



Gum Bend Lake - An Oasis In The Outback

The Things You See When You Don't Have A Boat...

Imagine you're travelling out past Forbes towards Condobolin. It's getting late and you're starting to think about where to stop for the night. You roll into Condo. The caravan park on the river looks good... but you're after something a bit quieter.

You could do worse than to camp at Gum Bend Lake.



GUM BEND LAKE, AN OASIS IN THE OUTBACK.

It's only a few kays west of Condo on the northern side of the Lachlan River. And what a surprise! Green grass, a delightful man-made lake and free camping. What's more, you can stay for up to 14 days.

Have a look around [Gum Bend Lake](#) in this video.

On the last point, we were having a yarn to the caretaker, he's a real character. Recently (April 2017) there's been mis-information about how long you can stay for. A rumour spread that the maximum stay was now 3 days. This is completely wrong - it's still 14 days and it's not changing.



YEP, IT'S STILL A 14 DAY STAY!

What, Hot Showers??

The amenities are simple but functional. You have everything you need, including hot showers. And all tap water is mains water from town. So you can safely use it, knowing the water has been treated.

An undercover eating area, free barbecues and an undercover kids playground mean this is truly a family-friendly destination. Perhaps the biggest attraction for locals is the lake. It's large enough to water-ski and wakeboard on.



THE BIRDLIFE IS PROLIFIC - WATERFOWL, BLACK SWANS, GALAHS, GEESE, DUCKS AND OF COURSE CORELLAS TO NAME A FEW.

What About The Camping Area?

In a word - awesome! Lots of shade, flat ground and space. Like most campgrounds filled with travellers and grey nomads, the people are friendly and the atmosphere is relaxed.



LOTS OF PLACES TO CAMP.



WE FOUND A SHADY SPOT - PERFECT!



A WIDER VIEW OF THE CAMPGROUND.



THIS "LAKE" IS SUPPOSED TO BE A CAMPING AREA! LOTS OF RECENT RAIN HAS TURNED IT INTO A SWAMP.



AMENITIES BLOCK ON THE RIGHT.



ANOTHER UNLIKELY SWAMP. THE FROGS LOVE IT..

Bush Camping

If you prefer, you can bush camp right on the banks of the Lachlan River. Seclusion, peace and privacy are the order of the day.



RIVER RED GUMS LINE THE RIVER.



THE PIPE IN THE BACKGROUND IS USED TO PUMP WATER INTO THE MAN-MADE LAKE. LIKE EVERY WATER USER, THEY ARE ALLOCATED WATER RIGHTS.

Recent Floods

Late in 2016, Condobolin was flooded for 7 weeks. The caretaker said they were one of the first to be flooded and the water was about half a metre high under their house. Sensibly, the caretaker's cottage is on stilts.



THE BROWN LINE ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE FENCE IS ABOUT HALF A METRE HIGH - EVIDENCE OF THE RECENT FLOOD.

So if you're looking for a great spot to free camp for a while, add Gum Bend Lake to your list. Just watch out for officious, pompous, arrogant council officials. Read on...

Sour Taste

Unfortunately we had a bad experience on the way out. We were topping up our camper tank from a tap, using a hose into the tank.

Bear in mind we've travelled to some of the driest places in this country. So we're always conscious of water usage and water restrictions. Also remember Condobolin was inundated with water last year and they have more water than they know what to do with.

A very officious man appeared in a 4WD while we were filling the tank, seemingly from nowhere. He proceeded to tell us what we were doing was illegal and didn't we know the town had water restrictions? According to him, there were signs everywhere. We had spent 2 days in the town and hadn't seen a single sign regarding water restrictions. There were certainly no signs at Gum Bend Lake. As we drove back through town on the way out, we didn't see a single sign there either.

Apparently it's fine to fill gerry cans. So it's perfectly okay to walk to the tap, fill a gerry can, walk to your camper and pour it in... multiple times until your tank's full... but it's not okay to fill your tank with a hose.

This council official's attitude was arrogant and disappointing after such an enjoyable stay. It left a sour taste in our mouths.

We had been planning to stock up with food for the next week at Condo. But after that encounter, we waited until the next town.

