



'Water, water everywhere'

■ **Arthur Gorrie**

THEY say the road to hell is paved with good intentions – and Gympie Regional Council found truth in the old saying yesterday.

Another relevant maxim: You can't please everyone.

When it comes to good intentions, few could fault the council's attempts to help rural and outer suburban residents whose tanks run dry.

And at \$1 for 200 litres, few could fault the price of emergency supplies they can gather in their own drums.

And no-one could complain about the convenient central location, in Archery Park.

But infrastructure councillor Larry Friske was having trouble pleasing anyone yesterday.

Occasional caravanner and Barter St businessman Ross Caulfield had tried to fill the tanks on his motorhome.

It didn't work.

The large diameter dispenser pipe was more than the tank inlet could handle and water went everywhere.

And there was no way to turn it off.

"You put in \$1 and you get 200 litres," he said.

"It's not for you," an exasperated Cr Friske said when he arrived on the scene.

"It's a quick fill for people in the rural areas when it gets

dry (and their tanks run out)," he said.

"It's for people suffering in drought times. It's not for caravans whatsoever. We have plenty of facilities for caravanners."

By coincidence, caravanner Brian Dollar, a former president of the Jayco Owners Club, turned up at that moment and commented that caravanners spend a lot of money in the Gympie region.

"I know," Cr Friske said.

"I'm a caravanner myself. But we have free facilities for them in Gympie and at Kan-

danga." Told there was a caravan and motorhome sewage dumping point adjacent and a simple spring-loaded tap would enable caravanners to top up as well, Cr Friske said the point was that the new pump was intended for another purpose.

A council spokesman said

issues like a tap for caravans and a means of turning off the high-volume pump would be looked at. "It's not officially open yet and we didn't anticipate any problems, because we are not in drought at the moment," he said.

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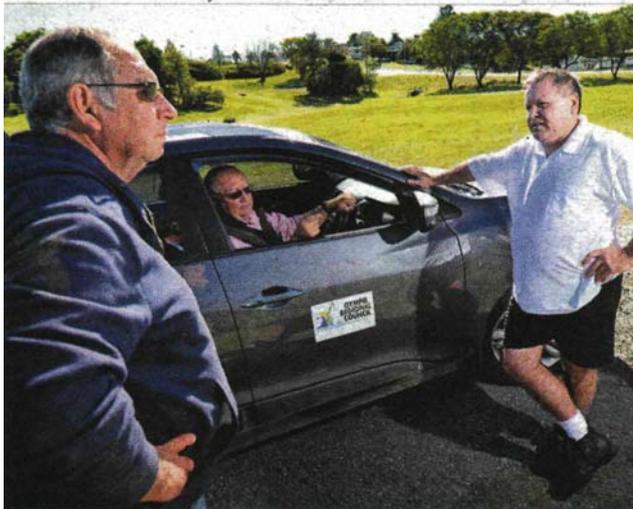
– Council spokesman



Council under the pump as complaints flow freely

NOT FOR HIM: Ross Caulfield finds out for himself the new Archery Park water supply facility is for people with dry house tanks, not motorhome travellers.

PHOTOS: PATRICK WOODS



TRYING: Gympie Region infrastructure councillor Larry Friske (in vehicle) with Brian Dollar (left) and Ross Caulfield.



news **Grey Nomads and freedom camping**

A semi-retired radiographer and self-confessed 'Grey Nomad' Steve Clegg says he felt compelled to write to Cobar Shire Council (and The Weekly) on the issue of 'free camping' after he and his wife recently spent three nights in Cobar.

Mr Clegg said there is constant conversation among motorhome and caravan people who prefer to 'freedom camp' about the perceived bias against freedom camping.

He said the bias against freedom camping can have a detriment on a range of businesses within a town or precinct.

"The detriment arises from the fact that Grey Nomads will go elsewhere, where they are appreciated for the money they leave with local business, if they are not accommodated with suitable camping areas.

"This has been a reasonably common theme as we travel around," Mr Clegg said.

"The catalyst to write the email [to council] came from a comment someone had posted on Wikicamps about 'The Newey'. (Wikicamps is a phone app that is gaining popularity as it can be very up to date rather than the Camps 7 book which is another guide to where camping sites are located).

"About two weeks ago we came across a not dissimilar situation in a Victorian town where the status of the freedom camping area was in limbo. So I thought, do I ignore it again or do I point out the obvious, which is the town has a magnificent resource (The Newey) they should be using to attract Freedom Campers.

"I first heard the term Freedom Campers in Tasmania 18 months ago, I'm not sure I like it, it conjures up the 60s and 70s Freedom Rides.

"But it's better than Freecampers because believe me it ain't free!" Mr Clegg said.



LONG HAUL: American couple's RV holiday has turned into a fulltime job and the world is watching

Cooks have a tastes for travel

Kara Paradies

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WHEN American couple Evanne and Ray Schmarder set out in their RV for a six-month trip they had no idea it would turn into a full-time job.

It's fourteen years later and they haven't stopped.

"There's so much freedom and adventure," Evanne said yesterday. "You can stop when you want, go when you want and experience different foods, cultures and people."

The pair, who film a popular online television program called the RV Cooking Show, rolled into Rockhampton's Tropical Wanderer Discovery Holiday Park on Yaamba Rd this week.

In partnership with PathFinder Outdoor Destinations, Evanne and Ray are travelling Australia and documenting their journey on a three-month road trip.

Evanne said they started filming the episodes for family and friends, but now they have nearly one million views internationally and have walked the red carpet in Hollywood.

She said the show featured destination-related dishes, as well as advice on RV travelling.

And nothing is more Aussie than Vegemite and a meat pie.

"Every time we see a pie shop we stop," she said.

"We love your pies."

Unlike many foreigners, Evanne said she loved Vegemite too.

The pair will continue up the coast this weekend, ending their trip in Port Douglas in 30 days' time.

To follow their journey, visit their Facebook page 90 Days Down under Road Trip or at rvcookingshow.com.



TOP CARAVAN SPOTS

- Tropical Wanderer
Discovery Holiday Park
Yaamba Rd, North
Rockhampton
- Southside Holiday
Village
Bruce Hwy,
Rockhampton
- Cool Waters Holiday
Village,
Scenic Hwy, Kinka Beach
- Big 4 Capricorn
Palms Holiday Village
Scenic Hwy, Yeppoon

LIFE ON THE ROAD: Evanne Schmarder (pictured) and her husband Ray roll into Rockhampton as they travel across Australia.

PHOTO: ALLAN REINIKKA ROK040714ATRAVELS



Manilla to be nomad mecca

MANILLA is set to become a caravanning mecca next year, with more than 100 caravans expected to converge for the NSW Association of Caravan Clubs 2015 State Rally in March.

Themed "Nomads", the rally will be hosted by the Tamworth District Caravan and Leisure Club at the Manilla Showground and is expected to give local service providers a financial boon.

Tamworth mayor Col Murray was enthusiastic about the upcoming event.

"This is an exciting opportunity for us to showcase a beautiful part of the Tamworth region to hundreds of visitors," Cr Murray said.

"Studies have shown that caravan and recreational vehicle travellers typically spend more than \$100 a day in a community on site fees, fuel, groceries, dining out, tours and admission fees, vehicle maintenance and incidentals."

Tamworth and District Caravan and

Leisure Club secretary Pam Wilson said she was thrilled to be approached by the NSW Association of Caravan Clubs to host the event.

"We thought, 'yes we can do it, we'll have a go,'" she said.

She said she valued the nomadic lifestyle and social aspect of caravanning.

"I love the company, the comradship, the friendship, getting together around a campfire and exchanging different views on a lot of things."

She said the Tamworth group was planning a range of activities, such as a meet-and-greet, entertainment, speakers and a disc bowls championship, as well as scheduling free time for visitors to explore places like Nundle, Tamworth, Wallabadah National Park and other gems in the region.

NSW Association of Caravan Clubs secretary John Spencer said this year's rally at Bathurst hosted 120 caravans and injected around \$60,000 into the community.



LACK OF FACILITIES COULD BE DETERRING VISITORS **WASTED CHANCE FOR TOURISM**

MELISSA CUNNINGHAM

SERIOUS harm is being caused to tourism in Ballarat due to a lack of camping and waste amenities for motorhomes and campervans, as well as difficulty in getting to the Visitor Information Centre, according to a leading recreational vehicle lobby group.

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Tourism loses opportunity

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The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia is spearheading a campaign to establish free dumping points for caravans, campervans and motorhomes to dispose of their waste.

The group is also calling for free camping at Pioneer Park in Wendouree and the relocation of the Ballarat Regional Tourism (BRT) office to a site where large-scale recreational vehicles can park.

The idea of a free dumping point has been raised with the Ballarat City Council for more than two years.

In April last year, councillors voted to

undertake further stakeholder consultation on the issue.

In September 2012, the council considered the idea of installing a free public dumping point but resolved not to proceed, citing the advice of BRT which said there was no clear evidence a dumping point would add any benefit to the town.

The council also raised concerns that providing the free service may cause an influx of people camping illegally in public places within the vicinity of the dumping point.

A proposal being tabled this week by the

council involves a \$4000 12-month trial where existing caravan park operators allow visitors to dispose of their waste at their parks.

If the trial is approved, the council will supply 400 vouchers valued at \$10 each which will be given to pay caravan park owners every time their dump point is used by visitors.

CMCA member and Ballarat resident Grant Tillett said he feared tourism in Ballarat was being harmed because it was ignoring the needs of a critical group.

"Ballarat is completely inaccessible as far as a mobile tourists are

concerned," he said.

"Trying to get a park in Lydiard Street is impossible enough let alone trying to find a legal park for a large-scale motorhome."

Mr Tillett said people who use recreational vehicles were usually older, retired and often frail tourists who needed to be able to park and readily access the information centre.

"They can't be expected to park miles away and walk down to the tourist office," he said.

"What is happening now is that tourists are passing through because they can't find a place to



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park at the information centre. There aren't any places for them to park their large-scale vehicles overnight and there aren't free services for them to dump their waste so they will say 'to hell with it' and move on to the next town."

Mr Tillett said more than 75 per cent of mobile homes were self-sufficient with bathroom and toilet facilities, but they needed somewhere to dispose of waste.

But Mr Tillett said although the vouchers would be free to the tourists, they were overpriced.

He said rather than slugging ratepayers, council should invest in creating a one-stop dumping point for recreational facilities.

He estimated it would cost the council between \$8000 to \$10,000 which would be made back in the tourism service it would bring to the town.

"Half the time these large-scale recreational vehicles won't fit inside caravan parks because of the length and width of them," he said. "They need their own dump stop which is catered specifically for this use."

The search continues for a new location for the BRT centre, as the lease for its current building, at 43 Lydiard Street North, ends in June next year.

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Caravan park owners voice concerns

Free camp proposal

MELISSA CUNNINGHAM

FREE camping for campervans and motorhomes could be available at Pioneer Park in Wendouree under a contentious proposal being considered by the Ballarat City Council.

'Freedom camping' is a concept that allows free camping to vehicles certified as being self-contained.

The council's proposed 'freedom camping' 12-month trial involves allowing large recreational vehicles to stay at the park in Wendouree for little or no cost.

Under the proposal, vehicles would not be permitted to stay longer than two nights.

The Campervan and Motorhome Club said the initiative was urgently needed

because there was nowhere in Ballarat that provided the basic facilities required and preferred by recreational vehicle owners.

But while the concept is being pushed by the CAMC, who have agreed to have two Ballarat members of the group inspect the site at Pioneer Park in Gillies Street North daily, it has been vigorously opposed by Ballarat caravan park owners.

Owners have voiced serious concerns about the effect of the proposal including the build-up of litter and waste on the site, an influx of homeless and needy people using the site, and visitors residing illegally.

They are also concerned

people will still use the site despite not having self-contained vehicles and that there will be a lack of staff to monitor or manage the site.

Co-owner of the BIG4 Ballarat Goldfields Holiday Park Annette Terill said she did not believe that the absence of a free camping site in Ballarat was having an adverse effect on tourism.

She said there were already four free camping zones within 25 kilometres of Ballarat, including one in Slaty Creek, Iron Furnace, Smythesdale Gardens Reserve and the Enfield State Park.

Ms Terrill said there was also an unpowered site at Lake Burrumbeet, which offers camping for about \$10 a night.

"It doesn't matter if it is going to be low cost or no cost, it is going to cost somebody to maintain this and it will most likely be ratepayers," Ms Terill said. "Caravan parks in town have to comply with strict regulations, they employ local people and spend their money within the town."

She said she wanted the council to undertake further investigation into the proposal.

According to the council's report on the proposal, council officers can shut down the site at any time during the trial if it is found to be having a damaging financial effect on the viability of existing caravan parks.

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