

Welcome



Eleanor Scully, Richard Mainey, Garry Lee, Gary Rebgetz, Lorraine Smith and Richard Barwick

Volunteering is something that many of our CMCA members are involved in, but often this will never be seen or heard. Of course, our Club would not have achieved what it has without the countless hours provided by our unpaid volunteers. Members, State Representatives and the National Member Services Team, work hard daily, on our behalf, to improve our conditions whilst on the road.

In addition to this, there are also many opportunities to volunteer in local communities Australia wide, and the Board would like to highlight a few. Volunteering is important. Apart from the fact that you are assisting a community or a project that may well be short of volunteers, it is also an opportunity for CMCA members to give back to a community. How many times have you heard people say we are 'takers'? When talking to local government, it certainly adds to the discussion if we have been seen to be an active contributor to their local community.

Many towns in Australia have quickly recognised this large group of travelling volunteers. Kimba in South Australia has developed its own initiative. On a recent visit to the area, I spoke to Mayor Dean Johnson where he stated, "Kimba welcomes the grey nomads and invite those who wish to stay a while to join in on some volunteering work alongside locals". He also said, "the rewards are considerable for participants and our community. Many find great satisfaction in sharing their skills and getting to know our residents and region. Some people have made lifelong friendships". Travelling volunteers are provided free camping, including access to power, water and amenities.

Back in June, we visited the Carnarvon

Space and Technology Museum, a must do if you happen to be in that region of Western Australia. A couple of members, Brett and Liz from Perth, were volunteering at the museum and introduced themselves to us. Initially thinking they'd park their vehicle and spend a few weeks volunteering, they were still there after nine months. They seemed to be having an enjoyable time volunteering.

During our visit to Pine Creek, in the Northern Territory, we came across a large notice on the town's notice board advertising, "Grey Nomads - volunteers wanted at Pine Creek School. We need help with relatively small jobs, and we will offer you a free site with power and water". It then listed the tasks that were to be completed, mainly simple maintenance tasks that we would all do around our own homes.

Some of our members travel seeking out volunteering opportunities within areas they enjoy. Paul and Anita Flynn have been long-time volunteers at many national parks. Paul stated that this suited them as, "it allowed us to combine volunteering with our travels. We are camp ground hosts in several states around Australia, including Western Australia, South Australia, and New South Wales. This activity gives us the opportunity to stay in places for an extended period, allowing us to explore those locations. So, if meeting people and giving back to the local community along with keeping active is for you, seriously consider it, we enjoy every aspect of our volunteering experience".

BlazeAid is a relatively new organisation, established by farmer Kevin Butler in 2009 after the devastating Victorian bushfires. It was formed to assist farmers in

rebuilding their lives and properties, after the occurrence of natural disasters such as bushfires and flooding. Two well-known CMCA members, Dave Binskin and Col Coleman, are very strong advocates and participants in these projects. According to Dave, "the backbone of the workforce are grey nomads, in particular CMCA members, many of whom are coordinators of the various volunteer camps around Australia. With no government funding, the volunteer process is simple, just look up BlazeAid's website to see where current camps have been established".

Col added, "BlazeAid offers a real opportunity for people our age and living the lifestyle we do, to help others who are really in need. You do not need to have any particular farming skills, it is a case of learning on the job. Very often, it is just a matter of being there to listen and help, providing that physical support in very difficult situations".

There are also the traditional service and volunteering organisations, such as Rotary Australia and Lions Australia. These clubs are now well structured for RV travellers with the introduction of e-Clubs, meaning the need for face-to-face meetings is no longer essential. The clubs now have the ability to facilitate your volunteering in a local community wherever you may be travelling.

The Board would like to establish a communication process via our website where members will have access to volunteer opportunities Australia-wide. We would hope this 'volunteering portal' will dovetail with the event microsite, giving members the opportunity to volunteer where additional manpower is needed. We would hope that this will provide further opportunities for members to meet other members, park in proximity to each other at these events, and be seen to be 'giving back' to the community. Members have recently commented that we should be "building a volunteer strategy to form partnerships with various events and organisations". Hopefully, we are on our way towards that.

*Travel Safely and
Laugh More, Live Longer.
Garry Lee A67278
Chairman, on behalf of the CMCA
Board of Directors*