

IN2 – Proposed Warragamba RV Friendly Site Trial

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the investigations and planning for the establishment of a Recreational Vehicle (RV) Friendly Site at Warragamba Recreation Reserve.
- This report recommends that:
 - Site Option 1, ie opposite the Boomerang Shelter be used as a trial RV Friendly site for 12 months.
 - A budget of \$35,000 be approved for the project with \$22,000 to be introduced from the Tourism and Economic Development Reserve and the balance to be sourced from existing infrastructure budgets.
 - An application be made to the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) for RV Friendly status for Warragamba Recreation Reserve.

REPORT

BACKGROUND

A preliminary investigation of options for establishing a Recreational Vehicle (RV) Friendly Site at Warragamba Recreation Reserve has been undertaken in response to a Council resolution from its ordinary Meeting of 16 November 2016 (Min 256/2016).

This investigation has considered four possible locations within Warragamba Recreation Reserve with the intent of selecting the most suitable area to facilitate a trial RV Friendly Site.

The four options were assessed for suitability based on the following:

- Access and manoeuvrability;
- The size of the available parking area;
- Existing natural shade provision;
- Access to existing barbeque and water facilities;
- Potential impact on the community's use of the Reserve;
- Potential management issues;
- Varied surfaces for short term stayers to park on; and
- Proximity to shops, Warragamba Dam, Warragamba public pool and the Warragamba off-leash dog area with the focus on promoting short term visitors to walk and explore the town.

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Additionally, a preliminary cost estimate for required works and infrastructure to establish the RV Friendly Site was identified for each option (Attachment 1). Option 1, located in the northern area of the Reserve and accessed via Farnsworth Avenue, has been identified as a suitable location to facilitate the proposed trial.

DEFINITION

For the purpose of the trial RV Friendly Site, RVs must be fully self-contained. This means that the vehicle has capacity for holding fresh, grey and black water within the confines of the vehicle. Permissible RV types include:

- Motorhomes
- Caravans
- Campervans.

MANAGEMENT APPROACH

In accordance with the site zoning under the Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011, the trial RV Friendly Site is considered to be a 'camping ground' and permitted with development consent. The trial project will require Council to submit a Development Application for this purpose.

Based on industry practice and advice from the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), it is recommended that the maximum length of stay at the trial RV Friendly Site be limited to 2 nights/48 hours. Based on the size of the site, a maximum of eight RVs is to be permitted to stay at any one time.

Options for after-hours access to the site have been considered and the issues that are associated with a key based system suggest that Council is best to pursue the installation of a pin-accessed automated boom gate operation for after-hours access to the trial RV Friendly Site.

A key-based system will require significant administrative resources that are associated with establishing and administering a physical key collection/drop off arrangement, including recording visitor details, and identifying an appropriate Warragamba business/organisation, that is available after hours, to facilitate the key administration process.

An automated boom gate is proposed to be installed at the entrance of the trial RV Friendly Site which will open during daylight hours via the boom gate's timer system. RV users will be able to access the site after-hours by contacting Council's after-hours Well Done service who will record their details and provide RV users with a pin code for the boom gate.

The pin code arrangement allows Council to control the number of RVs at the site at any time. Due to the siting of the short term stay area, the number of RVs that can physically fit is limited to approximately 8 (largely dependent on the length of RVs using site).

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Short term stayers will be notified of the 48 hour timeframe, as well as the pin code system via signage that will be located at the entrance to Warragamba Recreation Reserve as well as via Council's website.

Additionally, the CMCA will publish an article in their member magazine about the RV Friendly Town once Warragamba is given RV Friendly Town status (following an application), as well as provide information on their website.

It is anticipated that the trial RV Friendly Site will largely be self-policed. The boom gates will be left open during normal daylight operating hours of the reserve and will close in line with the locking of the manual gates around the reserve. The boom gate proposed is to have an auto exit function, whereby once a vehicle is stopped at the gate exit, the boom will automatically lift. Emergency services will be informed on access arrangements also.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The trial is proposed to be conducted over a 12 month period to capture the visitation variances that typically occur align to the four seasons. The trial will help to inform the preparation of a future Shire-Wide RV Friendly Strategy.

Following the trial period, a review of the trial will be informed by:

- Surveys with local businesses and site users
- Anecdotal feedback, particularly from Council's Area Maintenance Officer
- Assessment of site wear and tear
- Complaints and customer requests for maintenance received
- Feedback from the CMCA
- Feedback from Council's Compliance Officers
- Costs associated with waste disposal services, maintenance of boom gate operation
- The effectiveness of the fee free arrangement in relation to management costs and adherence to the 48 hour stay limit.

An Implementation Plan is outlined in Attachment 1, identifying the recommended approach that Council undertake towards establishing the trial RV Friendly Site at Warragamba Recreation Reserve.

CONSULTATION

The preliminary investigation to identify a suitable trial RV Friendly site at Warragamba involved consultation with various internal Council stakeholders, to assess the advantages and disadvantages associated with each option. This also included consulting with Council's operational staff who have a sound knowledge of the space and the local community.

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Consultation was also undertaken with the CMCA to identify the mandatory criteria to gain 'RV Friendly' status from the CMCA:

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

The proposed option for the RV Friendly site addresses the required CMCA criteria.

Additionally, Ward Councillors were provided the opportunity to comment on the preliminary investigation of suitable options and their feedback has contributed to the selection of Option 1 as being the recommended trial site as well as the fee free initiative to encourage visitation and economic stimulation in Warragamba.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No funding has been allocated for this project to date and is unable to be allocated from Section 94 funds. It is therefore recommended that budget be partially sourced from the Tourism and Economic Development Restricted Cash Account, with the balance being funded from the reallocation of existing budgeting savings.

The preliminary budget estimate for the project is \$35,000 and includes costs associated with:

- line-marking
- automated and pin accessed boom gate
- signage
- waste bins
- development application fees
- design work.

This project has a financial impact on Council's adopted budget and forward operational budget estimates, dependent on the effectiveness of the site during the trial period. Costs may include additional maintenance and cleaning activities.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE BOOKLET

1. Draft Implementation Strategy - Warragamba Trial RV Friendly Site

Report of Infrastructure to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 18 April 2017

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RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council pursues the establishment of a trial RV Friendly Site within Warragamba Recreation Reserve at location option 1 (opposite the Boomerang Shelter), for a period of 12 months.
2. That Council approve a budget of \$35,000 as part of the 2016/17 Operational Plan with \$22,000 of funding to be introduced from Tourism and Economic Development Restricted Cash Account, with the balance being funded from the reallocation of existing infrastructure budgets.
3. That Council apply to the CMCA for RV Friendly status for Warragamba Recreation Reserve.