caravan parks are a much more sophisticated product than they were years ago, and consumers have become more discerning - they expect a higher standard of accommodation when they travel these days.

"You can be as luxurious as you want now, but at the same time, you can still enjoy the benefits of a caravan camping holiday with a swag or a tent. You can decide what level you want. It's like picking your own adventure because there is so much choice."

Stuart predicts that the network of Australian caravan and holiday parks could be the nation's "charging network for the future as that product evolves.

"We're already seeing a huge amount of investment into our product and that will continue in keeping with some of the most spectacular locations that we have."

He said he was inspired as an industry leader, not by any one individual but by the "passion and enthusiasm of our operators serving customers".

"It can be from the most remote caravan parks because the effort these guys put into giving guests a great experience, to make their dreams and holiday memories come alive it's really inspiring," he said.

"They are real 'salt of the earth' people giving it a crack - people who are genuine and passionate about what they do and they make me enthusiastic for my job and very confident in the continuing strength of the industry." ■

Fergus Brown on 21 years with HPNZ

By Naomii Seah,
Industry Reporter

Holiday Parks New Zealand (HPNZ) is the industry association for the holiday parks sector of New Zealand, originally established in 1955 as the Camp and Cabin Association.

Outgoing Chief Executive Fergus Brown has had more than 40 years in the tourism and accommodation business, over twenty of which have been with HPNZ. Here, Fergus chats to *AccomNews* about his career at HPNZ.

What are some major changes you've seen in the 21 years you've helmed the organisation?

There have been many changes since 2003 when I joined the organisation, with many of them being around technology. Back in 2003 many parks used manual property management tools. Most parks now use online booking systems which incorporate channel management and dynamic pricing functions.

The latest change in our sector has been the introduction of corporate owners. This has been a great benefit to the sector and the New Zealand tourism industry as these new players invest in both the physical product and staff development.

What makes holiday parks unique as an accommodation option?

Holiday parks offer much more than just accommodation. They are a place where the other guests are a very important part of the product. Families return year after year to meet friends and make new ones. It is rewarding to see overseas visitors mixing with Kiwis while preparing a meal or washing dishes. Holiday parks are very



Fergus Brown

social and offer a special holiday experience for visitors of any age.

In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages, or strengths and weaknesses of the sector?

A major strength is our nationwide locations with many parks located in very special parts of New Zealand.

The advantages are many, but I would highlight the passion that the individual owner/operators bring to the business. A key strength is the fact that a holiday park is just that – a park where you holiday. The outdoor areas are considerable and there is plenty of space for everyone.

Our weakness is our greatest opportunity, and it is seasonality. We hosted 2 million guests in January this year and 1.1 million in both February and March. We don't get close to these numbers in other months and so we have huge capacity to welcome more guests and to increase

productivity and profitability.

What's been the highlight of your time at HPNZ?

It might not sound like a highlight, but COVID-19 was a challenging time which, from a personal view, provided many rewards. I had to work closely with my members, and others in the accommodation sector, to help them through something that none of us had experienced before. The holiday park sector came out of COVID very strongly with increased guest nights and strong businesses. I hope, though, that I never have to go through another highlight like this.

How can the sector diversify?

With an increased range of built accommodation, our sector can target different markets such as corporate travellers and meetings. Some parks have excellent meeting facilities, and combined with the abundance of space, they are an attractive option for small and medium business meetings.

In your last interview with *AccomNews*, you noted that climate change is one of the biggest challenges the industry faces. What do you think needs to happen to future proof the sector?

It is essential that parks take a serious approach to both climate adaptation and mitigation. Parks are already buying into the Tourism Sustainability Commitment and are changing the way they do business to minimise carbon and waste. There will be more challenges around adaptation and with many of our parks close to the sea or located beside rivers, they must be planning now for the impacts of climate change.

What's next for you?

Not sure at this stage. I don't plan to be looking for a new full-time position, but I still have plenty of energy and passion for tourism and will look for opportunities to use both.

Any personal holiday park recommendations in NZ?

It is a bit like choosing your favourite child. I have fond early memories of Smiths Holiday Park (now Paihia TOP 10) where our family camped when I was a kid. Now I see some fantastic parks such as Tasman Papamoa Beach, Hahei Holiday Resort, Hot Water Beach TOP 10, Lake Taupo Resort, Kaiteriteri Recreation Reserve, Omarama TOP 10, Driftaway Queenstown and Te Anau TOP 10 all of which offer wonderful holiday options.

What makes our sector special is not just the bigger parks but the smaller parks which are proudly owner operated. Parks such as Smiths Farm Holiday Park, Castlepoint Holiday Park, Tasman Ohiwa Beach, and Ross Beach TOP 10 are just a few of our very special places. ■

NRMA Parks and Resorts enhancing guest experiences

Chris Curran, what inspired your journey to becoming the General Manager of Operations at NRMA Parks and Resorts?

I've had the privilege of working for some great hospitality businesses, with leadership and management experience across single and multi-hotel operations, new build hotel openings, conversions, and major events. Joining NRMA was exciting due to its diverse mix of parks, resorts, and lodges, offering the potential to grow and elevate the experiences we can offer.

What current trends are you seeing in the caravan park industry?

It's interesting to see trends similar to hotels, particularly in providing unique, personalised offerings and more premium experiences. This includes enhancing the guest journey with food and beverage, amenities, and local experiences; it is more than just accommodation. Pet-friendly options and better accessibility are also increasingly important.

There is so much more opportunity to offer new products, create new experiences and add new master-planned locations.

What are the biggest challenges caravan parks face today and how can they be addressed?

Given our locations across the country, major weather-related events continue to challenge us, but our teams show amazing resilience supported by robust crisis planning. Communication across businesses and associations in the industry is strong and supportive. Addressing insurance costs and improving risk identification



Chris Curran, General Manager of Operations at NRMA Parks and Resorts

and management are critical, but the industry is working together to find solutions.

How has customer demand evolved in recent years, and what new services are caravan parks offering to meet them?

Customers now expect more, and the cost of living amplifies the perception of value. We offer a diverse product mix, including camping, cabins, villas, and glamping.

New initiatives like Tiny Homes in Jindabyne and Turtle Sands at Mon Repos cater to these evolving demands. Experiences and food and beverage play a large part in providing a well-rounded guest journey. Our Bear Grylls Survival Academy has been successful in providing a fun, interactive adventure programme for kids. We have also appointed a Group Food and Beverage Manager to the team, who is assisting in uplifting our offering in this space.

Investing in upskilling colleagues to deliver great customer service is also important, and our CARE training programme has been tailored to ensure our teams have all the support they need to host our guests in the best way.

What steps are you taking to implement eco-friendly practices?

Sustainability is exceptionally important. Our Turtle Sands Resort exemplifies this with solar and battery power, energy management systems, and a comprehensive turtle management plan. It had project support from the Queensland Government Activate Ecotourism Infrastructure Fund, working in cooperation with local stakeholder groups including QPWS, Gidarjil Corporation, Tareblang, Sea Turtle Conservation, Bundaberg Council and Bundaberg Tourism.

We are also very proud of the team at Freycinet Lodge, Tasmania, for winning the accommodation category in the recent Marie Claire

Sustainability Awards 2024, demonstrating innovative practices and commitment to environmental stewardship.

What role do caravan parks play in supporting local economies?

As Australia's largest member-owned organisation, NRMA, it has been serving members and the community for over 100 years and, with the launch of the MyNRMA membership programme, we're building on this legacy, so we can be there to help people for the next 100 years and beyond. Our park teams are integral to their communities, bringing new and return visitors, supporting employment, and partnering with organisations like Camp Quality. The NRMA Group's Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan guides our contributions to reconciliation.

What are your predictions for the future of the caravan park industry?

Demand for higher quality standards and diverse product offerings will continue but also provide opportunities to offer a diverse mix of products and experiences against a spectrum of segments and price points. Competition from the cruise market will increase, necessitating collaboration to maximise marketing and visitation. Embracing new technologies will also provide future opportunities.

What do you find most rewarding about working in the caravan park industry?

Working with a dedicated team of great people who genuinely want to make a difference, the amazing locations, diverse offerings, and the guests we host are incredibly rewarding. I love the potential of this industry. ■

Kui Parks: Local charm and national reach

Kui Parks is a network of owner-operated caravan parks across regional Australia, catering to like-minded travellers. Mark Simpson shares the inspiration behind its creation.

The inspiration for Kui Parks came from our founder, Bert van Spronsen, who travelled over 200,000 km around Australia, visiting caravan parks. He recognised the need for a network of parks focused on travellers seeking quality, cleanliness, friendliness, and value for money. Our goal was to offer like-minded travellers a selection of parks with these shared values.

What are the core values of Kui Parks, and how do they shape the guest experience?

We are guided by core values of cleanliness, friendliness, well-maintained facilities, and value for money. Surveys consistently highlight these values as essential to our members. They ensure that every park offers a welcoming environment, pristine amenities, and great value, making each stay enjoyable and stress-free without paying for unused facilities.

How do you ensure these standards are consistently met across all Kui Parks?

We have a rigorous selection process for new parks, including thorough inspections and evaluations. New park members must meet strict criteria for cleanliness, facilities, and customer service.

Before a park joins Kui Parks, we review all guest feedback and conduct detailed assessments. We also organise member visits to ensure consistent standards. If a park fails to meet standards, we work with



Mark Simpson, Director, Kui Parks

the owner to address issues, maintaining high satisfaction among members and travellers.

How do you foster a sense of community among Kui Parks guests and staff?

Caravan parks are about people, local knowledge, and connections. Many parks host happy hours, encouraging guests to connect and share meals. They also offer entertainment. Local park owners provide advice and knowledge about the area, creating a friendly atmosphere that makes guests feel part of the family.

Are there any projects or improvements you would like to tell us about?

All parks are continually improving, adding new sites, cabins, and upgraded facilities. To support members, we have introduced digital membership cards and are planning a new program to provide more value and usability in the future.

What sets Kui Parks apart from other caravan park networks in Australia?

Our commitment to representing owner-operated parks that prioritise cleanliness, friendliness, and well-maintained facilities

sets us apart. Additionally, our parks are in regional areas across Australia, offering travellers an expanded choice.

Can you highlight some of the most popular features that guests can expect to find?

Parks are in stunning locations, offering more space while maintaining high standards. Guests can expect clean and spacious bathrooms, well-equipped camp kitchens, barbecue areas, and communal areas. Many parks also offer drive-through sites, pet-friendly accommodations, fishing, and access to beautiful natural surroundings. The personal touch in the presentation and care of the park is also significant. Depending on the location, many parks arrange tours, fishing opportunities, boating, fossicking, and much more.

What is the importance of having owner-operated parks?

Owner-operated parks ensure a personal touch and a high care level. Owners are invested in maintaining standards and providing excellent customer service, directly impacting the guest experience. In owner-operated parks, guests

will experience a personal touch in presentation, layout, gardens and more.

How do Kui Parks cater to the varied needs of travellers?

We offer a range of accommodations, from powered and unpowered sites to cabins and luxury lodges. Our facilities cater to solo travellers, couples, families, and groups, meeting their specific needs.

Please share news of upcoming projects or new additions to your network?

We are excited about several upcoming projects, including new parks in prime locations and upgrades to existing facilities. We are also enhancing our online presence to make booking and information access even more convenient for our guests.

How do you envision the future of Kui Parks and the caravanning industry in Australia?

We see a future where caravan parks are modernised by a new generation of talented owners. As the caravanning industry in Australia continues to grow, we strive to be at the forefront, expanding our network and enhancing our services to meet evolving traveller needs.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of managing Kui Parks?

It's been seeing the positive impact on our guests' experiences and hearing their feedback. Knowing we have created a network that meets the needs of travellers is fulfilling. We are passionate about supporting small businesses and local communities and helping park owners promote and grow their parks. ■

Reflections Holidays: Embracing nature and community

Nick Baker, CEO of Reflections Holidays, elaborates on the vision to transform the camping experience.

At Reflections, we're all about embracing the beauty of nature in New South Wales. We manage 40 awesome holiday parks, unique properties, and camping spots on Crown land, plus we take care of 45 stunning nature reserves for everyone to enjoy.

We reinvest our profits right back into our parks and reserves. We're not just a holiday park group; we're a vital part of both coastal and inland communities. Our goal is to get everyone out into the wild, and we encourage our guests to check out local adventure and tourism services. It's a win-win—our guests have unforgettable experiences, and local businesses thrive.

We're always on the lookout for adventure companies that share our love for nature and Indigenous organisations offering cultural tourism programs. Many of our parks already host these activities and are building strong community ties.

How is Reflections leaning into sustainable tourism, and what are the standout initiatives?

Reflections is currently taking a multi-tiered approach to sustainability, which includes solar for energy efficiency, smart water meters and shower heads for water savings.

Our partnerships with OzFish and Landcare Australia are designed to benefit the environment in the patches of nature where we partner and to also encourage our guests to be participants in "voluntourism", from leaving their fishing tackle in recycling bins or joining in community workdays to remove weeds from nature reserves.

Reflections Jimmys Beach was named Holiday Park of the Year in 2023. What makes Jimmys Beach exceptional?



Nick Baker, CEO, Reflections Holidays

If you've been to Jimmys, as we call it, you'll know what a spectacular part of the world it is. Our park is nestled in bushland with access to two beaches (one lake-like and family friendly, the other a surf beach) and walking trails around Mount Tomaree and beyond. The accommodation mix at Reflections Jimmys Beach is diverse, from unpowered camp sites for those camping warriors to tiny homes, glamping tents and deluxe villas for those who like a touch of luxury, to budget cabins. The icing on the cake, beyond the extraordinary access to nature and water, is the heated pool. Kids love it!

You've partnered with Worimi artist Tyson Jolly for an art trail at Jimmys Beach. How does this initiative align with your Reconciliation Action Plan and 2030 strategic plan commitments?

Our Aboriginal Engagement Officer, Cheryl Newtown, built a rapport with Tyson, who developed artworks for the cultural trail. These show native animals and their Wiradjuri names, giving guests an insight into Country.

Building cultural tourism activities is a core plank of our first "Reflect" Reconciliation Action Plan. About 25 of our parks stage cultural tourism activities with

local Indigenous organisations, ranging from yarning circles to art workshops and didgeridoo playing. We are now preparing to commence our journey for our second Innovate RAP.

Tell us about the new partnership with the GIANTS AFL club?

Our partnership with the Giants is strategic, allowing us to connect with their heartland membership in Western Sydney, Canberra and to the south, and for their members to tap into our NSW-wide footprint.

Our organisations share similar attributes: we believe in the benefits of outdoor activity; we are nimble and progressive in how we work; and we want to encourage our members to better know the other organisation for mutual benefit.

Reflections manages a significant amount of Crown land in NSW. How do you ensure that your operations positively impact the local communities and environments?

Our team is deeply rooted in every community where we have holiday parks and unique accommodation. Our staff are active members of their communities and dedicated caretakers of local nature reserves, from beachside areas to popular parks.

Our commitment to community shines through in many ways. For instance, hosting various events, our collective efforts raised nearly \$80,000 for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service. We measure our success by more than just financial gains – we focus on social, environmental, cultural, and financial outcomes.

And here's something we're really proud of: we're the only holiday park group in Australia that's a certified social enterprise. This means we're committed to doing business for good.

What challenges have you faced in steering Reflections through periods of change and growth?

I think two of the most challenging events so far were the pandemic and the flow-on effects that were still occurring when I joined in July 2021, and the floods that impacted the Northern Rivers in 2022. With the pandemic, it was a team effort operationally to ensure our guests were cared for as best as we could, including freezing some fees when travel was not possible.

In the tragic case of the floods, we handed our Ballina park over to the NSW Government to assist flood-affected people. I'm really proud of how our team faced each challenge to make a real difference for those who lost their homes and livelihoods.

Looking ahead, what are your top priorities for Reflections over the next five years?

Reflections will continue to focus on being a leader in outdoor adventures. We have an ambitious park improvement program which will see diverse accommodations continue to be installed across our parks. We know that guests want more experience offerings, and we will be providing opportunities which build more connection to nature and the amazing landscapes our parks are in.

Environmental sustainability is also important to us as we continue to reduce the environmental footprint across our parks and attain Eco Tourism Accreditation. ■

The vision behind Reflections Holidays' new brand identity



Reflections Burrinjuck Waters Holiday Park



Reflections Lake Keepit

Peter Chapman, what were the key considerations behind the new brand identity for Reflections Holidays?

Our key consideration was to accurately represent who we are and what we are all about.

With a wide range of offerings from wilderness parks to architecturally designed villas, beach houses, remote campgrounds, tiny homes and even light houses, we are a team that genuinely believes 'Life's Better Outside' - we're about nature, connection and adventure and our brand identity needed to reflect that.

As a nature-based holiday company, we wanted to shift perceptions and show our commitment to providing opportunities for people to experience incredible outdoor adventures and nature in all its glory. Our new brand, Reflections Holidays, showcases that we are so much more than just a place to holiday or camp.

We also needed to show that we are not a closed-gate accommodation provider, keeping guests contained within our parks and amused with jumping pillows and other like entertainment.

We are more a base camp to explore the natural world.

Tell us more about the strategy behind this rebrand?

Reflections is re-imagining what a camping company could be. We want to do things that make a difference for the 2 million visitors we see each year. In turn, we encourage them to be gentle to their environment and to support local businesses when they are with us. Our brand focus is on the magic of the outdoors and how powerful and memorable those experiences can be, whether you are holidaying alone or with family and friends.

Share some insights on the marketing initiatives you have found most effective in promoting sustainable tourism?

We are just starting out on our sustainable journey. We are excited to launch our sustainable accommodation like our new tiny homes across our coastal parks and our new villas at Hawks Nest, which are prefabricated modular pod accommodation with environmentally conscious design principles.

Our guests choose to holiday in nature, and we know that sustainability and caring for the environment are things they care about. Future marketing



Pete Chapman, CMO of Reflections Holidays

will highlight our use of recycled materials, energy saving initiatives such as smart water metering, energy efficient appliances, solar panels and the use of design principles which create a unique holiday experience and help preserve the environments that we care for. Our exciting new fully off grid tiny homes coming soon to our park at Lake Keepit reflects our commitment to sustainable accommodation and tourism.

How do you ensure that your marketing campaigns resonate with both local and international tourists?

We understand that there is a real thirst to experience rejuvenating escapes with a

focus on the healing nature of the outdoors and natural environment. NSW has such a range of incredible landscapes and environments, and with coastal and country properties, we know that we can provide what both local travellers and international travellers are craving.

Highlighting the potential for adventure and cultural experiences across the regions our parks are in, resonates strongly with both domestic and international markets. We have seen this from participating in and leading industry forums, industry and guest feedback, interest at trade shows, OTAs and international travel groups. ■

Everyone's welcome: Lake Mac Holiday Parks' focus on inclusive tourism



Swansea Lakeside Holiday Park



Belmont Lakeside Holiday Park

Five Lake Mac Holiday Parks offer cabins, caravan sites, and camping spots, all featuring essential amenities across beautiful locations in the Lake Macquarie region.

Garry Ellem, where does your passion for the holiday park industry come from?

I've been managing tourist businesses since 2002 and still love the industry. I work in a space where people come to enjoy themselves, making for generally happy customers.

I thrive on the opportunity to help improve the facilities and experiences available



Garry Ellem, Coordinator, Lake Mac Holiday Parks

in the parks, allowing more people to enjoy them now and for years to come. It benefits everyone -- guests enjoy better parks, local businesses thrive with increased tourism, and we see positive growth.

Tell us about Lake Mac Holiday Parks' evolution since the 1960s.

From small tents and caravans to today's luxury motorhomes and spacious cabins with modern amenities, the parks have adapted to changing needs. The evolution doesn't stop there, historically our guests would stay for a long annual holiday, but we've seen a shift in the trend for mini breaks.

Since 2017, Lake Mac Holiday Parks has focused on inclusion and improved developments. What inspired this pivot?

In 2017, I saw my grandmother struggle with accessibility at a cabin. This was a turning point, leading us to prioritise inclusive development. From minor adjustments to major

redesigns, we aim to make our parks accessible to everyone, integrating inclusive features into all our projects.

How would you describe your leadership style?

In a word, inclusive.

The transformation of Lake Mac Holiday Parks is a team effort, driven by passionate teams committed to continual improvement. That essence of striving for more is now just part of our group's DNA especially our focus on inclusion and accessibility.

Congratulations on Sails Holiday Park being a finalist for Organisational Diversity and Inclusion at the 2024 Local Government Professionals Excellence Awards.

We are proud of Sails Holiday Park, achieving the goal of inclusive tourism, and ensuring access for all. With funding from the Regional Tourism Activation Fund, we completed several projects: inclusive cabins and tents, accessible amenities, a recreational room, new footpaths, and much more. We continue to improve with new developments like ensuite sites and better office access.

Wangi Point Holiday Park recently achieved a Gold Listing for consistently exceeding guest expectations. What led to this accolade?

Park managers Matt and Jo are dedicated to providing the best experience. Their friendliness and helpfulness shine through



Sails Holiday Park



Sails Holiday Park

in customer feedback. Despite fewer developments, their commitment to excellent service earned this recognition.

The economic impact of Lake Macquarie Holiday Parks is impressive, with \$82.5 million injected into the local economy and over 650 jobs supported in 2023. What contributed to this?

Recent redevelopments, including new accommodations and tourist sites, have driven growth. Expanding our options, like the new safari tents at Sails and accessible tents at Swansea, has also boosted tourism and economic impact.

The parks recorded almost 300,000 visitor nights in 2023. What strategies attract and retain so many visitors?

High return clientele rates are bolstered by holiday activity programs for kids. We also expand our reach through caravan and camping shows, spreading awareness and attracting new visitors.

What features of your bespoke cabins enhance the overall experience for guests?

Our cabins include features like large outdoor areas, automatic doors, adjustable kitchen counters, spacious layouts, and modern amenities. These enhancements cater to all guests, ensuring a comfortable and accessible stay.

How have guests responded to the new accessible cabins?

Feedback has been extremely positive. Guests appreciate the ease of access and the thoughtful design features. Many who hadn't been able to holiday for years can now enjoy our parks.

What are your long-term plans for accessibility and inclusivity at Lake Mac Holiday Parks?

Our vision is to make inclusive tourism mainstream.

We aim to increase accessible accommodations from 15 percent to equal levels, upgrade amenities, and introduce new features like a sensory room. Continued improvements include more accessible accommodation, playground equipment, and better website functionality.

What future innovations or upgrades can visitors expect?

Plans include pool replacements, playground upgrades, new accommodations, and expanded

solar and EV charging points. We continually enhance facilities to provide the best experience.

How do you see the role of holiday parks evolving?

Holiday parks are investing in experiences and high-quality facilities, offering a special environment where guests can enjoy open spaces and make connections. The industry is booming, and parks provide a nostalgic, community-focused alternative to resorts and motels. ■



Belmont Lakeside Holiday Park

David Murray's vision for the future of RMS Cloud

The appointment of David Murray as Chief Executive Officer of RMS Cloud marks the dawn of a new chapter for this global leader in Property Management Software.

With a storied legacy spanning over four decades, RMS Cloud has long been at the forefront of the accommodation and caravan industries. This latest move, following a strategic partnership with private equity firm Advent Partners, signals a bold step forward in the company's ambitious global expansion.

David Murray, bringing extensive leadership experience from industry giants like IBM and Amdocs and a successful stint as CEO of Buildxact, is eager to dive into this "welcoming and vibrant" sector. He envisions propelling RMS Cloud's already expansive customer base of more than 7500 properties to unprecedented heights.

"Joining RMS Cloud is both an honour and an exciting new challenge," he said. "The business is already immensely successful, with a rich heritage. Peter Buttigieg, our founder, will be staying on for a while, allowing me the time to truly understand the industry, the team, and our customers."

He continued, "In due course, I aim to focus on key market segments across the 65 countries we serve. It's crucial to support all these markets while targeting those with strong value propositions. Scaling the business requires robust processes, so we will invest heavily in our product, enhancing resources in marketing, sales, technology, and administrative support. Our goal is to mature our processes and become more corporatised, positioning RMS Cloud for sustained growth."



David Murray, Chief Executive Officer and Peter Buttigieg Founder.



This is a pivotal moment for our company

Exciting changes are on the horizon for RMS Cloud. In a recent announcement, Founder and outgoing CEO Peter Buttigieg revealed plans to appoint a new product leader to help shape the future direction while leveraging Peter's own deep industry knowledge.

"This is a pivotal moment for our company," Peter stated. "For over 40 years, RMS Cloud has been a cornerstone in the accommodation industry. We've been present at every Caravan Park Industry Conference since the very first event in Canberra 27 years ago. Our commitment to our clients, and continuous investment in our product, team, and infrastructure, has driven significant industry advancements. And this is just the beginning of further evolution."

He added, "Our future leadership must continue to prioritise adaptability and innovation. I am confident David is the right person to lead RMS Cloud into this exciting future."

David, who prides himself on inclusive leadership, is dedicated to nurturing RMS Cloud's customers, team, and operations while driving competitive and diverse market growth.

"My priority will be to set the direction, vision, and purpose of the company. I feel privileged because the RMS Cloud team is already well-established and incredibly welcoming. For me, it's all about outcomes and direction. Inclusive leadership yields the best results—everyone must be in it together. My role is to foster a healthy work culture and

empower the team to excel. Open communication is crucial, and having a bit of fun along the way is essential too!"

Peter added, "Integrity has always been our cornerstone. It's what I expect from myself and all employees. A tarnished reputation can't be bought back, and RMS has maintained an excellent reputation."

Looking ahead, David is thrilled about the challenges and opportunities awaiting him and RMS Cloud.

"I am excited to work with such a diverse range of clients. The opportunity to deliver solutions to small business owners, five-star hotels, and large hotel groups like Ascott Ltd is truly unique. The growth potential for RMS Cloud is phenomenal. With its solid foundation, I am confident we can enhance product investment, consolidate our strengths, and drive forward. The future is bright for RMS Cloud, and I am ready to turn up the growth." ■



Delighting guests the easy way



Efficient communication



Guest independence



Streamlined reservations

Unlock a seamless guest journey with the RMS Guest Portal. Discover intuitive technology that streamlines managing reservations, add-ons, check-in and out, and enables real-time communication- empowering staff to greet guests with a warm "G'day". Experience the future of holiday park technology and learn how to transform ordinary stays into extraordinary memories.

rmscloud.com/get-started

Future-proofing holiday parks:

Exclusive insights from Jurgen Ortelee, MD of IDeaS Revenue Solutions APAC

How is IDeaS Revenue Solutions responding to trends in the holiday park industry?

We are seeing a shift in the holiday park sector from traditional static pricing to a more modern, dynamic pricing approach. Selling the right price to the right guest at the right time is becoming increasingly important. By analysing historical data, market trends, and competitor pricing, IDeaS G3 RMS uses dynamic pricing to optimise rates for each inventory type. By understanding the booking patterns of different customer groups and forecasting demand, holiday park owners can automatically offer the best price for their accommodation, maximising revenue from available demand. IDeaS G3 RMS has specific functionality essential for managing holiday parks.

Can you discuss new developments for IDeaS Revenue Solutions in the holiday park sector?

IDeaS recently announced a rollout with Summerstar Tourist Parks, which has adopted IDeaS G3 RMS across fourteen of its Australian-based holiday parks. Summerstar previously relied on manual approaches to forecast demand and set prices. The holiday park group adopted IDeaS G3 RMS across all its properties to modernise business processes and improve its approach to pricing, driving revenues across its estate.

By automating revenue-related tasks such as pricing, inventory management, and distribution channels, Summerstar can maximise its revenue potential. IDeaS G3 RMS automatically assesses Summerstar property performance and market demand, deploying pricing decisions and length-of-stay controls across distribution channels to optimise revenue opportunities.

Commenting on the rollout, James Corbitt, Director,



Jurgen Ortelee, MD of IDeaS Revenue Solutions APAC

Summerstar Tourist Parks said: "Summerstar Tourist Parks has sites across western and southern Australia, all of which have different peak seasons, special events, and guest preferences when it comes to booking. Historically, our approach to revenue management has been a very hands-on, manual process that was often de-prioritised in favour of other operational activities. We realised that to continue operating successfully, Summerstar must provide both the best customer experience and prices possible. As a result, it was critical that our length of stay and pricing are balanced through practising effective revenue management."

Are there any innovative technologies or services you've recently implemented?

Holiday parks must navigate a tangled web of products based on length of stay while managing daily rates, which include derived rates, offers, and discounts. Operators need new technologies that allow them to price their rates independently. They require a solution that can automatically optimise and price daily flexible standard rates (often displayed for the retail market) as well as other independent rates (such as extended stay monthly rates) that are exclusively offered to specific types of guests.



Selling the right price to the right guest at the right time

IDeaS' G3 RMS Independent Products feature enables separate optimisation and pricing of products, resulting in maximised revenue while maintaining rate hierarchy and product positioning. In 2010, IDeaS G3 RMS was the first system to allow operators to price and optimise in real-time, eliminating the complex web of rules, time-consuming manual rate management, and static offline pricing that often increases the risk of mispricing.

How does IDeaS Revenue Solutions approach revenue management in the holiday park industry?

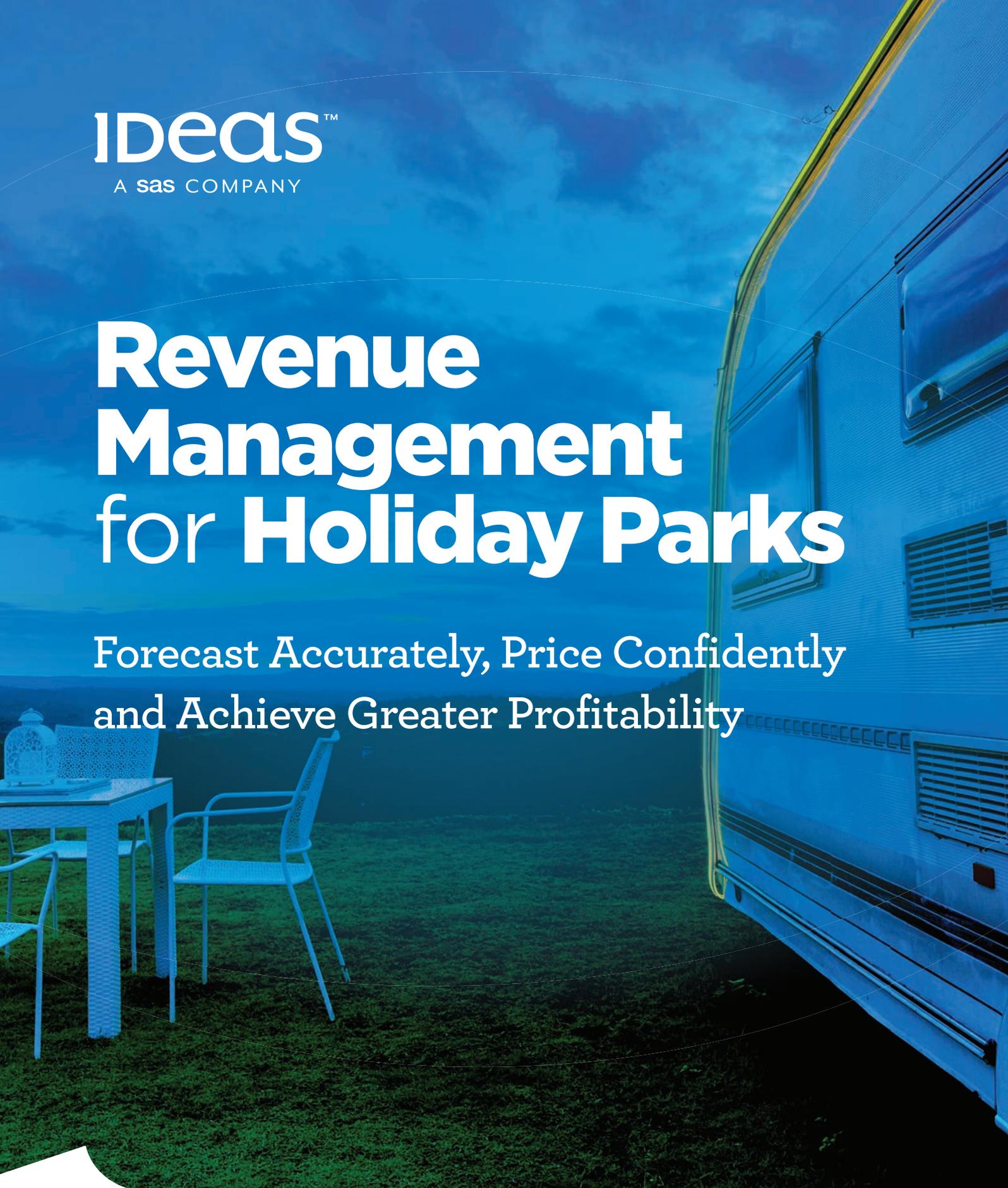
IDeaS understands that holiday park operators are under significant pressure to meet guest expectations and deliver a financial return. At the same time, teams are stretched and require the help of technology more and more.

IDeaS G3 RMS harnesses world-class analytics to automatically price and optimise holiday park cabins and sites, minimising the need for manual forecasts and delivering precise pricing distributed to all selling

channels. Using seamless cloud technology, IDeaS G3 RMS provides park managers with immediate access to revenue management and pricing tools, enabling holiday park staff to spend more time creating positive guest experiences and less time behind a desk.

What is your vision for the future of the holiday park industry, and how do you see IDeaS Revenue Solutions contributing to that?

The adoption of new technology in the holiday park sector is inevitable. Even the most traditional park operators understand the enormous possibilities of digital transformation to improve profits and productivity. IDeaS works with operators to ensure that manual data collection and tedious spreadsheet analysis are a thing of the past. Our revenue management technologies improve the operational efficiency and revenue performance of holiday parks, making a significant difference to both top and bottom-line business performance. ■



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Caravan industry's finest at groundbreaking **2024 National Conference**



Grant Wilckens, CEO (right) receiving the Eric Hayman OAM Award for Excellence.

A resounding success! Over 100 exhibitors and a record-breaking 1060 delegates gathered on the Gold Coast for the 2024 Caravan Industry National Conference, hosted by Caravan Industry Association of Australia (CIAA) and principal sponsors ModnPods and Leisure-Tec Australia. The event at RACV Royal Pines Resort showcased innovation, celebrated industry leaders, trailblazers, and enthusiasts of the outdoor recreation and caravan park sector.

The event kicked off with an enthusiastic welcome from Grant Wilckens, in his seventh and final year as CIAA Chair, who said it was "great to reflect on the incredible growth of the industry."

Over three days, the schedule was packed with opportunities for personal and professional growth. The trade programme was a hive of activity, showcasing cutting-edge technologies and services.

CIAA CEO Stuart Lamont said he was delighted to "celebrate what our iconic Aussie caravan and camping industry has

achieved and all of the exciting opportunities ahead."

Conference climax: Fireworks and prestigious awards

The conference concluded with a spectacular Gala Dinner & Awards, dubbed the Industry's Night of Nights! A highlight was the Eric Hayman OAM Award for Excellence, awarded to Grant Wilckens, CEO & co-Founder of Discovery Parks, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the National Body for the Australian Caravanning and Camping Industry.

AccomNews spoke with prominent exhibitors:

IDeaS Revenue Solutions

Most memorable moments:

Jurgen Ortelée, IDeaS Managing Director, APAC, noted the growing openness of holiday park owners and operators to adopt new technologies. He said: "They are increasingly keen to learn and understand how these innovations can enhance their business performance and operational efficiencies. It is such a positive development to see holiday park industry professionals explore the benefits that modern technology can bring to their operations, and it reinforced the importance of our work in driving the industry forward."

Promoted products and services:

IDeaS' primary focus was to highlight the overall benefits of revenue management to holiday parks. They did this by discussing how to optimise pricing strategies, improve forecasting accuracy, and drive revenue growth, emphasising opportunities to enhance overall business performance for holiday park operators.

Brand promotion: The conference reinforced IDeaS' longstanding collaboration with the Caravan Association. It provided an excellent platform to showcase expertise through presentations, workshops, and as an exhibitor, connecting with nearly 100-holiday park clients to hear firsthand their experiences and the benefits of IDeaS' solutions.

Networking highlights:

A standout was the high engagement during IDeaS' masterclass on revenue management concepts, reflecting operators' strong interest in adopting innovative solutions. Mr Ortelée said: "The attendees' openness to learning and willingness to embrace innovative solutions was truly inspiring."

Feedback: Attendees, including current clients, provided positive feedback. "Our stand was highly visible and attracted a lot of foot traffic. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees appreciating our clear message: forecast accurately, price confidently, and achieve greater profitability with the right revenue management solutions."



IDeaS Revenue Solutions



Australian Linen Supply

Australian Linen Supply

National Sales & Marketing Manager Helen Hurst expressed appreciation for the opportunity to strengthen existing relationships and establish new connections.

Promoted products and services: A comprehensive collection of linen designed specifically for caravan parks, emphasising a commitment to sustainability and highlighting efforts to meet net zero targets, strong ethical sourcing, and supply chain practices.

Brand promotion: The event facilitated direct engagement with both long-standing and new customers, enhancing brand visibility and recognition. Face-to-face interactions led to meaningful conversations about Australian Linen Supply's offerings and sustainable practices.

Notable networking opportunities: Meaningful conversations with key decision-makers from various parks, not

only helped strengthen existing relationships but also opened new avenues for collaboration and business growth.

Feedback: Attendees provided positive feedback about the quality of products on display, validating the value of Australian Linen Supply's offerings and underscoring their dedication to sustainable business practices.

RMS Cloud

Memorable moments: The opportunity to connect face-to-face with customers and partners. Outgoing RMS Cloud CEO Peter Buttigieg noted that hearing positive feedback in person was incredibly rewarding and reinforced pride in being part of such a supportive and dynamic community. "These interactions are a powerful reminder of the impact of our work and motivate us to continue pushing forward," he said.

Promoted products and services: Cybersecurity was a hot topic, demonstrating the industry's need to stay ahead of the threats



RMS Cloud

of fraud and cyberattacks. The RMS Cloud stand showcased its advanced payment gateway, RMS Pay, emphasising its secure, PCI-compliant solutions designed to protect customers' transactions and data. The key focus was to demonstrate its commitment to helping businesses safeguard their operations in the digital age.

Brand promotion and engagement: This conference has been a cornerstone of RMS Cloud's legacy in the holiday park and caravanning industry for over two decades. Always eagerly anticipated, it provides the team with an invaluable platform to engage directly with customers and partners, to provide real-time support and share updates on products. "The conference strengthens our brand presence and reinforces our dedication to the community we serve," said Peter Buttigieg.

Networking: This year's conference was particularly significant for RMS Cloud as they announced the appointment of David Murray as their new

CEO. David's introduction marks a new chapter for RMS Cloud, following the visionary leadership of Founder CEO Peter Buttigieg, who has led the company for over 40 years. Peter's influence on the holiday park and caravanning industry is profound, and his legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire the team.

Feedback: RMS Cloud received outstanding feedback from attendees regarding their stand and products. Notably, Kerry Goltz of Jolly Swagman Accommodation Park shared her positive experience with RMS Pay, stating, "Last year, we installed RMS Pay, and it has been a game-changer. We no longer take credit card details over the phone; I send a Pay Link via text message. RMS has really helped me because I am not worried about chasing people for money and payments." The RMS Cloud team expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the CIAA Conference and are excited about the future under the new leadership of David Murray. P18 ▶



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Guests have begun prioritising sustainable travel and outdoor experiences, and holiday and caravan park operators are embracing innovation and technology to meet their guest's needs with green and innovative amenities in their parks.



Using in-house developed advanced technology combined with high-quality equipment built for the demands of the Australian coastal environment, BYKKO's automated E-Bike Rental System paves the way for healthier and more sustainable travel. Seamlessly integrated into any existing Park, BYKKO's E-Bike Rental System has set the new standard for parks supporting outdoor fun and recreation.

The BYKKO system is headache free. Guests hire and return the E-Bikes themselves, with all registration and payment handled directly through their

own phone. BYKKO's online rental platform ensures park managers and their staff can focus on their daily tasks, while the fully automated E-Bikes seamlessly supports their guests and creates an additional revenue stream for the park.

BYKKO's E-Bikes not only adds value to guests and increases their satisfaction, an intelligent e-bike rental system acts as a unique selling point, attracting new visitors who are actively seeking recreational activities. After all, park's guests are outdoor lovers at heart!

BYKKO E-Bike stations use cutting-edge security and anti-theft features, keeping them safe, secure and even monitor bike use. The stations and E-Bikes are an aesthetically pleasing, convenient amenity requiring minimal space. The system can be installed indoors or outdoors, and it can be adapted for mixed fleets, combining E-Bikes and e-scooters on the same charging station. BYKKO provides on-going facilities services and maintenance, IT and customer support.

Providing automated e-bike hire within a park is not only valuable to the park's guests; it also opens up a new passive revenue stream for the park. It is also a great way to associate the park's brand with green and environmentally responsible tourism. ▲

Contact BYKKO today to see how we can support you setting a new standard of outdoor experience and fun for your guests, while providing an eco-friendly revenue stream.

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RMS Cloud celebrates success at the CIAA National Conference 2024

In May, the CIAA National Conference gathered Australia's leading holiday park and caravanning industry experts at the RACV Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast. As a key corporate sponsor, RMS Cloud's participation provided an excellent opportunity to engage with valued customers and partners.

This year's conference was particularly noteworthy for RMS Cloud due to the appointment of David Murray as the new CEO, marking a new era of leadership. Murray takes over from Peter Buttigieg, the esteemed founder and outgoing CEO, who led the company for over 40 years. Peter's visionary



David Hassan Discovery Parks, David Murray RMS CEO, Grant Wilckens Discovery Parks CEO & Peter Buttigieg RMS Founder

leadership and dedication have significantly shaped the camping and caravanning industry, and his influence will continue to be felt within the company.

David Murray took the opportunity to honour Peter's legacy while connecting with RMS Cloud's loyal customers, including prominent names

such as Reflections Holidays, Discovery Holiday Parks and numerous independent operators. David's vision and enthusiasm set a positive tone for RMS Cloud's future, highlighted by RMS' presence at the centre of the exhibition.

The exhibition showcased RMS Cloud as a crucial solution for

park management. Kylie Rixon from Sunset Tourist Park shared her positive experiences, stating, "Having a system like RMS makes it so streamlined and easy for check-in." Additionally, industry professional Joanne Keown from Tourism Creatures expressed her passion for the product, saying, "RMS is built on foundations that are solid in its business approach and how it services its customers. Many properties, particularly in regional Australia, benefit from automated systems that handle last-minute bookings, even after office hours."

RMS Cloud's presence at the conference underscored its commitment to innovation and excellence in the holiday park and caravanning industry. The event was a resounding success, paving the way for a bright future under new leadership. ▲

Engage, empower & retain your guests.

Peter Akers

We'll be arriving around 6pm friday, is that ok?

Delivered

Sunshine Park

Hi Peter, no problem! we'll be there to check you in.

Delivered

Peter Akers

Thanks! See you then

Delivered

Offer guests a contactless experience through technology that connects before, during, and after their stay. Our property management system enhances guest experiences and fosters brand loyalty.

rmscloud.com/get-started





BYKKO

◀ P15

BYKKO

National Conference highlights from BYKKO, a Newcastle-based leader in automated equipment rental solutions.

The team said: "Wow, where to start! Between the great social nights, the live music and entertainment, great food and awesome atmosphere with our friends and peers in the industry - we made lots of great memories!"

Promoted products: BYKKO showcased their intelligent, automated electric bike rental system, ideal for the Australian coastal environment. Their stations feature fail-proof security, are aesthetically pleasing, and require minimal space. The system can support mixed fleets of e-bikes and e-scooters and includes ongoing maintenance and IT support. BYKKO helps park owners offer healthy, climate-

friendly amenities with a user-friendly rental system.

Brand promotion: The conference provided hands-on opportunities for attendees to experience BYKKO's E-Bikes. Engaging directly with park owners helped BYKKO understand their needs, offering tailored solutions for enhancing guest experiences and overcoming challenges.

Networking highs: BYKKO enjoyed watching attendees try their E-Bikes, often extending their "quick rides" due to the fun experience. These interactions were a highlight, showcasing the ease and enjoyment of BYKKO's E-Bikes.

BYKKO received valuable feedback from existing clients, highlighting how e-bikes enhance guest visits and support park operations. These conversations are crucial for ongoing system



Accessible Accommodation

improvements, making the conference a successful and significant event for BYKKO.

Accessible Accommodation

Most memorable moments from Kerry Williams, Founder/Director: who noted a keen interest in the "Accessibility and Eco-Tourism" session. Especially the feedback that holiday park operators now have a clearer idea of how to attract travellers with disabilities, and older people.

Services promoted: "We showcased our website, offering accessible accommodation booking services for travellers with disabilities. Holiday park operators found value in our tiered property rating system, providing clear insights into their accessibility standards. Additionally, we highlighted our Inclusion Training Program and User Experience Accessibility Consulting Service."

Brand awareness: The highly targeted event for holiday park businesses and operators allowed for engagement in more in-depth discussions with providers.

Notable interactions: The seminars were particularly impactful, and the topics highly relevant. Also, the partnership between CIAA and Accessible Accommodation, as well as Eco Tourism Australia, underscored the keen awareness of emerging markets and forward-thinking initiatives.

Feedback: Standout feedback revolved around Accessible Accommodation's tiered rating accreditation system. Operators particularly appreciate how expert-provided accreditation offers clear consumer understanding, giving a transparent measure of accessibility standing. ■



AccomNews

TIPS FOR FINANCING CARAVAN PARKS



Mike Phipps,
Mike Phipps Finance

Whether you're a first timer or a seasoned industry professional, some or maybe all of these tips are worth considering.

With a national client base and a lifetime in finance we've seen it all. Ok, some things still surprise us, but with a bit of pre-planning it's possible to manage the process in a relatively stress-free manner.

By necessity this will be brief. Our services are fee free, and we are happy to provide more detailed information and assistance as required.

Our team are just a phone call away. And now, without further ado, let us begin.

Get Pre-Qualified

Every journey starts with a first step, and this is the most

important one. There's no point in looking at \$2m parks if you don't have the financial firepower to get a deal done. We will assess your financial position and tell you what you can spend. In doing so we consider current bank policies, your individual position, and your relevant experience. If you've got equity in property, we look at how much money you may have access to by using that property.

As part of our calculations, we consider purchase costs, ongoing working capital allowances and any immediate capital expenditure required to maintain profitability.

Importantly, don't assume your equity position is the value of your property less what you owe. Banks usually lend a maximum of 80 percent on a residential property less any existing debt.

Of course, maximum purchase price calculations are theoretical only. It's one thing to know you can spend \$1m, but if the property you fall in love with makes no dough, then debt servicing capacity may prove hard to demonstrate. Potentially not the end of the world but please don't take maximum purchase calculations as a fait accompli.

Our advice, once you know your price range, is to decide your purchase parameters, engage an industry expert sales broker and go hunting. Once

you find a suitable opportunity ask your broker to send us the Information Memorandum and Profit and Loss Statement. We will review this information, calculate equity and debt service numbers, and provide you with feedback. If we see anything odd in the data, we will discuss this with you. Our job is to help you to be successful so anything we note that might present a higher than usual risk we have a duty of care to point out.

The Finance Process

Once you have an offer accepted the real fun begins. We will gather all the information we need to complete our finance tender document. We use that information to invite suitably qualified lenders to tender for your business. We then collate those tenders and present them to you. We will point out the pros and cons of each proposal and assist you to come to a decision.

Once a lender is engaged our senior brokers and our support staff will work with the lender to guide the application through to approval and settlement. In doing so we will work with your lawyer and accountant to ensure key critical dates in the process are met. In the event of any speed bumps, and only with your permission, we will keep your agent informed of progress. An effective agent can be invaluable in any negotiations during the process.

A Word on Loan to Valuation Ratios

Please know that these are guidelines only. 50 percent for leases and 60 percent for freehold going concerns. High quality transactions may attract higher LVRs. Passive freehold investments are very much on an individual transaction basis, call us. Same goes for interest only terms on all asset classes. If you want interest only, tell us early and we will factor that into our calculations. Interest only terms are very much transaction centric and may not always be available.

A Word on Business Plans and Cash Flows

Particularly for first-time operators, a convincing business plan and realistic cash flow forecast will be very well regarded by lenders. We can help with your business plan and your accountant can assist with a 12-month cash flow forecast. We encourage our clients to have a crack at their own forecast as the process can be of great assistance in better understanding the business. Please don't do one month and then cut and paste that into the next 11 months. Business doesn't work that way!

In closing, we love caravan parks. Never had a client go broke in one and not planning on starting now. Happy hunting and we are here to help. ▲

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Upwardly mobile: Caravan parks emerge as big business

By **Grantlee Kieza OAM**,
Industry Reporter

Caravan and holiday parks are on the move upward as increasingly valuable assets for investors.

After the challenging years of lockdowns and travel restrictions during COVID-19's reign of terror, caravan and holiday parks have emerged from the lost years as prized properties. This is driven by their high land value, multiple income streams and increasing popularity with families, remote workers and grey nomads.

Leading brokers say their biggest problem is finding enough stock to meet the huge demand.

Sales of mixed-use holiday parks offering both cabins and caravan sites have already exceeded \$100 million in Australia this year, compared to \$114.06 million for all of 2023.

Holiday parks can operate on limited resources while offering high returns, with many travellers finding their flexibility and relatively low cost very attractive.

Caravan and campervan registrations across the nation have steadily grown over the last decade. In 2023 there were almost 859,000 caravans and campervans registered. This was a 21 percent increase since 2019 and an all-time record.

CRE Brokers' Sunshine Coast-based Craig Clark says: "Our biggest problem is getting stock to satisfy the great demand for caravan and holiday parks.

"We're finding that big parks sell quickly because the large corporations such as Ingenia or Tasman snap them up. The smaller parks under about \$5 million take a little longer because they are



Craig Clark, CRE Brokers

usually family operators who need to raise the finance.

"We've sold a few big parks over the last year but fewer big parks are becoming available. They have been swallowed up by the corporates over the last decade or so, and they very rarely come back onto the market.

"There are not many parks being built anywhere in Australia – probably only half a dozen in the last few years. There's been a few 'greenfield' manufactured home sites being developed but few traditional caravan parks and holiday parks, and their scarcity makes them all that more valuable."

Mr Clark said parks provided multiple income streams and were a very safe investment.

"Generally, there is the scope to improve them, and update the accommodation," he said. "They are often a flexible business that lets you move with the times.

"Quite often the parks that sell quickly have a bit more room for development and the buyers are willing to pay accordingly."

Tourism Research Australia says the number of caravan and camping trips (including glamping) continues to grow.

In the year ending 2023, Australians took 15.3 million caravan and camping trips and spent \$14.3 billion doing it. This



Atherton Holiday Park

exceeded pre-COVID-19 levels and was at an all-time high.

Of these trips, commercial caravan parks and camping grounds accounted for 55 percent of trips, 61 percent of nights and 67 percent of spend.

Mr Clark has vast experience in the caravan industry, having owned, operated and developed a caravan park with his wife at Boomerang Beach near Forster in NSW. He has seen the industry growing steadily.

"We bought a park at Boomerang Beach in 1997," he said. "It was rundown but it was beachfront and a fantastic location. We set about building a community title resort there and we ended up structuring a management rights business over the community and sold all the beach houses off to investors and we sold the management rights business to Mantra in 2006."

Mr Clark said that while many parks were sold off for redevelopment 15 to 20 years ago "now we are seeing that the most profitable use of the parks is for them to remain as caravan parks. People see the potential upside and the security that comes from the land value".

He said in the last couple of years he had sold the BIG4 Ballina Headlands Holiday Park to the Tasman group for \$20 million, while Serenitas

Management had also bought two side-by-side permanent relocatable home parks at Ballina through CRE.

"And only a few weeks ago we settled the Bli Bli caravan park on the Sunshine Coast. We have a few more under contract.

"If we've got a really good caravan park, we generally sell them off-market even before they go on our website because the demand is so strong. We know the buyers, and we can make contact with them before the property is advertised and away we go."

Mr Clark said his company was currently marketing the Atherton Holiday Park and the Googarra Beach Caravan Park at Tully.

Michael Philpott, from Tourism Brokers, agrees that the market for caravan parks and holiday parks is "incredibly strong". ▶



Michael Philpott,
Tourism Brokers



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Packsaddle Roadhouse, QLD, Image courtesy of Tourism Brokers



Roma's Largest Bottle Tree, Roma QLD, Image courtesy of Tourism Brokers



Broken Hill Outback Resort, NSW, Image courtesy of Tourism Brokers

“It’s difficult for brokers to get stock when it comes to anything where you can erect MHEs (manufactured housing estates). Parks of that size with available land are incredibly popular.

“The big buyers are coming in with their finances sorted and ready to go to pick up the most expensive properties while the ‘mums and dads’ who are buying the smaller parks are working through banks and it takes longer.

“That’s why we always say you have to use specialists in the industry when it comes to finance and legal.

“Across the board parks are very popular. They are being upgraded all the time which makes them more and more popular with consumers. It’s all about the guest experience and a lot of the parks have added a great deal of luxury.

“Many have increased their accommodation as well, and we’ve seen parks with more than 50 cabins on them.”

Mr Philpott said: “In general the industry is powering, and parks are benefiting from all the people who now own caravans.

“Manufactured housing is also a more competitively priced alternative for people when it comes to having somewhere to live. Manufactured housing is creating communities with space around them, and that segment is getting stronger and stronger.”

Mr Philpott said Tourism Brokers recently sold properties to owner-occupiers going into Goondiwindi and eastern Queensland.

“We’ve had MHE purchasers go into Central to North Queensland, and we’ve got owner-operators developing and doing an MHE over in Western Australia.

“The parks we are selling in Victoria are primarily to owner-operators.”

He said sales in NSW and Victoria were “a lot stronger than in Queensland.”

“Insurance remains an issue for parks on the Queensland coast north of Rockhampton because of the cyclone activity,” he said.

“Some of the inland parks are also seeing a decline in visitor

numbers because of the high cost of fuel and worries over interest rates. But there are a lot of projects coming into central NSW in the way of solar and Snowy Hydro 2.0. Those infrastructure projects will give NSW a real boost.”

Mr Philpott’s portfolio of properties for sale includes the Bega Caravan Park on the NSW South Coast. The well-established caravan park is nestled on more than a hectare and has 50 approved sites, providing a solid foundation for a thriving business. It is priced at \$4million.

For \$3 million, he has the Alva Beach Tourist Park, just south of Townsville. It has beautiful coastal scenery and proximity to the Great Barrier Reef and comes with 83 spacious sites and cabins.

The Lake Coolmunda Caravan Park at Inglewood near Goondiwindi is priced at \$1,450,000 and turned over a whopping \$683,404 (GST excl) in 2022/23.

The park is well maintained and has multiple income streams. These are increasing significantly due to major works in the area for the next few years. There is a large main house and a separate caretaker cottage, and multiple sheds for storage, machinery and equipment. A large inventory of machinery, valued at \$150,000 also comes with the park, including a tractor and backhoe.

The Bailey Bar Caravan Park, located in Charleville, 750km west of Brisbane, has a well-established, reliable and stable track record of consistent turnover and net profit. It has 15 exceptional cabins of varying configurations and 50 powered sites. It is currently listed for \$2,100,000.

Meanwhile, the Koonwarra Family Holiday Park at Lakes Entrance in Victoria comes with a price tag of \$7,950,000 but has turned over more than \$1 million a year for the last two years and has been a favoured holiday destination for generations of Australians.

Set on 1.78 hectares it caters for Melbourne residents wanting a retirement lifestyle and meets the needs of the increasing numbers of retirees

hitting the road with their caravans. The park appeals to holidaymakers enroute from Sydney to Melbourne, and also caters for sporting groups, school camps, and Probus club outings. It already has 105 sites but comes with a large parcel of undeveloped land.

Kevin Connolly a Director of CRE Brokers who oversees marketing Victorian, NSW, South Australian and Tasmanian properties for CRE says while sales are very strong for caravan parks in the southern states it remains a "two-tiered market". "The major corporates have a very strong appetite for the larger caravan parks and the smaller family-run parks



Moama Waters, Image courtesy of CRE Brokers



Kevin Connolly

are still keenly sought after but they are taking a little bit longer to sell than the larger ones," said Mr Connolly, who is based at Carrum Downs, in Melbourne's south.

"If there is no further redevelopment opportunity on a site, the larger caravan parks would have to be doing \$1 million a year turnover for the corporates to be interested."

He said CRE had sold "some significant properties" in Victoria in the last year and a half.

"Eighteen months ago we sold seven caravan parks in suburban Melbourne and country Victorian areas to a large corporate for more than \$100 million," Mr Connolly said.

"We've sold some other significant properties in recent times including the Somers Caravan Park on the Mornington Peninsula, Amaroo Holiday Park on Phillip Island and Beachport Caravan Park in South Australia. We've also got a couple of others under offer."

Mr Connolly is marketing

the Allawah Caravan Park at Paynesville in Victoria's Gippsland. It's listed for \$8,500,000 and is situated on almost four hectares of waterfront park on the Gippsland Lakes. There are two residences including a modern four-bedroom waterfront home.

The property is registered for 183 caravan park sites for mixed-use (tourism/permanents). It has 145 sites and 20 boat storage sites currently in use.

The development opportunity is underpinned by 78 tenants who are "annuals" and 16 "permanents" paying regular fees. Three new villas have just been constructed and sold, and six others are under construction.

There is a great opportunity to convert this mixed-use park into an Over 50s Permanents Village.

Mr Connolly said the leasehold on the Big4 park at Barham on the NSW side of the Murray River was excellent value at \$985,000.

There are more than six hectares of riverfront land with 130 sites including 15 cabins (two of which are pet friendly), powered and unpowered sites and four ensuite sites.

Internal gravel surfaced roadways are well established and drained, and all sites have designated parking areas.

"Getting good parks is always the challenge for a broker," Mr

Connolly said. "There is a big demand for parks because people realise they are highly profitable – with significant cashflows and they are underpinned by significant land value. "There is usually a diverse income stream involving holidaymakers, permanent residents and annual

holidaymakers. Generally, a caravan park will offer two or three income streams and generally those annuals or permanent residents involve a guaranteed income for minimal risk. Caravan and holiday parks have solid reputations as profitable businesses and safe investments." ■

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Let's play: Outdoor play areas at holiday parks

By Naomii Seah,
Industry Reporter

Having fun is one of the most important aspects of any holiday.

For families, this means an excellent suite of outdoor play options for all ages can be a decisive factor when booking a holiday.

Holiday parks afford lots of space for children to run around and socialise. They're a low-cost option for large groups, and families often spend time onsite for the social experience. Visitors who go to holiday parks as children often reminisce about their memories of playing outdoors with new friends.

Outdoor play areas can give parents a break when they need one, as well as the opportunity to bond with children during downtime. Not having to leave their holiday spot and drive to activities to entertain the children is also appealing to many parents looking to rest and unwind.

For children, the opportunity to run around, explore new areas, try new play equipment and make new friends is one of the great joys of a caravanning or camping holiday.

Outdoor play trends and ideas

Playgrounds and play equipment can be designed for a fun experience at all ages.

With people often holidaying in large groups with a spectrum of ages and interests, intergenerational playgrounds are especially great for holiday parks. These incorporate elements which cater to all ages, including young children, teens and adults.

Intergenerational play spaces could include gym and exercise equipment, giant chess boards and noughts and crosses,



Image courtesy of WillPlay

and games incorporated into cement areas and pathways, like hopscotch or snakes and ladders. Walking-paths and climbing surfaces which draw adults and children into the joy of play are also excellent inclusions.

Recent years have seen a trend toward nature play and loose parts play. Nature play, as the name suggests, involves incorporating natural elements into play. Consider areas in your park that might be suitable to add swings and ropes into trees, rock gardens with pump tracks, sandpits, mud kitchens, and other features which take advantage of the natural landscape.

Loose parts play means providing loose items for children to play with however they choose. Old tyres, logs and rocks may be incorporated into nature play areas. Foam blocks, giant jigsaw pieces, hoops and recycled items can also be used. Check with local businesses to see if they have any items suitable for use. This type of play encourages children to use their imagination and engage in unstructured play.

For park operators, both nature play and loose parts play can usually be added to your park's recreational offerings at minimal cost.

Water play and splash zones

Particularly in summer and in warmer climates, water play is a much sought after recreational activity. Pools continue to be a great drawcard, with guests relishing the opportunity to cool off. Many options for both above and inground pools are available. For the ultimate adventure experience, you could consider installing some water slides with your pool. Heating your pool may be a valuable investment to extend its usage period throughout the year.

For the less advanced swimmers, zero depth splash zones provide a safe place for children of all ages to get wet.

Including everyone

Building a reputation for accessibility and inclusivity is another way that an outdoor play area can cater to visitors. A considered approach to access builds a stronger reputation for your facilities, as families see that everyone can participate, attracting diverse visitors and underserved markets.

For optimal inclusivity, ensure areas around play spaces are also accessible for people with mobility considerations, young children and older people.

Wide, even paths, accessible toilets and seating, ample shade and water stations should be located nearby.

From an industry insider

Nathan Lee from WillPlay said timber-look aluminium and recycled composites are a great choice for holiday park play equipment. "These give the look and feel of timber without the expensive maintenance.

"Reputable manufacturers will be able to design a project to suit all age groups and abilities. While some elements are considered 'all ages', many are age or ability specific and the inclusion of these needs to suit the demographic and expected users of the park," Mr Lee said. "The manufacturer will be able to recommend equipment to suit the expected user range, and depending on budgets, may be able to custom design something specific to the project. Choose equipment that has a lower environmental footprint and is recyclable at end of life."

Mr Lee stressed that park operators need to ensure designs are compliant with the current Australian standards and that the installation is certified and as per the manufacturer's recommendations. "Third-party inspections will ensure that all aspects of the project are compliant. Designs need to incorporate safety elements such as age-appropriate equipment, fencing, user flow, seating, shade, and line of sight."

To ensure the longevity of play equipment, Mr Lee recommends engaging an Australian manufacturer. "They understand the local environment and usually design equipment to withstand the harsh Australian conditions. Australian manufacturers also understand the local market and can recommend equipment and designs that suit Australian users, not equipment designed for European conditions." ■

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While every community is different, WillPlay offers custom systems designed to fit the specific requirements of your facility. Their team works closely with clients to bring their vision to life, ensuring that each playground is as unique as the community it serves.

In choosing WillPlay, you're not just getting a playground; you're investing in a piece of industry-leading quality and design. WillPlay's Australian Made certification is a promise of quality and a commitment to the success of our local industries and communities.

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Refreshing and updating communal outdoor cooking areas

By **Naomii Seah**,
Industry Reporter

Preparing and enjoying a meal onsite with family and friends is one of the great joys of holidaying at a caravan park.

With more people choosing to holiday in caravan parks and changing guest expectations, consider if your cooking and eating facilities could use a refresh.

Communal kitchens can become busy places, so make sure sufficient empty counter space is available for multiple guests to prepare their food at once. Providing storage to stow items off countertops can assist with this. The addition of island benches in the middle of a room, away from walls may also help.

Ensuring synergy between indoor and outdoor spaces, as well as preparation, cooking, and cleaning stations is important. Sinks and waste disposal should be easily accessible. Taps that are activated by a pedal or button can improve access to this amenity.

Safety and hygiene

For a hygienic cooking area, access to hand washing facilities is paramount and can be supplemented with hand sanitiser dispensers. Surface wipes or cloths and spray disinfectant should be available for guests to wipe down hard



Images courtesy of DA Christie

surfaces. Any appliances or equipment available for guest use must be simple to clean, with easy-to-follow instructions. Providing baking paper or foil for guests to use on items like baking trays, sandwich presses or even barbecues can further simplify cleaning.

Ample waste disposal is also vital. Storing bins in pull-out drawers or cupboards can help contain odours and stop bins – which are not always aesthetically pleasing – from taking up valuable floor space.

A rigorous cleaning schedule as well as regularly maintaining and replacing kitchen items can also help keep kitchen areas clean, neat and hygienic.

Outdoor spaces for cooking and eating

Outdoor cooking areas take pressure off indoor areas and allow guests to socialise in larger groups while cooking and eating.

Paul Conradie from DA Christie said choosing a commercial

grade barbecue for your park isn't just about meeting basic cooking needs. "Commercial grade barbecues prioritise durability, reliability and ease of cleaning. They're designed to withstand constant use and the rigours of outdoor environments, ensuring they remain in top condition and provide value for money over the long term," Mr Conradie said.

To ensure barbecues in parks are accessible to everyone, including those with mobility challenges and families with children, thoughtful planning and design is essential "Install barbecues in wheelchair-accessible cabinets with accessible tables nearby, and ensure no obstacles are blocking the path to the barbecue area" Mr Conradie said.

"Maintain clean pathways leading to the barbecue area, free from grease, debris, and tripping hazards, and regularly clean the barbecue and surrounding areas. Non-slip materials for flooring around the barbecue area, especially in wet conditions, will prevent slips and falls.

"Make sure nearby amenities like seating, shade, and waste disposal are also accessible to everyone. Install ramps where necessary to facilitate access to barbecue facilities for users with mobility aids or strollers and ensure pathways leading to the barbecue area are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs comfortably."

With sustainability a key focus in all industries, Mr Conradie highlighted several features of barbecues park operators should look for to reduce their environmental impact.

"Choose barbecues equipped with advanced heating technologies that promote even heat distribution and quicker cooking times. This saves energy and enhances the cooking experience for users.

"Opt for barbecues made from recycled materials, such as recycled stainless steel, which is durable, easy to maintain, and recyclable at the end of its lifecycle," Mr Conradie said. "Whenever possible, source barbecues that are wholly manufactured in Australia to reduce transportation emissions and support the local economy. Signage near barbecue areas can educate visitors about sustainable practices and their importance, encouraging participation in conservation efforts." ■



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The Oran Park at Ron's Creek - NSW

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Glamping from paddock to profit

By Grantlee Kieza OAM,
Industry Reporter

In 2016, Lucia Gordon transformed an unused pine paddock on her husband's family farm in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, into a thriving glamping retreat.

A 38-square-metre tent, made of high-quality European canvas, was pitched on the paddock overlooking the Maraetotara River, which meanders through the farm. This glamping retreat was in so much demand that a second tent was added two years later.

Despite hosting just four guests a night, Lucia reports that Clifton Glamping has been a highly successful business venture for their young family.

"The decision to install the glamping tents was spontaneous," Lucia said. "We'd camped out on the property ourselves, saw these tents advertised, loved them and



chose beautiful spots on the farm to put them. We've had a fantastic response; they are very popular and are especially attractive to international visitors. Guests love experiencing nature up close but with modern luxuries."

Glamping at the Gordons' Clifton Station allows visitors to immerse themselves in the fresh waters of the Maraetotara River, inhale the coastal sea breeze of New Zealand's North Island, relax and find comfort in the peaceful safari tents. Guests can swim in the

river or warm themselves with a glass of wine in the property's steaming hot outdoor baths.

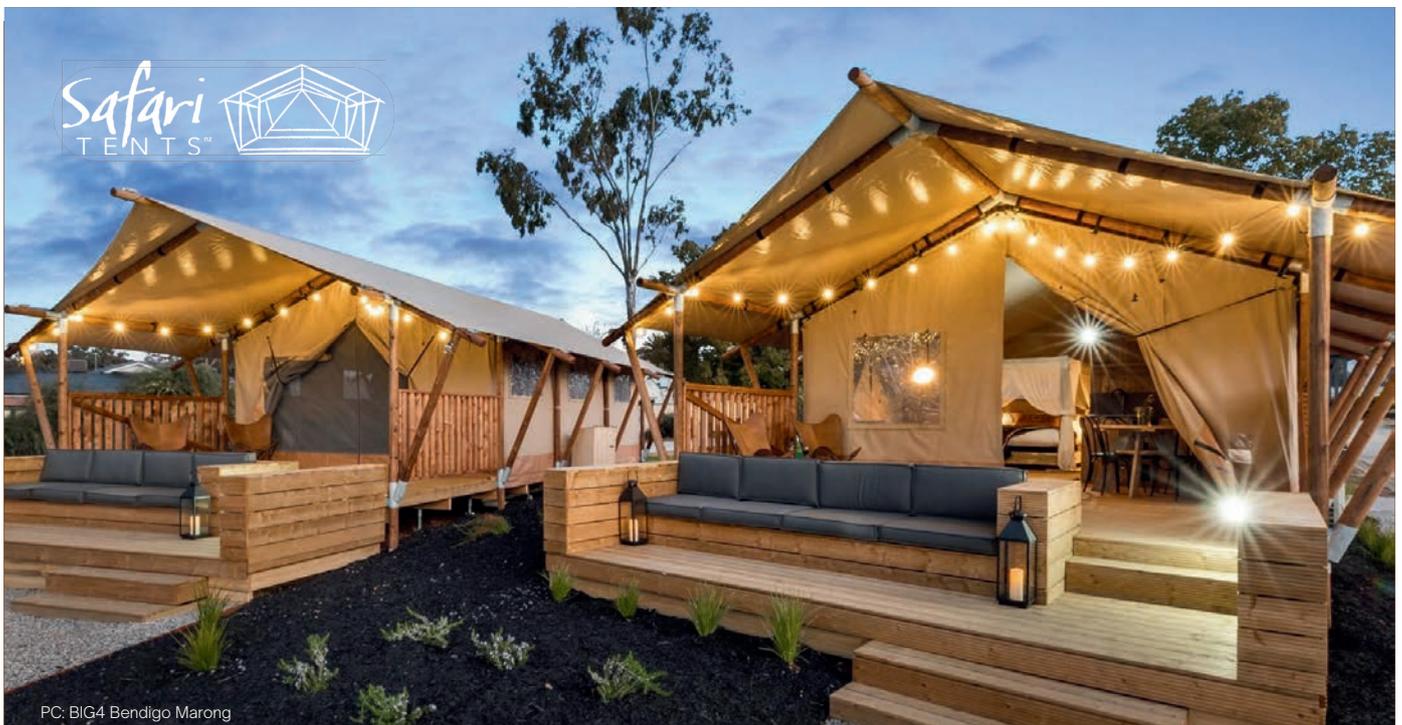
Lucia and Tom were among the first customers to buy glamping tents from James Lamb of the Hawke's Bay-based business, Safari Tents NZ. In 2015, James became the first distributor outside of Europe for Netherlands-based Luxetenten who since 2009 had been the driving force behind the glamping phenomenon in Europe. James still works very closely with the

original founders, Sandra and Leon Juffermans who now run Glamxperience in Australia.

"Lucia has a great sense of style," James said. "She and Tom fitted the tents out to a very high standard and as a result have attracted high-end clients. Spending that little bit more on quality soft furnishings has led to guests paying \$395 per night, a rate which is reflected in our tents all over New Zealand. Clifton were trailblazers and their business has really taken off!

"So far, we've put over 200 tents into New Zealand where glamping is still in its infancy, but we are confident that its popularity will continue to grow. It offers New Zealand's holiday parks a product that can attract a new high-spending demographic with a great ROI." ■

Note: Safari Tents NZ and GlamXperience work together to serve both NZ and Australia with the same unique tents.



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Where glamping meets the wild Grampians

By **Grantlee Kieza OAM**,
Industry Reporter

Twelve years ago, Josephina and Rohan McDonald bought the lease on a rundown caravan park in Halls Gap, the heart of the Grampians National Park. With hard work and renovation, they bought the freehold two and a half years later, transforming Halls Gap Lakeside Tourist Park into a premier Victorian holiday destination.

Positioned near the Grampians' iconic Pinnacle, the park features 100 powered caravan sites and 35 cabins surrounding two outdoor wood-fired heated swimming pools. Josephina says the highlight of their business is the unique glamping options provided in the 10 luxury eco-friendly tents supplied by GlamXperience.

"Our glamping options have

solidified and expanded our business," said Josephina. "Offering guests luxury 5-star hotel facilities whilst sleeping under a million stars. Our glamping guests enjoy an enhanced experience, immersed in nature while enjoying the comforts of reverse air conditioning, toilet, shower, kitchenette, barbecue, luxury mattress and even a bath on the deck.

"We are proud and delighted to have connected with Sandra and Leon from GlamXperience in 2017 and become their first Australian customers.

"Initially, we introduced four bell tents and two safari tents, and they proved so popular that in 2019 we added four more safari tents with enhanced features. Stage 3 is now in progress, adding two accessible safari tents, a luxury lodge, and Woody Junior tents with private facilities to replace the bell tents.

"Our glamping options are extremely popular, perfect for our spectacular location—described by many visitors as an Australian



safari. Our four safari tents overlook the valley and guests can relax in the bath on their deck, enjoy the view and marvel at the abundance of wildlife. A haven for nature enthusiasts."

The collaboration with GlamXperience has realised Josephina and Rohan's vision to make each guest's stay an extraordinary experience.

"Our business was successful before the glamping tents were erected," Josephina said,

"but glamping has provided an unparalleled accommodation option. As the first caravan park in Australia to introduce glamping at this level, our position as a boutique caravan park attracts new, higher-yielding customers.

"This venture has been fantastic for our business, and it's been a pleasure working with GlamXperience." ■

Note: Safari Tents NZ and GlamXperience work together to serve both NZ and Australia with the same unique tents.

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Whatever your product requirement Koala has the answer.

Maximising space is crucial for all accommodation providers and this is where Koala's innovative sleeping designs and products allow it to stand out from the crowd. Over the last 9 years Koala has disrupted the Australian furniture market and as a result, now has the number one rated mattress range along with the 2023/24 AU Product Review award for Sofa Beds.

Whatever your product requirement Koala has the answer.

So why has Koala stood out from the competitors in the crowded home furnishings market?

Nothing enhances guest comfort like a good night's sleep. Koala's bespoke bedding solutions are crafted with meticulous attention to detail, offering a range of mattress options and bed frames that cater to diverse preferences and budget considerations. Their commitment to quality ensures that each piece combines durability with ergonomic design, promising a restful experience that guests will cherish.

Koala's in-house team of Sydney designers works tirelessly to come up with new innovative furniture solutions that are at the core of Koala's commitment to redefining space that is paramount for caravan parks. The Koala sofa bed range enhances guest satisfaction both as a design-appealing sofa while giving sleeping comfort that is hard to find within the sofa bed market.

The most recent Koala sofa bed addition, the Byron Sofa Bed has received strong customer demand since it launched a few months ago. The sofa bed is carefully designed using over



30% recycled polyester fabric and 100% FSC wood. Designed to take pride of place in the living space, its deep plush seats, range of six bespoke colours and luxe look make it Koala's most elevated sofa bed yet.

The deep seat cushions of the Byron provide the perfect plushness to nestle up or stretch out on, with all of the comfort and support you'd want for both. The sofa bed is inspired by Koala's award-winning Mattress Range with over 50,000 five-star reviews that see's the famous cooling Kloudcell® technology integrated into the top layer,

This makes the Byron Sofa Bed just as soft to sleep on as your bed. With its breathability and higher density, it responds to your movement so that

you get undisturbed sleep and cloud-like comfort.

With just a single flip the Byron becomes a queen-size mattress that is perfect to add additional sleeping options to any accommodation unit. It features a super smooth pull-out platform that reveals a soft, ventilated support surface so you can stay cool as you snooze too.

The Byron has substance as well as style, with four large compartments concealed by fabric doors. They're the perfect size to pop pillows, linen or your guest's belongings, with timber storage lids that double as a tray for their mug of tea.

Keeping products in their intended use for as long as possible is the core focus of

the Koala design and product team. When you use the best raw materials, ethical sourcing mixed with high-quality design, and superb craftsmanship you get the benefits of products having a longer life. The longer a product lasts in it's intended purpose the better it is for the planet.

Koala is also proudly part of 1% for the Planet and a B-Corp Business as part of their core value of giving back to people and the planet helping to create an inclusive and sustainable economy. Koala is one of the largest retail donors to WWF having given over \$3 million in donations since 2017. One of Koala's key drivers is to keep Koala in the wild in Australia.

The Koala Commercial Team looks to partner with their customers for the long term looking for the right solution, not the first solution. This often takes trialing different Koala products to find what will work best for a given space. Once this is ascertained the Koala team will work on the best commercial pricing, delivery, and services that meet the individual customer requirements. The service doesn't stop there with Koala supporting all ongoing operational requirements and end-of-life solutions.

If you want to elevate your guest experience to the next level giving an accommodation experience that is unrivaled by your competitors then look no further than the amazing range of Koala products.

Join the countless of satisfied customers who have made Koala Furniture their go-to choice in the caravan park industry. Visit our website or contact the Koala Commercial team today to learn more about our comprehensive range of products and how we can tailor solutions to meet your specific needs. Experience the Koala difference – where innovation, quality, and value converge to redefine comfort in caravan parks nationwide. ▲



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If you own a caravan park, it's fair to say you know that space matters. Fitting in all the necessities while keeping your customers comfortable? It can be like a game of tetris sometimes. At Koala, we've got a stylish space saving solution. Meet the Cushy Sofa Bed, your new best friend.

Why choose the Cushy Sofa Bed? Well, firstly, we're chuffed to announce that the Cushy Sofa Bed has been crowned the 2024 Product Review award winner in the sofa bed category. Secondly, It's not just a sofa. It's a sofa bed. Emphasis on bed. The Cushy is designed with three things in mind. Style. Space saving. And seriously good sleep.

It's a win for smaller cabins, freeing up floor space and allowing extra sleepers. The Cushy Sofa Bed is compact. But once you unfold it, it's the size of a queen bed, making it ideal for accommodating extra guests.

And it enables a touch of luxury on a budget. Offering a high-end sleep solution at a budget-friendly price point, the Cushy ensures your guests enjoy a touch of luxury without you having to breaking the bank.

The Cushy Sofa Bed is incredibly easy to set up and pack away. Your guests will appreciate the simplicity and ease of set up and pack down, making their stay even more comfortable.

If you're looking to upgrade for aesthetics or for comfort, the Cushy Sofa Bed is a game-changer. Its combination of comfort, convenience, and style makes it a must-have for short stays.

Treat yourself and your guests to the ultimate comfort of the Cushy Sofa Bed and experience the difference that an award-winning product can make.

Reach out to the Koala Commercial team or join the Koala Trade Program today.

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beautiful holiday accommodation since 1999, and boy, have we learned a thing or two! We understand the magic formula for creating spaces that guests will fall head over heels in love with. Our commercial know-how ensures that your investment is not only a treat for the eyes but also a smart financial move. And don't worry about those pesky regulations; we've got them covered too! We know the ins and outs of holiday park development like the back of our hand.

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So, if you're ready to make your holiday park cabin dreams come true, Uniplan Group is here to sprinkle some magic into your life. We deliver on our promises, make the process easy-peasy, create stunning accommodation, and offer end-to-end design services that will leave you speechless. Don't settle for ordinary when you can have extraordinary. ▲



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Expanding caravan park accommodation

By Mandy Clarke, Editor

Caravan parks have a loyal customer base, and it is only growing.

According to Tourism Research Australia, the caravan and camping sector is a major contributor to the economy. The sector has been recovering well since COVID-19, with spending at an all-time high of \$10.5 billion in the year ending June 2022. Right before the pandemic, the camping and caravan sector experienced its highest year on record in 2019. That year, commercial sites accounted for 53 percent of all caravan and camping holiday trips and 72 percent of the spend. This positions the caravan and camping sector to grow into the future as the world continues to recover from the pandemic.

With the cost of living on the rise, camping and caravanning are great value-for-money solutions for many holidaymakers. Now is the optimal time to assess your park's capacity to ensure you are using park spaces, guestrooms, accommodations, buildings, and surrounds to their maximum potential, to secure as many bookings as possible.

Enhancing the flexibility and accessibility of your accommodation offerings can significantly broaden your customer base, making your park more inclusive. Tapping into the accessible tourism market will attract a wider range of guests, including extended families looking for affordable holiday options.

Growing your space

When considering how to increase capacity, reflect on who has visited your caravan park in the past and identify potential growth markets. Caravan parks have several options for increasing capacity



Image courtesy of GlamXperience

by enhancing existing structures and expanding available accommodation types.

Enhance existing structures

One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to increase guest capacity is to add more beds! Consider replacing your beds with more multifunctional and versatile bedding options



Image courtesy of the Mattress Company

such as sofa beds, bunk beds, trundle beds, mattresses that zip together, and adjustable beds. These investments offer guests more choices, allowing them to plan holidays without being limited by numbers.

Such solutions make even compact spaces comfortable for multiple guests. For instance, beds that can be converted from a king bed

into two single beds provide flexibility for different sleeping arrangements and can benefit couples who prefer different mattress support or feel.

When designing new structures, innovative and creative approaches can maximise space and enhance both accessibility and capacity. Incorporating fold-down bedding, combined storage areas, and other space-saving solutions can be highly effective. Customisable mattress options designed for commercial use can meet specific space and quality requirements, including odd sizes.

Improving the design and style of accommodations can elevate the sleep experience. Modern, thoughtfully designed rooms that balance functionality and aesthetics, coupled with high-quality mattresses, are essential. By making your accommodation options appealing, versatile, and attentive to all customers' needs, you can ensure a superior guest experience.

P36 ►



Image courtesy of UniPlan

Your one stop shop for commercial mattresses and bases

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Ideal for compact areas like tiny homes and glamping setups, our mattresses are expertly designed to maximize space without compromising

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But that's not all – we don't just stop at mattresses. We also offer specially designed bases to complement your unique sleeping environment, ensuring both style and functionality in every corner of your space. Whether you're seeking a custom solution for your caravan or camper van or a luxurious mattress for your horse trailer, The Mattress Company has you covered. Experience the difference with our tailor-made bedding solutions and elevate your sleeping experience on the road.

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Image courtesy of Safari Tents

◀ P34

Expanding accommodation types

To enhance your park's appeal and increase capacity, start by upgrading existing sites and adding new ones. Enhancing facilities with additional power hookups, water connections, waste disposal units, and communal amenities will attract more RV, caravan, and camping visitors. The addition of a variety of modular units or glamping tents can help manage high demand without the need for permanent construction, providing flexibility and additional revenue opportunities.

For parks considering new buildings, there are several low-cost, high-value, and attractive options.

Modular buildings are particularly popular for commercial use because they can be extended in the future and accessible by design. These buildings are easily adjustable and customisable for different purposes at a low cost. Their flexibility covers everything from layout to interior finishes, ensuring that each building fits perfectly with the park's aesthetic and functional requirements.

These modular buildings combine design and functionality with sustainable materials and construction practices. Unlike permanent builds, they are constructed in a controlled

factory environment, significantly reducing on-site construction time and minimising disturbances to guests. Experts can advise on the best structures for a site based on a project's needs, challenges, and advantages, offering support throughout the entire building process, from initial design and council approvals to final installation.

For parks seeking innovative capacity solutions to stand out from competitors, 'glamping' presents an exciting opportunity. By combining glamour and camping, this approach leverages a park's natural resources to offer premium outdoor accommodation. Glamping tents, such as safari tents and yurts, blend the adventure of camping with the comfort of hotel-like amenities. Themed tents can cater to specific market segments, such as families, with the option to add small tents for children. Private luxury tents nestled in nature are perfect for couples seeking a romantic getaway. Glamping adds variety and appeal.

Permanent cabins and cottages offer a comfortable, weather-resistant alternative to traditional camping. Basic cabins can attract nature lovers, bird watchers, and hikers looking for a rustic yet cosy stay close to nature. On the other hand, luxury cottages, equipped with high-end amenities, can attract guests seeking an upscale experience,

adding a touch of elegance to your park's offerings. These luxury cabins can include features such as modern kitchens, spacious living areas, and private decks.

Eco cabins, built from sustainable materials, appeal to eco-conscious travellers looking to minimise their environmental impact. Adding solar power can reduce operational costs and attract guests interested in sustainable tourism, showcasing your commitment to green practices.

Ever-popular tiny houses are also a fantastic addition, offering compact yet fully equipped homes that provide a unique and cosy stay. Easy to set up and move, they offer flexibility and charm.

Be creative: Knock it out of the park!

Stand out by adding alternative accommodation options that attract guests seeking quirky and memorable stays. Think converted vehicles, vintage caravans, and Airstreams for nostalgic charm. Converted buses and even aeroplanes offer unusual yet stylish and functional accommodations. Treehouse cabins provide whimsical experiences, while novelty lodgings like converted silos, tepees, hobbit holes, or igloo-style structures draw interest from those seeking truly unique experiences.

Camping pods are small, insulated, weather-resistant alternatives to tents, suitable for short stays. Geodesic domes are visually striking and can be equipped with modern amenities, offering a blend of adventure and comfort that appeals to many.

Houseboats or floating cabins provide vibrant experiences for guests staying near water bodies and some can even offer practical solutions for flood-prone parks. A standout example is the amphibious cabins designed and developed by Cicely Sylow and Stephen Ritchie for their Dunbogan Caravan Park, NSW after they suffered major flooding in 2021. Their innovative design allows their cabins to remain accessible and float during floods, minimising damage. These cabins garnered industry attention and were recognised with the Gery Ryan OAM Innovation Award at the National Caravan Industry Conference. There, Ms Sylow remarked: "It took us three years to convert a thought into a physical dwelling installed on site – it was no mean feat."

Regardless of how you choose to expand your park's accommodation options, ensure you have a comprehensive plan in place, including a budget and timeline, before starting. Maximising potential capacity, coupled with the strong demand for camping, will make your expansion plans well worth the investment. ■