

Why Dump Points Are an Economic Asset

How a \$40,000 investment quietly underwrites hundreds of thousands in local spend.



David Williams

FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT (& CARAVANNER)

Argo Advisory & Consulting

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

| A quiet piece of infrastructure with an outsized economic return.

When regional councils discuss caravan tourism infrastructure, dump points are often viewed as a necessary service or compliance requirement. They are rarely considered an economic development asset. That is a missed opportunity.

A well located, well maintained dump point is one of the most cost effective pieces of tourism infrastructure a council can invest in. While the capital cost may be around \$40,000, its real value lies in influencing visitor behaviour. It encourages self drive travellers to stop, remain in town, access local services and spend money with local businesses.

The economic return is not generated by the dump point itself. It is generated by the visitors who choose to use it.

CONTINUED

Rethinking the Business Case

Councils routinely invest in roads, footpaths, sporting facilities and community infrastructure because these assets support economic and social outcomes.

RV infrastructure deserves to be assessed using the same lens.

A dump point should not be evaluated by asking:

“How many people use it?”

Instead, ask:

“How much local spending does it enable?”

This subtle shift changes the conversation from infrastructure maintenance to economic development.

Understanding the RV Traveller

Today's caravan and motorhome travellers are among Australia's highest value regional visitors.

Many are:

- Aged 55 or older, though increasingly younger and semi retired.
- Travelling for extended periods, often several weeks or months at a time.
- Financially comfortable, with time and discretionary spending capacity.
- Flexible about routes, stops and length of stay.
- Motivated by comfortable weather, authentic experiences and walkable towns.

Unlike destination based tourists, they make dozens of decisions during a journey about where to stop, where to stay and where to spend.

Those decisions are heavily influenced by practical infrastructure.

If a town makes life easy, travellers stay. If it doesn't, they continue to the next town.

Why Dump Points Matter

For self contained RV travellers, access to a dump point is not simply convenient. It is essential.

Travellers often plan their route around locations where they can safely:

- Empty grey and black water tanks.
- Refill fresh drinking water.
- Dispose of household waste and recycling.
- Take a short break in a well maintained public area.
- Access clean public toilets.

Once they stop, something important happens. They walk. And when people walk through a town, they spend.

The Economic Ripple Effect

A traveller stopping to use a dump point rarely leaves immediately. Instead, the visit often expands into multiple purchases.

A typical overnight stop might include:

BUSINESS	TYPICAL SPEND
Fuel station	\$120
Supermarket	\$65
Bakery or café	\$35
Pub or restaurant	\$70
Pharmacy	\$25
Local attractions	\$30
Retail shopping	\$55

One travelling couple can easily spend \$300 to \$400 during a single stop. Multiply that by dozens of visiting RVs each week and the economic contribution becomes significant.

CONTINUED

The Numbers

Consider a conservative scenario. A regional town attracts:

- 20 RV parties each week that use the dump point and stay in town.
- An average spend of \$300 per party across local businesses.
- 50 operating weeks each year.

That equates to:

- \$6,000 in visitor spending each week.
- Around \$26,000 each month.
- Approximately \$300,000 in additional local expenditure each year.

Even if only part of that additional activity is attributable to improved infrastructure, the return on investment is compelling.

A dump point costing approximately \$40,000 could help support hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual visitor expenditure over many years.

More Than Waste Disposal

The highest performing RV friendly towns rarely install a dump point in isolation. Instead, they create a visitor services hub that includes:

- A reliable dump point and potable water refill.
- Clean, accessible public toilets available 24 hours.
- Rubbish and recycling facilities.
- Clear signage directing visitors to the town centre.
- A short, walkable route into cafés, shops and attractions.
- Visitor information covering local businesses and experiences.

The objective is to encourage visitors to remain in town rather than simply passing through. Infrastructure should support economic activity, not just operational convenience.

Location Matters

The placement of a dump point is just as important as its construction.

Facilities located within walking distance of the town centre consistently deliver stronger economic outcomes than those placed on industrial fringes or highway bypasses.

Successful locations allow travellers to:

- Empty tanks and refill water quickly and safely.
- Park a caravan or motorhome nearby without difficulty.
- Walk directly into the town centre in a few minutes.
- Access cafés, bakeries, supermarkets and retail on foot.
- Visit the local visitor information centre or heritage attractions.

Every additional minute spent in the town centre increases the opportunity for local businesses.

Learning from Successful Regional Communities

Several regional communities across Australia demonstrate that practical visitor infrastructure encourages longer stays and stronger local economies.

Langhorne Creek combines accessible RV facilities with walkable cellar doors, hospitality venues and a welcoming community atmosphere.

William Creek proves that even the smallest communities can become iconic overnight destinations when essential infrastructure supports extraordinary visitor experiences.

Daly Waters shows that memorable experiences, supported by practical facilities, generate powerful word of mouth marketing that attracts travellers year after year.

These communities understand that tourism infrastructure is not a cost. It is an investment in local prosperity.

Measuring Success

Councils should evaluate RV infrastructure using meaningful economic indicators rather than simply counting facility usage.

Measures could include:

- Average length of stay for RV visitors in the town.
- Estimated visitor spend per party per day.
- Retail and hospitality turnover in the surrounding streets.
- Traveller reviews, ratings and destination sentiment.
- Repeat visitation and referrals from previous guests.
- Grant funding secured against the visitor economy strategy.

These indicators better reflect the true return generated by visitor infrastructure.

CONTINUED

A Different Conversation

Too often, discussions about dump points focus on installation costs, maintenance responsibilities and operational issues. Those are important considerations. But they should not overshadow the broader economic opportunity.

Regional Australia competes for self drive visitors every day. Travellers have thousands of destinations to choose from. Communities that make it easy to stop, stay and explore are the communities most likely to capture a greater share of Australia's growing RV tourism market.

Final Thought

A dump point does not generate economic value because people empty their tanks. It generates value because it gives travellers a reason to stop.

When combined with welcoming public spaces, walkable town centres and thriving local businesses, that simple decision to stop can become hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual economic activity.

The most successful regional councils no longer view RV infrastructure as an expense. They recognise it as an investment in the visitor economy and a practical way to strengthen local businesses, support employment and build more resilient regional communities.

WHERE THIS LEADS NEXT

Turning insight into action.

Every regional community has the potential to strengthen its visitor economy. The difference lies in leadership, planning and a willingness to think beyond individual assets and towards the whole visitor experience.

If you would like to discuss how these principles apply to your council, tourism organisation or region, Argo Advisory & Consulting works with regional leaders across Australia to translate insight into practical, measurable outcomes.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

David Williams

Founder & Principal Consultant (& Caravanner)

david@argoadvisory.com.au

argoadvisory.com.au

About the Author

Founder and Principal Consultant, Argo Advisory & Consulting. David advises regional councils, tourism organisations and economic development agencies on visitor economy strategy, RV tourism and regional growth. Drawing on deep marketing expertise, Australian authenticity and extensive travel throughout regional Australia, he helps communities develop practical, evidence based strategies that increase visitation, strengthen local businesses and create more resilient regional economies.