

Facelift for Victor Harbor caravan park after lessee chosen

BY JULIA BECKETT
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VICTOR HARBOR - The City of Victor Harbor has confirmed the new lessee of the Victor Harbor Beachfront Caravan Park will be the Australian Tourist Park Management group.

The Coolangatta-based group already runs 23 caravan and tourist parks in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

The city manager, Graeme Maxwell, said a 20-year plus 10-year lease had been granted to provide long-term security, allowing for capital investment.

He said there were about 30 enquiries during the tender process, resulting in several serious contenders for the lease.

"Australian Tourist Park Management was the clear standout because of its 15 years in the industry and its experience with similar council-owned parks in the eastern states.

"The group presented a comprehensive business plan with \$3million in capital expenditure over the next five to ten years."

Proposed improvements included new, quality cabin accommodation; refurbishment of amenities blocks and kitchen and barbecue areas; and the possibility of a small heated swimming pool.

Mr Maxwell said the park would be re-branded and the improvements could offer some local employment opportunities.

"Council has been exploring this sort of option for about 10 years.

"It is a big change and we wanted to make sure to retain a consistent return to Council's budget and revenue stream."

He said enabling capital expenditure without draining Council resources was a major driving force in changing the way the caravan park was operated.

"Australian Tourist Park Management has the knowledge and resource capacity to maintain and improve market share."

Victor Harbor will become a second hub for the company as it expands its operations in southern Australia.

The general manager of Australian Tourist Park Management, Andrew Chapman, grew up in the town and will return home from the Gold Coast in early November to open the new office.

Mr Chapman said the company would begin cosmetic changes to the park immediately, renaming it Victor Harbor Beachfront Holiday Park and introducing an extensive holiday program, including outdoor movies and a huge 'jumping pillow' before Christmas.

A more comprehensive upgrade would start in the new year, with new, high-quality cabins.

"We're trying to create a park that will be four star, at a minimum, but still affordable and family oriented.

"Victor Harbor will be one of our feature parks."

He said local businesses had already been approached to quote on the work to be done.

Australian Tourist Park Management has appointed an experienced team in Eugene and Leanne Anderson to run the caravan park.

The couple previously ran a park for the company in Coffs Harbour.

They will take over from current managers Kevin and Rose Dunn, who will retire on October 1.

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