

Free RV Parking in the City of Greater Geraldton

Review Report August 2017



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This report has been prepared by the Geraldton Visitor Centre

Free RV Parking in the City of Greater Geraldton

In August 2016 the City of Greater Geraldton opened a limited number of 24 hour dedicated RV and camper van parking places in the Francis Street carpark.

Since the opening of the RV area, the Geraldton Visitor Centre team have received various comments on its set up. While positive comments include people being grateful for the area and stopping in Geraldton rather than passing through, there is concern that some travellers have taken liberties, not adhering to the Free Overnight RV or campervan parking requirements. These include:

- Parking outside of designated area
- People sleeping in cars and roof top campers
- People defecating nearby when toilet block is locked
- People staying for more than 24 hours

Feedback from Port Staff:

- Area looks messy and unkept especially with the non-self-contained vehicles
- Vans being there for more than one night

Feedback from Axis Auto:

- They have planted plants behind their fence to discourage people to use it 'as a toilet'

Feedback from Geraldton Visitor Centre Team:

- Upon speaking with people on the recent survey many commented that it should be 48 hour and felt they had a sense of 'entitlement'
- Have recognised vehicles staying for more than one night
- One team member saw a vehicle there for four nights. Other team members have seen vehicles parked there for multiple nights
- One team member spoke to a couple that refuse to pay for caravan parks but will buy their groceries and fuel here.
- Evidence of human excrement on landscape plants and rock areas – health risk
- Had to have all power points in area disconnected except on the GMC stage as people were charging phones, mobiles and batteries
- Regular complaints that parks are not wide or long enough
- Regular complaints about the trains and port operations (noise)
- Regular complaints about rubbish trucks doing the rounds early in the morning waking people up
- Wanting to stay multiple nights in tents and treating staff disrespectfully demanding free camping or else they'd leave Geraldton
- Complaints from those staying seeing people urinate near their van
- Complaints from those staying seeing people tip out their grey water on the car park

- People are being moved on during the day by rangers. There are directional signs for caravans to park in the area who are visiting the visitor centre, yet all long vehicle areas (except the RV area) are designated as 'car and boat trailer only'. This means that visitors in caravans can only park in the RV area even if they are not staying. *There needs to be allowance 'during the day' for caravans and RVs that cannot fit in a single car park space..*

Complaint Received From Concerned Resident

When responding to the customer by e-mail, they replied with the following:

'I am hugely supportive of the RV area and the way it brings travellers into the city who may otherwise pass us by. I just don't like to see it continually abused to the detriment of Caravan Park owners.'

D-17-03001

GERALDTON

TAKE A FRESH LOOK

Customer Complaint Form

Customer Information

Name: Rose Holdaway
 Phone: 0418665631 Email: clare.rose.artist@hotmail.co
 Address: 33 FRANCIS ST, GERALDTON

Complaint Information

Date: 24/8/17 Complaint taken by: Glands - Visitors Centre.
 Complaint details:
I live in Francis St + pass through the R.V Friendly Camp frequently. It's been concerning me lately that a lot of campers have been camping for longer than the allowed one night. Some others leaving + returning. This is a regular occurrence.

Business or individual involved:
A ratepayer exercising in area.

The Geraldton Visitor Centre requires that, as an initial step, you raise your complaint with the business/individual. Have you done this? Yes/No
 If no, what was the response?
It's not up to me to ask people to move on, but I think abuse of the 'one night private' needs attention.

Customer signature: [Signature] Date: _____
 Would you like to know of any progress made with this complaint? Yes/No
 What is your preferred method of contact? Phone or email Phone/Email

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WikiCamps Comments

Selection of comments on WikiCamps:.

User 963117 16 Mar 2017

There is one parking lot with defined places for (long)self contained vehicles and there are 9 spots special for campervans (not SC)on other side. Tents are prohibited. Weird that they have spots for campervans but they shut every toilet in town from around 8pm. McDonalds is open till 10.30 pm if you need a toilet. 6.30am still closed.

User 963117 16 Mar 2017

Noisy place with a lot of light at night, but in town and free so good overnigher. 24 h stay. Next to beautiful park with wifi and a lot of points with power. Next to beach.

Ianandleonie 11 Mar 2017

We must have picked a busy night, spot is next to the train line, freight trains ran from 11pm all through the night it was very noisy. Also Ranger came through late yesterday afternoon moved on anyone not self contained.

DemmeJoe 18 May 2017

Awesome spot in Geraldton!You can stay longer than 24h if the wrong ranger isn't coming ;)Just one told us to leave!Cold and hot showers in walking distance (cold at Cafe after playground, hot at the marina a bit further but free!!)Plugs at the playground and near area work all perfectly and the WiFi is the fastest public WiFi I have seen in AU

sueandgran 12 May 2017

Great spot. Well done Geraldton. Happy to spend money in town by way of thanks. Not for light sleepers though or wear earplugs.

User 183585 4 Jul 2017

Bays far too narrow. Only enough room to just open the door IF CAREFUL. Not prepared to stay there. If the council was serious about providing a spot for caravans/motor homes they would make the bays at least 50% wider. Then a person could have peace of mind of not being hit by a vehicle coming in or going out AND he might even be able to sit o/sid

Land Sailors 4 Jul 2017

Oh dear! Not for me, I don't mind being a bit close, but you could pass the toilet paper to your neighbor without getting off the throne.....at 11:30 am there were 2 extra squeeze spots left.....Sunset beach park offered 3 for 2, so we moved on to them.

Taysandco 9 Jul 2017

Never again - pure torture. Great for a day visit to Geraldton but not overnight if you actually want to sleep. CBH trains 50 mtrs away banging all night, nightly hoon welcome with dirt bikes and cars Reving around and the 5.30am wake up from the garbage truck right outside the van windows and dragging wheelie bins across the car park. No thanks!

Slowbob 6 Jul 2017

The address as the location couldn't be found on my GPS. The actual site is at the Francis St. Boat Ramp. The nearest cross st. is Marine Terrace and Francis St. Nothing here but a place to spend the night. Walking distance to shops and pubs.

Stefanov 3 Aug 2017

Free and quiet but toilets are 200mt far away, and closed during the night. (Two seats camper van)

Redcloud 14 Jul 2017

Due to car problems came back into town late in evening, all caravan bays full. Several vehicles parked in car with boat trailer bays, did same. Next morning moved along by ranger in unfriendly manner. Spent lot of money in town on repairs, food and lastly on caravan park for some days. Rangers need much better people skills.

Carolin 10 Jul 2017

2nd visit here, no problems. Bays close but not too much of a problem...loved Geraldton and this was easy to find and good enough for us for one night free

User 1016178 14 Aug 2017

There is places for campervan which r not self contained as you drive in on the right, yellow line stating campervans. Toilets about 200m walk but very clean. Cannot complain for a free spot!

User 373313 12 Aug 2017

Thank you Geraldton, because of being able to freedom camp in the town, we stayed an extra day and spent more \$. We need more towns like you because if they don't have free camp sites , we don't stay.

Jennifer.S 11 Aug 2017

2nd time staying there last night. Not as quite as the last time we were here. But oh well it was just one night with not much sleep. Bays could be a bit larger that's for sure. Trains were a bit noisy last night compared to last time we stayed. Thank u geraldton.

JENPA 29 Aug 2017

Great place, thanks Geraldton. Just hope those vanners who have camped in the boat/trailer area don't spoil it for other travellers. Karma may come in the morning.

trevelon 17 Aug 2017

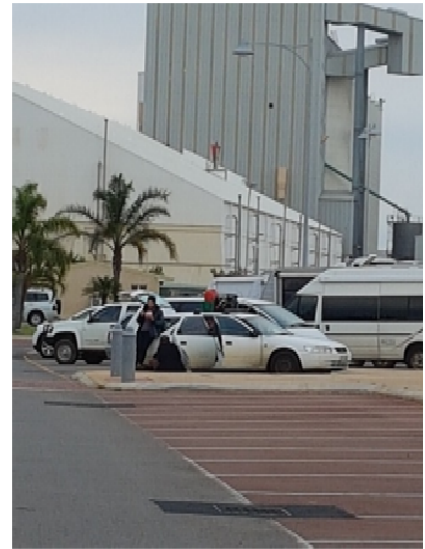
What a beautiful friendly town for grey nomads, love the sea lions, Esplanade and the chance to stock up on groceries etc, thank you Geraldton.

Green Bushes 16 Aug 2017

Thank you Geraldton. Appreciate hospitality and we do spend in town

Francis Street Carpark Usage Issues

Problem: Sleeping in 'cars' in non-designated area.



Sleeping in 'cars', left picture with belongings spread across pavement.



RV parked several nights in non-designated area with extension leads to power points.



This vehicle was parked up for the third night. Ranger spoke to person but they still stayed a third night. A stronger posture, issuing infringement notices, may be required.



Roof-top camper illegally camping – common to see roof top campers in the campervan area.



Common sight to see caravans and RVs parking in non-designated area because designated bays are full. (Consider some additional self-contained RV Bays for overnight, but also some day-use-only bays for caravans stopping for a short stop?)



Surveys of Users

Two surveys were conducted at commencement of the 24-hour free overnight parking, one survey for the RV user and one for the caravan parks. These surveys were repeated for this report.

Travellers – Geraldton 24 Hour RV and Campervan Stay

Questions	2016 Response		2017 Response		Comparison
Where are you from?	Qld	32.08%	Qld	21.62%	Down
	WA	16.98%	WA	18.92%	Up Steady
	NSW	15.09%	NSW	24.32%	Up
	SA	11.32%	SA	02.70%	Down
	Vic	11.32%	Vic	18.92%	Up
	Overseas	09.43%	Overseas	10.81%	Up Steady
	Tas	03.77%	Tas	02.70%	Down Steady
	NT	00.00%	NT	00.00%	Steady
How many people are in your group?	One	13.21%	One	02.70%	Down
	Two	81.13%	Two	89.19%	Up
	Three +	05.66%	Three +	08.11%	Up
What is the average age of your group travelling?	20s	05.77%	20s	05.41%	Down Steady
	30s	03.85%	30s	05.41%	Up Steady
	40s	03.85%	40s	00.00%	Down
	50s	07.69%	50s	24.32%	Up
	60s	59.62%	60s	40.54%	Down
	Other	19.23%	Other	24.32%	Up
Have you stayed overnight in Geraldton before?	Yes	43.40%	Yes	27.03%	Down
	No	56.60%	No	72.97%	Up
How did you find out about the free overnight RV parking?	WikiCamps	30.19%	WikiCamps	38.89%	Up
	Other	30.19%	Other	30.56%	Steady
	Stumbled on	20.75%	Stumbled on	13.89%	Down
	Friend/Relative	09.43%	Friend/Relative	08.33%	Down Steady
	GVC/Ranger	09.43%	GVC/Ranger	08.33%	Down Steady
Did this facility prompt you to stay for the night?	Yes	96.23%	Yes	97.22%	Steady
	No	03.77%	No	02.78%	Steady
If this facility wasn't available where would you have gone?	Not stopped	39.62%	Not stopped	37.84%	Steady
	Caravan park	28.30%	Caravan park	24.32%	Down
	Other RV site	15.09%	Other RV site	24.32%	Up
	Other	15.09%	Other	13.51%	Down Steady
	Park illegally	01.89%	Park illegally	00.00%	Down
Have you considered staying in Geraldton longer, in another facility, such as a Caravan Park, now that you see what Geraldton has to offer?	Yes	73.58%	Yes	67.65%	Down
	No	26.42%	No	32.35%	Up
Will this experience influence future decisions to visit the region or Geraldton AND will you recommend Geraldton to other visitors after your stay here?	Yes	100%	Yes	100%	Steady
	No	000%	No	000%	Steady
Do you mind giving us an idea of the amount you spent while in Geraldton and what you spent it on?	Based on average 100 people (majority surveyed in group of two), averaging out expenditure equates to \$22,293 / 100 = \$222.93 per person Main expenses food and fuel but other comments were gifts, repairs, medical, clothing and hardware.		Based on average 76 people (1 x 1 person, 33 x 2 people and 3 x 3+ people in groups), averaging out expenditure equates to \$12,541 / 100 = \$165.01 per person Main expenses food and fuel but other comments were repairs, medical, tours and hardware.		Down by \$57.92 per person

Caravan Parks – Geraldton 24 Hour RV and Campervan Stay

Questions	2016 Response		2017 Response		Comparison
How is your current occupancy rate in percentage?	00-10%	1	00-10%	1	Decline in occupancy
	11-20%	0	11-20%	0	
	21-30%	1	21-30%	0	
	31-40%	0	31-40%	1	
	41-50%	1	41-50%	2	
	51-60%	0	51-60%	0	
	61-70%	0	61-70%	0	
	71-80%	1	71-80%	2	
	81-90%	2	81-90%	0	
	91-100%	0	91-100%	0	
Are you being impacted by the availability of the limited number of free overnight RV parking spaces in the City?	Yes	50%	Yes	67%	Increase in impact with those in 2016 responding with 'can't tell' being able to give a definite yes or no.
	No	00%	No	33%	
	Can't tell	50%	Can't tell	00%	
If yes, what do you think the impact is?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupancy rate is normal to a little down for this time of year but feel it's general across the board. • Loss of income of customers, see tents set up, not good look for the City. • In the busy period no but in the quiet period we will have an impact. Counted 14 vans down there the other day and we weren't full that night. • It's a free for all with utes, trailers, not just RVs • We also have 25 acres available for camping that is very low occupancy. We are a little down to normal in the main park area. • Occupancy 80-85%, currently a steady stream staying 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment from two parks • Pretty simple - we are losing customer that should be staying in local parks (not just us, all Parks) and I know that they are staying more than one night at a time as we have been keeping our own eye on it. • Caravanners are using RV area instead of caravan parks, decreasing local employment, really effected the business, no occupancy, losing business and money, keeping the basics camps only is adequate such as Ellendale Pool, Coronation and Fig Tree Crossing. This is what is going to close caravan parks.. • Example recently seeing 15 parked behind the visitor centre and 8 at the marina. It costs so much to run a tiny park with \$1,000 weekly power bill plus insurances, gas, water, rates etc. All those payments stay the same regardless of occupancy. We're just trying to survive and do the best we can. • The impact is the vacancies we have. These are down and we see how much we're losing each year as caravan parks in the region. For example each night 10 occupants at the free camping area is approximately \$400 worth. Multiple this by 365 days totals \$146,000. This is a modest example. We're paying the City the lease to run this caravan park yet the City are offering free parking overnight elsewhere. 		Increased impact

Issues & Possible Solutions for consideration

The 24 hour RV parking has been available for 12 months. This is adequate time for people to research and know what they can and cannot do. Rangers from some other Shires do not give warnings, as there is adequate signage and they issue on the spot fines.

- **Increase revenue** and issue fines as per the Local Government Act 1995 – Parking and Parking Facilities Local Law 2012
 - Item 8 Clause 2.8(2)(d) Parking for more than the maximum period in a parking station \$75
 - Item 45 Clause 3.13 Failing to move vehicle after direction by authorised person \$150
 - Other Items may be suitable for the RV and Campervan area
- Move on those that don't comply and if refuse issue an infringement
- No tents, roof top campers, camper trailers or camping in passenger vehicles
- Consider RV and self-contained caravans only with their own toilet and water, this will reduce human and water waste issues
- More ranger presence in area and rangers communicate with each other recording number plates, activities, and hand over (shifts). The more people see rangers the more people will do the right thing and word will spread on WikiCamps
- *Daily patrol:* 6am and/or 6pm (early/late)

NOTE: The RV Friendly initiative clearly states 'self-contained'

<https://members.cmca.net.au/content/rvfriendlymap.aspx>

NOTE: 'Leave No Trace' Code of Conduct

<https://members.cmca.net.au/content/scvInt>

Example - Shire of Coolgardie Conditions for 24 hour stop

