



Shire gets RV friendly

KATANNING shire is providing free short-term camping within the townsite for visitors with caravans and camper vans.

At last month's council meeting, councillors voted to turn a disused section of road, left over after Albion Street was rerouted, into a 24-hour recreational vehicles (RV) rest area.

They chose the site partly because a dump facility can be connected straight into the sewer serving the adjacent childrens' playground and Miniature Railway Building.

Council officers said it would also be a simple matter to connect a free water outlet to the existing water mains.

Shire President Alan McFarland said establishing the facility on this site would be \$25,000 cheaper than it would have cost if built anywhere else.

"It's maybe not the ideal spot for it to go but it's still going to be the most cost-effective spot," Mr McFarland said.



● Katanning Shire President Alan McFarland.

"It's actually an old road reserve – Albion Street used to be the main entrance into town, and used to be a dual carriageway.

"Just by cutting in a driveway through the old median strip we've actually got a nice sealed area for them to park."

Mr McFarland said the facility should then allow Katanning to claim "RV Friendly Town" status, as it would meet the Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia's criteria.

"At the moment we are actually surrounded

by RV Friendly Towns," Mr McFarland said.

"Katanning's one of the few around that isn't an RV Friendly Town yet we've got all the shops and supermarkets and things."

He said RV Friendly status would encourage more people to stay overnight and spend money in Katanning.

"They use the facilities we have, shop in the shops, walk down the street, see what we have to view, buy a cup of coffee, buy fuel, and they buy groceries," he said.

"If they don't stop, they don't spend money in the town."

He said the Shire was working to make the facility ready well before the Albany RV camper show in October.

While camping will be free, a sign on the site will encourage campers to donate \$5 to the Visitors' Centre.

Council has allocated \$5,000 in the 2014/15 budget to deliver an RV Dump facility and rest area in Katanning.



Club puts brakes on RVs

Car group is driven to oppose grey nomad stops

By **PETER GARDINER**

DESPITE the Combined Coastal Car Club now opposing a proposed Noosa Council recreation vehicle stop at its Cooroy grounds, planning staff want councillors to approve this Mary River Rd grey nomad magnet with strict waste disposal conditions.

Club president Cliff Watson has lodged the only formal objection to the development application to allow up to 40 RVs to stay a maximum of four nights.

But 17 other submissions of support have been received, including the local RSL and IGA supermarket.

Mr Watson said the club had withdrawn its previous support for the RV park in its current form because of its likely impact on the group's clubhouse operations and activities.

He said the major concern was the inclusion in the park of the area in front of the clubhouse extending north to the creek.

Forty club members attended a council briefing

last November, and Mr Watson said: "We were assured (previously) by the council staff that this area would not be used in any way - no RV siting or access.

"At this stage the requirement was for the area on the northern end of

the football training field; later it was decided by council that this area was too small and some football field would be required.

"The club realised that

the council may require the use of the whole football field, which was still deemed acceptable as the club only requires it for a limited number of occasions," Mr Watson said.

This field is used by the club once a year in October for the Cooroy Car Show and Swap Weekend, so Mr Watson said the letter of consent was signed "in good faith" with the understanding that the field was all that was in question.

Mr Watson said the main area in front of the clubhouse was used more than 40 times each year and was needed on 46 occasions last year. He said a major part of the group's fundraising came from accommodation clubs, such as Rainbow Lorikeets and The Suncoasters, which had exclusive use of the clubhouse, ablution block and grounds.

"There are up to 30 vehicles staying from four

to seven days at a time.

"We hosted the All Indian Rally, which saw 60 vintage motorcycle enthusiasts.

"We have fish and chip nights, show and shines, demonstrations, workshops, sausage sizzles and working bees throughout the year, all of which require unfettered vehicular access," he said.

Mr Watson said none of this could continue with the council RV stopover in the same area.



LAND WORRY: Cliff Watson (left) and other members of the Combined Coastal Car Club at a fundraising cheque handover.

PHOTO: GEOFF POTTER



Cooroy eyes a grey stay boost

By **PETER GARDINER**

NOOSA councillors will today discuss a staff recommendation to endorse up to 40 self-contained recreational vehicles on council-owned land that is presently used by the Combined Coastal Car Club and the Cooroy Horse and Pony Club.

A report to Noosa Council says self-contained RVs have sleeping and cooking facilities, toilet, shower, drinking water and the ability to carry waste.

"Only fully self-contained RVs up to 12.5m in length are proposed to use the site, with larger rigs excluded due to the potential to damage the ground surface," the report stated.

"The maximum number of nights any travelling RV will be permitted to stay at the stop-over is four.

"The RV stop is to occupy a 2.1ha area, located within the south-eastern corner of the site, adjacent to the Cooroy Sewerage Treatment Plant and the Lower Mill Rd.

Staff propose that the northern area accommodate up to 11 RVs near the existing creek and bushland, which would be accessed via an existing driveway adjacent to the proposed waste dump point.

"The southern area accommodates up to 29 RVs and is accessible via an existing driveway near the existing car club and amenities buildings along the site's southern boundary," the report said.

Councillors, if they approve the development

application, are being asked to consider two management options.

One is for an on-site caretaker or the use of local community groups to look after the stop from off-site.

"The management of the park involves ensuring fees are paid, managing the type of vehicles, their length of stay, maintenance of the grounds and assist vacating the site at short notice during flooding and other hazard events.

"At its ordinary meeting on August 28, 2014, council resolved to amend parts of the Noosa Plan to create more opportunities to

attract and accommodate the growing grey nomad market."

If approved, no liquid or solid waste is to be left or disposed of on-site and the council, as developer, must provide suitable waste storage.

The development must be undertaken and operated in a manner that causes no detrimental effect upon the amenity of the neighbourhood.



Dump site's new signage

THE new RV camping and dump site in Boort will soon receive new signs and a donation box.

The signs and box will be installed by members of the Boort Development Committee.

The RV dump site has already been operational for several months, with dozens of travellers stopping overnight at Boort Park.

To date, donations have been collected in person, but the box will ensure that all those who camp and use the dump site will have a place to leave a contribution.

The money will go to the Boort Park Committee.

Boort is the fourth town in the Loddon Shire to receive the tag of "RV Friendly Town", after

Wedderburn, Bridgewater and Pyramid Hill.

RV Friendly Towns are formally accredited by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia.

RV sites are available for maximum stays of 96 hours and are designed for self-sufficient travellers.

Loddon Shire Council tourism manager, Robyn Vella said council provides no amenities,

apart from dump sites, and therefore did not take business away from caravan parks.



Barry Kennedy, Robyn Vella and Ian Mercer with the sign which will be installed at Boort Park.



▶ LETTERS

Let's make an effort to be RV friendly to lift Prossie

Catering to caravans

I WAS very pleased to read the letter from S.C. Ferrill in last week's Guardian.

I love our town.

I have lived in Proserpine for around 45 years and I also have witnessed the trading shops closing down one by one.

There are so many empty shops at present.

It really is so sad.

As a fellow caravanner, like the writer of the article, I would also like to see Proserpine adopt the "RV Friendly" town attitude and I also believe making the Showgrounds available, at a small fee, to caravans would really boost the town's economy.

I am also concerned that if the "Pat Botto Park" is made a freedom camp for caravans, then these people would bypass Proserpine (as it's too far out), and head to another town to spend their money.

I know that when we travel to small towns in our caravan we make a point of spending money in these country towns.

It's a fact that many fellow caravanners think and do exactly this.



Wouldn't it be lovely to see Proserpine the thriving little friendly country town it once was?

Fact: they inject \$17.44 billion into the economy annually.

A large number of caravanning people are on limited incomes.

They are either on pensions, self-funded retirees or young families on a budget.

The Proserpine Showgrounds would be ideal.

They could leave their vans and enjoy a walk up town to have a meal, enjoy a few beverages, buy some groceries and shop at the few remaining fabulous shops still open in Proserpine.

Upon leaving town they usually also fill up their vehicles at the local service station.

The showgrounds already has a caretaker on site to collect the fees.

It could be closed to caravans during our annual show week as is common practise in other showgrounds that are used for this purpose.

It has all the amenities required and a "dump point" conveniently located nearby in Anzac Road.

Caravans are more than willing to pay a small fee to utilise the amenities it has.

Most small towns allow the use of their showgrounds to caravans and we have used them.

It is also a proven fact that the caravan parks do not see a slump in their bookings when a freedom camp is close by.

Visiting caravans in many cases keep the economy going in small towns and are their lifeblood.

One only needs to just look at the amount of caravans there are on the highway bypassing Proserpine daily.

Wouldn't it be lovely to see Proserpine the thriving little friendly country town it once was?

**Sharron Emmerson
Kelsey Creek**

Congratulations

JUST a few lines to express my congratulations on the production of Whitsunday Coast Guardian.

This has become a truly local paper about Proserpine and district and the local Proserpine community.

The promotion of local events and organisations and the social photos are excellent.

The enthusiasm of the young reporters is a joy to behold.

May this newspaper prosper for many years.

Come on, Proserpine residents, support your local paper – maybe put an ad or two in to support it.

OK, it's not privately owned now, but APN are doing a darn good job.

**Writer's name withheld
Proserpine**

■ **Editor's note:** Thanks for your wonderful feedback, it means a lot to me and my hard-working team.

If any other readers have any suggestions about what we can be doing better then please let us know.



Show us the figures on camping

THIS is an open letter to Will Hodgman and Peter Gutwein who, in their portfolios, are overseeing the decimation of a vital Tasmanian tourist industry.

Which ever way you dress it Freedom Camping is Welfare Camping.

There is no point continuing a debate in these pages with welfare recipients who are latched to the government teat.

In my letter (Adv., May 6) I detailed accurate figures of lost income for this industry on the coast; it is now time for the government to respond. It must present a business case for Welfare Camping with accurate and

detailed figures including past, present and projected income. It must not be the usual simplistic argument about increased numbers. It must be a business case strong enough to convince a bank to lend for this venture.

More importantly it must be a strong enough case to justify destroying a profitable tourist park industry that has contributed vast amounts to our economy for nearly 100 years and can continue to do so if not faced with unfair competition from government-sponsored welfare camping.

CHRISTINE ESPITALIER

Wynyard