



Law changes

Camping enthusiasts have until Monday to make comments on proposed changes to caravan park and camping ground laws.

Proposed changes to the 17-year-old laws include giving park operators longer licences, lower compliance costs and greater flexibility to meet consumer demands and providing simpler and flexible laws to meet the needs of the locality.

Local Government Minister Tony Simpson said WA's outdoor lifestyle meant it had more caravan, camper-trailer and campervan registrations than any other State.

This is the first stage of the public consultation process.

For more information, visit www.dlg.wa.gov.au.



Dump point issue is aired

By CAROLINE KEENAN

■ Council considers moving a town dump point to another site

A PLAN to install an RV dump point across from Seven Creeks Park might be scrapped, with the facility to go in at an alternative location.

The dump point was going to be built in the Strathbogie Shire Council car park, opposite the travellers' rest but the most recent council meeting heard it might not go ahead in that spot.

Council CEO Steve Crawcour said there had been some community opposition to the proposed site.

"We are still receiving submissions on the dump point and are considering moving the dump point to a more suitable location," Mr Crawcour told the meeting.

Kirkland Avenue business owner Janet Fogarty welcomed the news that council was reconsidering locating the dump point opposite the Seven Creeks Park barbecue area.

"Well that's great news. I don't think it's appropriate to have the dump point right opposite from where people are trying to enjoy their lunch in the park. It doesn't really go

together," Mrs Fogarty said.

"Friends of mine who travel for five months of the year tell me that sometimes the dump points are left in a disgusting state by other travellers," she said.

Mrs Fogarty said a lot of people had expressed their concern to her about the proposed location of the dump point.

"The general feeling is that the dump point should be on the edge of town. From what I understand that's the case in many towns."

The RV dump point is part of a \$360,000 upgrade to the rest

facilities at Seven Creeks Park.

Strathbogie Shire deputy mayor Colleen Furlanetto told the meeting it had been difficult to access funding for the renovation of the rest facilities.

"This project will provide a decent loo for the next 50," she said.

"The travellers' rest will make that side of Kirkland Avenue a bit of a jewel for Euroa. It's quite a coup."

Council has announced the contract to build the new facilities had been awarded to Shepparton company BG & JK Douglas Builders.



Recreational vehicles are growing in both size and numbers

Big plans for big vans

**JOHN
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A NEW breed of traveller armed with “bush-busting” caravans and motorhomes are helping to open up new areas of previously hard-to-reach tourist attractions in outback Queensland.

Simon and Gaye Terry, who operate the Cobbold Gorge Caravan Park on their How-long Station near Forsyth in Queensland’s southeast Gulf Country, are adding more sites in order to accommodate growing numbers of caravan and motorhome visitors.

“We’ve just put in an extra 16 drive-through sites. The vans are getting bigger, so now I drive my prime mover through to mark out the sites.

“If I can get the prime mover through with the water tanker on the back, they’ll get a caravan through,” Mr Terry said.

“We’ve already had a lot of positive feedback from the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia.”

Mr Terry said that, in addition to his existing sites at the Cobbold Gorge village, he was also in the process of building another 15 sites in a secluded bush setting around a large dam stocked with barramundi 10km from the village.

“Camper trailers mostly go anywhere, but now the newer caravans and motorhomes are kitted out for bush roads. It’s

making a difference to our business,” he said.

Max Taylor, editor of industry bible *Caravan World*, said more people were getting into the caravanning lifestyle.

“Manufacturers are building their vans to suit certain needs.

“There are a lot built now

with off-road specifications such as dual axles and heavy-duty shock absorbers,” he said.

Caravan Industry Association of Australia chairman Mark Lindsay said the number of registered recreational vehicles jumped from 502,025 to 528,869 in 2013.

“Out of this total number 474,783 were caravans, camper

trailers and tent trailers and other towed RVs. Another 54,103 were motorhomes or campervans,” he said.

Mr Lindsay said RV production in Australia for May 2014 was up 7.4 per cent over May 2013, and the rapid growth was not necessarily due to grey nomads.

“Tourism Research Australia figures show the largest consumer group in the industry is 35 to 49-year-olds,” he said.

Colin Balfour from the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia said the industry was worth \$5.4 billion nationally a year.

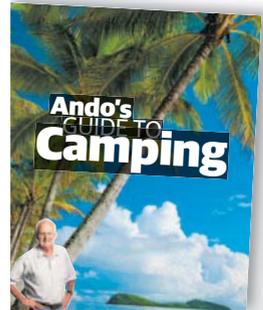
“And we estimate it tips \$1 billion into the regional

Queensland economy annually,” he said.

PLANNING a camping trip?

Don't miss Friday's *Townsville Bulletin* to get your copy of 'Ando's Guide to Camping.'

The special 20 page lift-out includes tips and pointers on how to best enjoy your trip, plus exclusive info about some of the best camping spots in our region.





PRIME MOVER: Simon Terry, operator of Cobbold Gorge Caravan Park, is catering for a different class of off-road traveller.

Picture: FIONA HARDING



Camping cost hike

Mt Eccles park doubles rates

CAMPING FEES

By **JARROD WOOLLEY**

A DOUBLING of overnight camping fees in the Mount Eccles National Park has locals concerned visitors will wipe the park from their plans.

Fees for unpowered sites in the park, which is co-managed by Parks Victoria and the Gunditjmarra traditional owners, start at \$43 in the off-season and \$48 in the peak period for a maximum of six people. Prior to July 1, rates were set at \$24.60 in the peak season.

Camping fees for parks around the state were overhauled based on recommendations from a regulatory impact statement released last year. The overhaul groups camping facilities in parks across the state into four categories, based on the facilities they provide.

Prices at "basic/very basic" campgrounds were set at \$13 a night and those for "very high-standard" facilities at \$59.20 a night.

Sites in the central area of the Grampians National Park start at \$34 in the quieter

winter months and \$37 during the busier summer period, while sites in the Lower Glenelg National Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park both start at \$34.

One local resident told *The Standard* of concerns that a new online booking system was discouraging travellers in campervans from making unplanned stopovers.

"We've got Victoria's best-kept secret at Mount Eccles and it appears Parks Victoria are doing nothing to promote it. They are just pricing people out," the resident said.

A Parks Victoria spokeswoman said camping fees had increased statewide following community consultation during 2013, after a detailed regulatory impact report.

"Camping and accommodation fees across the state have not changed significantly in the past decade, and as a result fees did not represent the true cost of maintaining and providing the services," the spokeswoman said.

"There are around 680 campgrounds in parks and reserves managed by Park Victoria which attract 2.2 million visitor nights each year.

"The cost of maintaining them is about \$17.8 million each year. The revised fee structure helps offset part of the annual shortfall in delivering camping facilities.

"The standard of facilities across the state would have suffered unless changes were made."

The spokeswoman said the new online or telephone booking system also allowed travellers to secure their campsite before they travel.

"Prior to July 1, visitors were not able to book at Mount Eccles. The new system allows them to book online or on the phone in advance, guaranteeing a site," she said.

"Local staff have reported there is no noticeable change in the number of campers you would expect at this time of the year.

"There have been advanced bookings already, with schools that have previously stayed at the park returning."

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New sign offers a warm Waikerie welcome

VISITORS to Waikerie's caravan and recreational vehicle (RV) rest stop are being encouraged to explore the town via a new welcome sign.

The District Council of Loxton Waikerie established the dump point/rest area earlier this year in a bid to draw in more caravan and RV users off the Sturt Highway.

Chief executive officer Peter Ackland said the sign was developed in consultation with representatives from the Waikerie District Community Committee, Riverland West Chamber of Commerce and Waikerie Information Centre.

Its features include a map of the town and a photograph of the local river front, and QR codes have been placed next to logos for Destination Riverland, DCLW, Discover Murray and the Waikerie Information Centre.

"Ideally because the

free WiFi service covers that area, people can log into the WiFi service to see the codes for Destination Riverland and the Waikerie tourism website," Mr Ackland said.

The RWCC logo also features on the sign, but the group is still developing its own website and therefore has no QR code assigned to it.

Mr Ackland said the rest area project was now complete from council's point of view.

"Pleasingly we've had no further feedback from nearby land owners," he said.

"It appears to be working as per what it was designed for."