



PINKS BEACH RV PARK

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

To open or close indefinitely? That is the question we asked our community.

The Pinks Beach RV Park (the Park) has been a free park in its current form, offering a period of up to 5 nights stay, since 2013. The Park is currently closed due to COVID-19, however, there has been some sentiment in the community to keep it closed indefinitely.

At its November 2019 meeting, a motion without notice was passed: *"that Council requests the CEO to undertake investigations into alternative locations for the Pinks Beach RV Park in Kingston."*

This motion was put forward by Cr Pope due to complaints about the facility, specifically relating to:

- Access being restricted to water located at the site for fire-fighting purposes;
- Waste management;
- Visitors to the site restricting beach access due to camping on either side of the road; and
- General congestion and safety of the amenity.

A general review of Council land holdings was undertaken, revealing that no obvious alternative location is available without reasonable expenses incurred to provide a certain level of services, i.e. lighting, public conveniences and waste management.

As part of the review, the RV Friendly Town Program, administered through the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA), was considered. Specifically, what guidelines must be addressed to qualify as a RV Friendly Town. Due to changes in the essential criteria, whereby Council no-longer must provide free camping to qualify, there is no requirement for Council to expend ratepayer money on an alternative location simply to maintain RV Friendly Town status.

After considering this information, Council, at its 24 March 2020 meeting resolved to undertake discretionary period of community engagement to determine public opinion about closing the Pinks Beach RV Park.

Immediately following this decision, COVID-19 restrictions were announced and a risk-based decision to close the Pinks Beach RV Park, amongst other Council facilities was made, effective from 26 March 2020.

As restrictions started to be lifted and travel to the regions was encouraged, the engagement process commenced in May 2020. This was undertaken through a Facebook Poll, as well as submissions in the traditional manner via an online voting form, written submissions and/or in person. Additionally, an article on this matter was included in the Kingston to the Cape Newsletter and CrayBay Gazette which guided the community to provide feedback via our Facebook page and website. A summary of the feedback received from the above channels can be found below.

FACEBOOK POLL

Council conducted a Poll on its Facebook page on 24 May 2020. Statistics of the poll include:

- 5,884 People Reached
- 766 Engagements
- 548 Votes
- 58 Likes, Comments & Shares

Kingston District Council created a poll. Published by Tess Armfield [?] · May 21 at 4:40 PM · 🌐

PINKS BEACH RV PARK POLL 🗳️ ? 😬
To open ✅ or close indefinitely ❌ that is the question we are asking through this Facebook poll!

The Pinks Beach RV Park is currently closed due to COVID-19. However, there has been some sentiment in the community to keep it closed indefinitely 🙅❌.

Make your opinion known, VOTE NOW 🗳️✅❌

Full media release can be found at this link 👉
<https://www.kingstondc.sa.gov.au/.../pinks-beach-rv-park-open...>

Option	Percentage
CLOSE	42%
OPEN	58%

This poll has ended. 548 Votes

5,884 People Reached	766 Engagements	Boost Unavailable
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👤 Stuart Martin, Nick McBride and 8 others 16 Comments 13 Shares

The poll saw 42% vote to close the Park indefinitely and 58% vote to open the facility. Whilst a Facebook Poll is a quick way to engage with our online community, this feature may not be the most effective way to get a true opinion of those voting, being that is very reactive. Due to a limit on the number of words able to be used in the post, it was hard to provide voters with background on why we were conducting the poll. **Note - although a link to a media release was included in the post, only 57 of the 548 voters chose to click the link.**



The post caused for some debate and a series of comments were made, both for and against the closing the facility. An overview of some of the comments are available below:

"Have they done a lot wrong in the past to close it down indefinitely? I think it's wonderful to see people visiting our town and enjoying what we have and a lot take for granted, they are staying and spending money in our town. This is just another avenue for revenue and that equates to more jobs for our kids etc. I'd like to see it landscaped and increased!"

"Sorry I partly disagree, I frequently walk to the beach on this road, yes lovely to see and chat to the campers but when they are on both sides and not obeying the few rules it is dangerous and unpleasant. The rubbish bins overflow regularly, and dog rules don't seem to apply. Camping nearer to town would encourage campers to enjoy Kingston's local businesses more."

"Close it, it is an eyesore and dangerous to those walking down the beach with small children. It's also very annoying trying to get a boat down there early in the morning and campers are parked on the bitumen with generators and or a washing line. There is a perfectly good camping ground across from the jetty, or a caravan park."

"There was a camp there years ago and Mr. Pink came each evening to sell milk etc. to campers, it was a great experience. Why can't we honor his memory and keep this park open?"

"Open but please upgrade area available for use"

"Close it."

"Close it down... make use of the parks in town. The area is not big enough for the amount of people that are trying to squeeze in there. It's a 2WD carpark turned into a caravan park."

"Be easy enough to put bollards up on the northern side of the road to keep camping on the southern side for safety reasons."

"As a resident near there we have seen in the last 12 to 18 months some take up permanent residency which broke the night stay limit to start with. Then we have seen as many as 17 vans there on both side of the road from which some spilled on the road. If they stayed in town the Council would have at least got those park fees. The two bins overflowed and had old broken camp chairs and bags of rubbish next to them. Rubbish on the beach. There were dogs off lead and wandered to properties. Generators going. The toilet block with that many must have struggled as it stunk very bad. Just make it no over night camping as there is grassed RV Park down the road that has one of the best fish and chip places in SA right there and choice of the best pubs are close by, all walking distance."

"I have lived here for many years and I can't see why this facility should be closed. It is good to see people stay at our beach. Council should leave it the way it is to keep visitors coming through the town and spend money. Some backpackers only stay one night."

"I hope more talk and thought goes into this, not just a poll, which is extremely limited."



WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

We received 70 online voting forms, 46 voted to close the Park indefinitely and 24 voted to open the facility. An overview of comments for and against are available below:

Feedback to CLOSE the Pinks Beach RV Park

"The facility at times, is grossly overused. Vans are parked along the road, others on the adjoining sand hills destroying the natural vegetation, rubbish bins overflowing, Council needing to pile rows of compost to stop intrusion into the native undergrowth. Maybe the Pinks Beach 5 day stay has outlived its intention but the now extended town site i.e. better equipped to deal with campers, plus the town site is better suited to encourage travelers to wander into town and spend money. it has done its job, and it is time to return the small Pinks Beach area back to locals, day visitors and boaties with its facilities. Given the explosion of caravan activity in the last decade, Pinks Beach has probably outgrown its ability to cope."

"Close – no where to park when the carpark is full of caravans."

"The number of free campers has increased each year, where people are parking on both sides of the road. Sometimes up to twenty plus vehicles – overcrowding is ridiculous. I used to walk to the beach, but now I find it too intimidating. People are camping in cars, overstaying and rubbish bins are overflowing. Locals who drive out here to go to the beach have nowhere to park and it is the local ratepayer who is paying for these free campers. Living near this is a nightmare and would love to see it closed!"

"If it stays as is, I would like it closed. If an upgrade is undertaken would be ok to open, but currently too many stay at once, rubbish is left everywhere and is an eye sore. Even electric cables across the beach access road was seen last summer. RV's and caravans on both sides is not reasonable and doesn't look attractive."

"If people are happy to travel to our town, they can use a paid services i.e. our caravan park to stay at."

"Close due to overcrowding and lack of access to beach."

"The overcrowding, large volumes of litter and power cords extending across the road has had a negative impact on the Pinks Beach community and made access to the beach unpleasant."

"We holiday in Kingston every year, this little park is a real eyesore."

"I feel that this area is not needed. As a beach user, I get frustrated when I take the kids to Pinks Beach and I have nowhere to park."

"Close – don't follow camper rules, dangerous with all traffic, overcrowded."

"Camp is overfilled, parking on road, rubbish bins overflowing, overstaying time length, most appear not be self-contained."



"The state this free park was in at times during summer was most disgusting. Rubbish spilling from the bins, campers parked over the road. You have a perfectly good caravan park in town plus short term free park, this park is not needed."

"This park is no longer required as the Council has put enough other better option in place for people and RVers. It has served its purpose and by closing it, you will stop a lot of negative comments."

"It is a toilet spot and a carpark for people who can't take their car onto the beach. Should have never been and RV Park to start with. New one near the jetty is ample. Sick of all the freeloaders camping there and not being able to park there. Make the Pinks Beach park into a bigger carpark and leave the toilets etc. there."

"It is overcrowded making it very worrying with young kids coming off the beach. From a car point of view – limited visibility when the 'RV' section is so full. Over summertime there were what we would call permanent people camped there for free. Although the Wyomi site has blocks behind it, this area is a much more suitable place for RV Park as the camping is off the road and safety for people, animals and cars is adequate."

"It is so close to one of the main entrances of the beach. It could be used as a beach goers carpark instead, for people that don't have vehicles that enable them to access the beach."

"There is no safety from campers there as they walk all over the roads to the beach and also at the entrance to the beach. There is not enough room for the people that camp there. I would like to see the area used as a BBQ area for families with fencing."

"Too many campers and some stay too long. They are camping on the wrong side of the camping area. Most look like they aren't self-contained – puts a great strain on the public toilets. Garbage bins are overflowing which means rubbish is everywhere."

Feedback to OPEN the Pinks Beach RV Park

"In todays toughening business environment, we as a community should look and asses any forms of tourism facilities that encourage more visitors to our town in a favorable manor. I love seeing people/travelers parked up enjoying what we have to offer. The few negative comments council be easily fixed with enlarging the area and landscaping, more signage and increased number of rubbish facilities. Let's pave the way for Kingston to become the number one must stay location for RV travelers moving through the Limestone Coast."

"Leave it open – why close it? There is enough facilities closed in the town now."

"It is great for the town and mostly they are fantastic people who are quiet and leave the area clean."

"It brings tourists to town who do spend money here – food, fuel, etc. Maybe it needs to be policed a bit more and if any mess is left behind they get a bill for the clean-up."



"Instead of using the problems occurring to close it, fix the problems and make it a facility of pride."

"Open. I've often seen people camping across the road from the toilet block which should be banned and patrolled. A limit on how many groups/vehicles allowed in the parking area should also be indicated."

"It is great to see people out that end of town and for them to travel Marine Parade and appreciate how nice the stretch of beach is. Remain open with restrictions in place to limit camping on the Kingston side of the access road to the beach."

"Open, however I can't believe there is power. Take the power away and have a sign saying, 'NO GENERATORS'. The facility should be for full self-contained only and reduce the time limit to 48 hours maximum. If the litter does not stop, close it all together."

"Limit visitors to the space as many campervans are often on the other side of the road. Also limit the number of nights allowed to stay as some have been known to stay for lengthy periods."

"Need more bins and a bigger area as its too small."

"On reading volume 2 issue 7 of the 'Cray Bay Gazette' I was astounded to see the negative comment re the Pinks Beach RV Park. I quote 'Council no longer needs free camping to maintain its RV friendly status'. Is this staying we now have what we want so lets go back to the old ways? I have been a member of the CMCA (Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia) with 70,000 members, the largest club of its kind in Australia. They publish a magazine every month and update camping facilities around Australia every month with free and friendly camping sites. Several years ago Kingston SE was written up as one of the friendliest and best towns in Australia. Do you wish to see it written up in the future as the town that used to have everything but over the last few years has gone backwards? Because of the nature of caravanning, campers sit around and socialize over a few drinks and news travels fast on what towns are friendly to visitors and what towns are not. Do we want our town to be known as going backwards? I think not, tourism brings in a lot of money to Kingston and after COVID-19 we need to build this up again."

"When I came down to Kingston to retire in the early 2000's I fought to get toilets and free camping into the town. We eventually got 2 toilet blocks built, once at Wyomi and the other at Pinks Beach along with free camping at both sites. Then came a change with a new CEO who decided we didn't need the Wyomi camping site so we will close it. Through his decision the Wyomi store had to be closed. Now our present CEO is considering closing Pinks Beach RV Park as well. I ask, what benefit to the town will this be?"

"The majority of self-contained RV campers are very responsible people, with campers at Pinks Beach the toilets are watched, with no campers there they will be open to vandalism. This is proven in the Gold Coast several years ago by a school that used to suffer significant damage every school holidays. The Principal decided to open the school oval to RV campers during holidays and the vandalism was reduced to almost nothing."



Pinks Beach is only 6km from the town and those staying for several days still need to buy food, drinks and fuel and maybe have their vehicles serviced. All this money goes into the local businesses. Living between Wyomi and Pinks Beach I visit this area regularly and all I've ever seen is happy, responsible campers enjoying the beautiful beach and sites that we have to offer in our town.

I would be extremely upset if this area was closed to campers unless you can prove to me that this is a liability to the town."