



The Caravan Parks
Association of SA

PO Box 39, Seacliff Park,
South Australia 5049

Phone: (08) 8363 7255

www.sa-parks.com.au
Email: admin@sa-parks.com.au

To 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review Secretariat
E: secretariat@rtirc.gov.au

Re: Submission into 2021 Regional Telecommunications Review

SA Parks - the Caravan Parks Association of SA is the peak body representing the Caravan Park industry in South Australia. Our 165 members comprise of caravan parks and a small number of park suppliers. Our members are based in metropolitan Adelaide and throughout all the regions of SA with 90% being based in the regions of the state. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the current Regional Telecommunications Review and would like to highlight the challenges for some caravan parks who operate their businesses in regional South Australia.

National Research reveals that for every dollar of received by a caravan park the park generates \$1.38 of economic activity into their local community. Improved connectivity and increased take up of digital technologies can enable caravan parks to improve their productivity, increase digital marketing activities, attract more guests, increase their turnover and, as a result, continue to increase the economic contribution they make to their local community. The access and reliability of telecommunications can also cause either a positive or negative guest experience, which can impact the reputation of the business and the tourism region.

Our member caravan parks can use a range of cloud or web-based services. These products can enable them to increase guest nights, improve productivity, ensure compliance, increase their profitability, and increase their economic contribution to the region. Where caravan parks do not have access to reliable internet services, the effectiveness of these systems may be limited, they may try to operate them with ongoing frustrations, or they may choose not to take up these cloud or web-based services.

By moving to cloud-based software solutions and providing guests access to online booking services caravan parks will be able to increase visitor numbers to regional areas providing a significant economic benefit for the community.

Reliable mobile phone and internet reception is also critical for many travellers. Reliable and consistent mobile phone reception and internet reception may encourage corporate travellers to stay for longer in areas of regional Australia that do not currently have reliable coverage. The move to more 'work from home' because of COVID has increased the ability of some people to work from anywhere. Good coverage in regions will increase a regions ability for travellers 'working remotely' and to stay in the regions for longer. This can bring significant economic benefits to regional Australia.

More specifically, Caravan Parks need quality telecommunications services in order to:

- Use cloud based "live" reservation software. This software allows parks to create and manage site and cabin bookings either over the phone, in person, or through a link with online booking services (such as booking.com) and provides realtime data on how many bookings parks have at any time. It also allows offsite owners to track bookings and performance of the park at any given time.

This software requires reliable internet service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as without connection parks cannot take new bookings, or check guests in & out.

- Use cloud-based accounting software and communicate this information to their accountants and/or bookkeepers. For businesses where the owner does not work in the business, or has multiple properties, this software allows them to understand how the business is performing without needing to be at the park.

- Provide a guest service in the form of Wi-Fi, which is a now a guest expectation.
 Poor internet and / or mobile reception can create reputational damage to both the caravan park and the tourism region as guests who have a negative experience can often leave negative reviews (online) when they leave.
 By contrast, having quality Wi-Fi can enable guests to post images and updates of their adventures on social media. This can improve the reputation and awareness of a tourism region, thereby increasing visitation and improving economic return to the district and region.
- List available rooms and sites on online booking platforms such as Booking.com & Expedia, thereby enabling caravan parks to increase guest nights and visitation to their property.
- Communicate with guests, suppliers, and staff using email or through email marketing software (which is usually cloud based).
- Attend meetings by video and/or teleconference. During COVID when in person conferences and meetings were kept to a minimum, some SA Parks members reported it was difficult to join online webinars and zoom meetings as their internet connections were patchy and unreliable.
- Undertake marketing activities including social media activity and to maintain their caravan park website.
- Allow staff to access professional development activities like webinars and online training. This is particularly important in regional locations where training opportunities remain limited, and travel times can limit accessibility to metropolitan options.
- Contact emergency services in the event of an emergency or incident. This also extends to those travellers with health issues that need medical attention.
- Use online ordering for goods and services needed for their businesses (as a 7 day a week, 24 hours a day business, caravan park operators may often have to admin work out of hours). Use cloud-based staff rostering and cloud-based register systems.
- Process guest payments using Internet based EFTPOS.
- Ensure that business backups are regularly maintained & kept offsite.

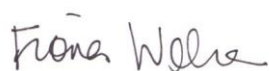
In the year ending March 2021 there were over 4 million nights spent caravan & camping in SA. Research reveals that approximately 90% of caravan & camping takes place in regions, making this sector is a major contributor to the regional SA economy.

As an industry association representing an industry sector that is so important to regional SA, we acknowledge that improvements are needed to the speed and reliability of telecommunication services in regional South Australia. Improvements will increase growth opportunities and efficiencies for member parks and will also serve the guests staying in parks.

We commend the work of the Committee and ask that our industry needs be considered as part of your Review.

Yours faithfully,

Kind regards,



Fiona Williams
 General Manager
 28th September 2021