



Trial will go ahead

A free recreational vehicle (RV) camping trial will run at Lakes Entrance's Rotary Park, East Gippsland Shire Council has confirmed.

And Lakes Entrance Action Development Association members have heard the council wants to trial another area in Lakes Entrance in addition to the Jemmys Point site.

East Gippsland Shire manager major projects and economic development, Tim Ellis, said the short-term overnight parking (STOP) zones were de-

signed to "corral itinerate campers" from the town's car parks and foreshore.

He also said the council would increase the onset of law enforcement at "suitable times" to ensure free camping is done in the STOP zones, and that campers are only staying within the designated hours.

The solution to free camping will be assessed after the 12-month trial.

You can have your say on the topic on the council's website, by clicking onto 'Your Say'.



Dump point saga absurd

THE saga continues in a bureaucratic maze of catch 22 absurdity. It seems that the original decision by the council to excise 4470 square metres of parkland and turn it into a parking lot for motorhomes in the middle of

Leckie Park still stands. Motorhomes could take over our park for free, parking and carrying out their ablution of sewer waste.

When the residents of Vickery St were sent a letter saying work would commence in 10 days time, they were outraged. No consultation, no prior information about the project, just a brief letter saying when work would commence.

Residents all across Alexandra were shocked. You don't have to live in Vickery St to lose your park.

When council officers who were the proponents of this project learnt of the reaction of ratepayers, they very quickly stalled the process and then decided they would "consult" with people who would have been directly affected. Nevertheless, a resolution by the council remains in force that the septic waste dump site be located in Leckie Park. It has never been rescinded.

The Vickery St residents were then keen to be involved in finding a new, less detrimental site that would not cause offence to any resident. Lots of sites were available on the fringe of town or in the industrial estate and other places where no impact on residential ratepayers would occur. With this proviso, we set out to work with council officers to find a suitable location.

The consultative group of five established the principles under which we would contribute. 1: That we would cause no harm and no resident would be affected. 2: That it be cost-effective; the council is in financial trouble and needs to be frugal. 3: That it meets the needs of motorhome owners; i.e. a safe place to park and turn around.

The enthusiasm by the council staff for the new site adjacent to the park on the road reserve saved them embarrassment by proclaiming that that the council didn't have to rescind the decision that they were 'having it in the park' anyway. Considering that they were the authors of the first silly proposal to excise a huge area of Leckie Park, it was important for them and the council to save face or avoid embarrassment at all costs.

Needless to say, the nearby residents/ratepayers objected vigorously to their loss of amenity. "How would you like it outside

your front gate?"

The consultative group insisted that this new site at the intersection of Lamont St and Station St was fraught with dangerous hazards. The OD route carries B double log trucks at 60kph, semi-trailers of trusses from the truss company in Lamont St, and there is a narrow bridge and a rise on the road that obscures vision. This site had failed the consultative group's criteria on safety and the rights of ratepaying residents that their environment and amenity not be sullied by vehicles dumping toilet waste and increased traffic hazards.

Six proposals for alternative sites were offered by the consultative group. Council staff were not prepared to entertain any of them. They declared that they were obeying council instructions to forge on with the new site. Provocative action in letting tenders for plumbing works caused dismay for residents and the consultative group.

There was no urgency for this project. Despite pleas from residents and the consultative group, council officers were not prepared to entertain alternatives because they were stuck in the bureaucratic bind that a council resolution was in force and they could do nothing else. This was absurdity. Not only did the council officers responsible for this whole mess simply excuse themselves by claiming "a council resolution still exists to put it in the park," they claim that we have to prove the Station St/Lamont St site is unsuitable. So, here we go.

1. In the first place, it is dangerous. Convoys of three or four RVs can cause chaos at this spot.
2. It destroys the amenity, atmosphere, environment and pleasure of residents who are adjacent to the park. This disruption to their peace of mind is ongoing and wholly unnecessary as alternatives are in abundance with no disruption to anyone.
3. It is a very expensive exercise and comes in a time of budget emergency for the council and overburdened ratepayers. Many easier, cheaper and cost free alternatives are available. For this reason alone other sites should be considered. Council officers refuse to consider them because 'a council resolution exists that prevents us from behaving in a rational and reasonable way. Furthermore, we don't care about any other available sites, we are only doing our job.'

Enter the perfect solution - a new manager has been appointed to manage the shire showgrounds caravan park. He approaches



the shire officer in charge of this project and offers to install the RV dump free of charge to the council and at the same time offering the service free to the RV owners.

They can drive in, dump their waste and drive away free of charge. If they were to stay the night a fee would apply, however free parking in the showgrounds could be available all day.

If the purpose of an RV dump is to harvest tourist dollars then this is the perfect solution. Not only is this person the newly appointed manager, but he provides a link to the P and A society committee of management because he is also the president of that organisation. We need more people like this with entrepreneurial expertise.

The council officer in charge has refused his cost free, impact free, tourism wise alternative, claiming that he intends to implement the shire resolution that it must go in the park, beside the park or as is proposed, on the roadside reserve beside the residents, which is contrary to the council resolution anyway.

The mind boggles, human beings are better than this, unless you live in a culture of bureaucratic double speak.

I had a courteous meeting with the CEO and mayor who listened carefully and we had a very harmonious talk about the options. I cleared up the many misconceptions about alternate sites. It was obvious that much inconsistent information had confused them.

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Following this, two of us met council officers again only to face resistance to appeals to break the dead lock and entertain alternatives more suitable, free of charge and impact neutral.

The two officers simply repeated their claim that they were obeying the resolution of the council to, "put it in the park," despite the fact that their proposal was not in the park, but on the road reserve.

Aw shucks - so there it is, a Kafka-esque nightmare, a surreal absurdity, a farce. Here in Alexandra.

We commend the Mayor on her piece on consultation and communication processes. It is sorely needed.

Finally I issue a challenge to any councillor who is game. Come with me on a tour of all the sites and consider the pros and cons of each. This invitation has been made to staff, the CEO and the mayor, but nobody

was prepared to take it up. Instead they said, "But the council has a resolution to put it in the park."

The consultative group, the residents of Vickery St, Station St and Lamont St are not opposed to the establishment of a dump point. We are determined to have one, but it must be located where it does not impact residents on recreational areas. There are many such suitable sites available. The council can solve this impasse by rescinding their earlier resolution or making a new one. Put your hand up if you agree.

Geoff Hall, Alexandra



RV FRIENDLY TOWN STATUS FOR COLLARENEBRI & WALGETT

Walgett and Collarenebri joined Burren Junction and a list of nearly 50 other locations across NSW that have taken advantage of the growing RV market to become RV Friendly Towns. There are more than 500,000 registered RVs in Australia and this figure is predicted to rise dramatically over the next ten years.

An RV Friendly Town provides minimum accommodation needs of RV travellers, including campervans, motorhomes and caravans. Becoming an RV Friendly Town requires meeting a set of essential criteria such as being able to provide appropriate parking within the town centre, having short-term (24/48 hour) parking available, access to potable water and a dump point for black and grey water effluent.

Mayor Councillor Lane said 'it was not as easy to become accredited as first thought, with CMCA requesting improvements to road conditions and access to dump points before signing off on the status. It is great to know they (CMCA) take the RV Friendly Town Scheme so seriously which obviously has a flow on affect to travellers. Many travellers look for the 'RV Friendly' signage and prefer to stay in towns they believe they will be welcomed. CMCA guides are often used by travellers in planning how far to travel in a day and where to stay overnight'.

'Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in our area' Mayor Lane concluded, so it is important that we do all we can to make our various towns inviting to visitors.

Research shows RV travellers spend between \$500 and \$900 per week on a range of products and services which makes a real impact on businesses in regional communities. Delivering an RV Friendly Scheme was important to Council's role in supporting tourism and local business in the region. Achieving RV Friendly Town status will help promote our destinations to this growing visitor segment.

For further information please contact General Manager Don Ramsland on 0458 200 158 or Alana Copelin Senior Visitor Information Officer on 02 6828 6137 or adouglas@walgett.nsw.gov.au



Motorhome rally has left its mark on Deni

It is four years since the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia held its 25th annual rally in Deniliquin, and were still seeing the benefits.

Deniliquin Council made a successful bid for the 25th annual rally, held in 2011, which attracted more than 1100 vehicles and their occupants.

Memorial Park was a sea of motorhomes and campervans as the club's enthusiastic members took in all the town has to offer.

And they're still coming back.

Council's manager economic and business development John Harvie said events of this nature are what tourism and increasing our visitor economy is all about.

"Since that event took place many of those who attended have returned to Deniliquin," he said.

"They were pleasantly surprised with what our town has to offer, from the nature-based attractions to sporting facilities

and the warm welcome they received.

"So they're happy to come back, whether for a stopover on their way to another destination, or for an extended stay.

"Every time that happens, our economy benefits further," Mr Harvie said.

He added the 29th annual Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Rally is being held early next month at Murray Bridge.

"Our staff at the Visitor Information Centre have had visitors calling in on their way to Murray Bridge.

"They're travelling via Deniliquin because of their previous experiences."

Increasing Deniliquin's visitor numbers has been a priority of Deniliquin Council for many years.

"Tourism is a highly competitive industry and getting results

does not happen overnight," he said.

"But it is pleasing to see our efforts being rewarded."

Mr Harvie, along with Mayor Lindsay Renwick and general manager Des Bilske, attended this month's Local Government NSW tourism conference to ensure Deniliquin is keeping up with the latest promotional trends and tourism opportunities.

"Our town is recognised throughout the state for the successes we have had in this sector, particularly over the past 10 to 15 years," Mr Harvie said.

"It's generally recognised that we punch above our weight.

"Deniliquin Council has an ongoing commitment to tourism because councillors can see the economic benefits, including the valuable employment opportunities that are created.

"Council aims to continue working with local stakeholders to ensure we build on the growth we have achieved."



Travellers feel at home

Wineries open cellar doors to motorhome club members

THERE was a frenzy of activity at cellar doors across the region last week when motorhome club visitors enjoyed the ultimate Coonawarra experience.

Members of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) solo network filled two large buses to taste what the wineries had to offer.

Each group tasted Coonawarra's finest wines and made purchases to take home with them.

Di Giorgio Family Wines experienced a hectic couple of hours pouring wine for CMCA members.

Cellar door employee Ilana Minge said it was good to be busy.

"We love to see groups like this come through because we can personalise the experience for them with specials and rare tastings," she said.

"We want to make good impressions and be remembered for our wines and service."

She said it was another way to promote the region.

"You never know how far the products will go because these people travel from all over," she said.

Zema Estate cellar door manager Lynn Doyle said staff enjoyed serving large numbers of visitors.

"These events are busy and fun ... the visitors always enjoy themselves and so do the staff," she said.

"We love to meet and

chat with these people who travel from all over and help them spread the word about the area.

"We want to give CMCA the best tourism experience possible."



BUSY: Ilana Minge relaxes after the rush of visitors from the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) solo network at Di Giorgio Family Wines.

Pictures: KYRA SYKES



ON TOUR: Sandra Gleeson, Lynn Rees, Brenda Cook, Karin Kirk, Kay Burke, Christine Cousins, Nancy Mulrooney and Karen McDonald at Wynns Coonawarra last week.