



Tourists spending a penny

By **JOLENE OGLE**

A HOLIDAYMAKER and his family have been left distraught after three girls from a campervan pulled into the park they were relaxing in and went to the toilet in plain view.

The holidaymaker from Bundaberg asked to remain anonymous, but said he and his family were disgusted by the girls' actions on Monday 29 June when they pulled their van into the car park at Tinbeerwah School park.

"There is no need to see that in Noosa," he said. "We didn't know what to do or what to tell the kids."

The man was with his family including children, with the oldest being 11.

"We're here visiting family and are just completely shocked," he said.

"They just got out of the van and squatted."

Noosa Today put the story to our Facebook followers and according to locals this is a common issue

throughout the shire, with some calling for more public amenities and

cheaper camping rates to help curb the problem.

"Maybe some more services about the place that could be made into gathering spots," Jennie Lovecartmill posted on Facebook.

"An observation area with family picnic facilities, for example."

Chris Stallan said half-price rates at council-run caravan parks might help stem the flow of illegal camping and encourage backpackers to keep visiting Noosa.

"They're (the backpackers) here to spend money, we can't rely on school holidays and weekend visitors to keep the place going," he said.

Trish Radge said her sister-in-law, who lives in Sunshine Beach, had often dealt with backpackers spending days staying out the front of her home.

"My sister-in-law lives in a street in Sunshine Beach ... and had backpackers parked for days outside her house," she said.

"They would toilet on the verge and even leave dirty toilet paper."

Annie Owens said it was common to see hire camper vans parked in the

Tinbeerwah park but said this most recent incident came down to a lack of respect.

"There are always ways to toilet in private and respectfully," she said.

"No family should have to witness this. I think this is a respect issue and one that, as locals, needs to be addressed with the persons involved to let them know this is not acceptable behaviour in Australia."

What do you think? Has this ever happened to you or do you have a great suggestion to help solve the issue? Send your thoughts to newsdesk@noosatoday.net.au



LETTERS to the editor

Welcome visitors

It was with much interest that we read the front page regarding RV acceptance (or not) in Bega and Cobargo (BDN, 9/6).

We are founding members of Far South Coast Chapter of the Campervan and Motor Home Club of Aust (CMCA), formed in 1996 over a weekend held at The Tilba Winery.

Since that time we have travelled quite extensively around Oz and have attended several CMCA rallies.

We also ventured on a 12-month stint around Australia in 1998.

Wherever we went people would ask the age old question "where are you from?"

We were always quite proud to say that we were from Bega where the best cheese is made, and we displayed Bega Cheese stickers on the rear of our first motor home.

Back then people we met would reply, "Oh, we have been through

Bega, but we don't stop as there is no camping and the cost of fuel is too high".

Feeling welcome in a town is important!

We understand the concerns of Mr and Mrs Carlon, in respect that they presume they will lose business, but we feel that this is not the case.

The money they have invested into their caravan park will only encourage those who are not fully self-contained to stop in Bega.

Most people are quite discerning were they shower and expect clean accessible amenities for their money.

We are happy to pass on the word that these improvements have been installed.

"Word of mouth" between travellers is the best advertising whether it be fuels costs or camping fees.

Many travellers are in their retirement years and are not entirely happy to "free/ bush camp" due to safety reasons and still require the use of good showers and toilets, . However, for those of us who do not require these amenities, and do not wish to pay the cost per night of being forced onto a piece of land (due to council regulations) where we sit for the night often still choosing to use our own shower and loo for convenience, this is not for us.

We also travel with our dogs.

Many people travel with their pets, which is often the reason they purchase their RV in the first place, after all they are part of our family, but are not always welcome in caravan parks.

We can only say that we welcome the move by BVSC to allow low cost camping at the Bega Show-ground and also having a dump point will ensure that travellers stay and shop in the town.

Congrats also to Cobargo for its initiative as well.

We know from experience that people will spend their dollars in groceries, entertainment, fuel, dining out, laundromats, gifts and souvenirs, in towns where they are made to feel welcome.

**Lori and Gerry Hammerton
Beauty Point**



PROGRESS: Leitchville and District Progress Association president, Julie Triffle, left, and secretary, Geoff Behrens hope the new Recreational Vehicle Friendly Town accreditation will provide a boost for the town.

Town's tourism tick

PETER BANNAN

LEITCHVILLE has become the first town in the Gannawarra Shire to become a Recreational Vehicle (RV) Friendly town.

RV Friendly Town accreditation is granted by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia, which has more than 66,000 members.

A town can be eligible for accreditation by providing appropriate parking for long vehicles in the town centre near supermarkets, providing long-term parking, access to portable water and access to a free dump point at a convenient location.

The Leitchville stopover is located on Cohuna-Leitchville Road, adjacent to the town's swimming pool facility.

Mayor, Cr Neville Goulding

said Leitchville's RV stopover area was very close to the town centre, provided public toilets and a pleasant area for visitors to camp.

"We hope to see a growth in the number of visitors who travel in their motorhome or campervan to Leitchville, and hopefully to the whole shire," he said.

"Gannawarra Shire is a great destination for people traveling in self-contained accommodation as we have stunning natural environmental for people to enjoy at their leisure."

Leitchville and District Progress Association secretary, Geoff Behrens said the town welcomed the accreditation.

"It is another string in our bow to be advertising this, but it has been a popular rest area any-

how," he said.

The association's president, Julie Triffle said the stopover is popular during the peak spring and summer seasons.

"It's really good timing, because the bakery is now another new attraction for our town. Everyone seems to trek over to the bakery," she said.

"We want to prove that Leitchville is still alive, and this is what we are doing."

Mr Behrens said campers leave donations and thank-you notes at the site, saying it's the best stopover in Australia.

The community has raised more than \$4000 for a shower to be installed at the toilet amenities.

"We want to divert campervans off the highway and visit," he said.



Hundreds of 'Grey Nomads' to enjoy Christmas in July celebrations

Grey nomads will be pouring into Mareeba to take part in the town's *Tropical Christmas in July* celebrations to be held 23th-26th July 2015.

The event, which is hosted by the Far North Nomads Chapter of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia and supported by Mareeba Shire Council, is in its 18th year and offers visitors a variety of fun and interesting events.

Davies Park, Mareeba, will be home to up to 250 motorhomes that will converge from all over Australia for the annual event.

The profits of the event are donated to many local charities and organisations.

Over the four days, nomads will be able to enjoy a range of entertainment, raffles and special events as well as live entertainment from local bands, *Now or Never* and *Kick Start*.

On Saturday 25th, the big *Christmas In July* dinner takes place at Davies Park, (catered by the Mareeba Leagues Club) followed by the open day on Sunday.

The day begins at 9.00am and goes until 3.00pm and features market stalls, raffles and various displays including motorhomes, campervans, and camping equipment.

"Mareeba has a great reputation with the travelling public, and we welcome them with open arms," Mayor Tom Gilmore said.

"There will be a wide variety of information stalls from local businesses and tourist destinations, and many of these amazing vehicles will be open for the public to see on the day. And it is a wonderful chance for locals to mingle with our visitors," Cr Gilmore said.

"Local multicultural dancers will entertain the crowd and there will be fun for the kids, a jumping castle, face painting, ice creams and all sorts of food stalls," Mayor Gilmore said.

The gold coin donation entry fee will be divided between the Mareeba SES and the Mayor's Christmas Appeal.



Body of work attracts RVs

ANTHONY Wynne-Hoelscher with RV-friendly community amenities that will bring passing business to Eumundi. STORY P3.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON

It's built and RVs all came

By PETER GARDINER

RECREATIONAL vehicle owners are “bodily” going where none have stopped before late last year – the \$250,000 new amenities block and recreational facility at Eumundi.

A recycled shipping container featuring a bold and bright Australian Body Art Carnivale mural, gifted to the town by the Eumundi Combined Community Organisation, has earned Eumundi the first RV-Friendly Town status on the Sunshine Coast.

According to Campervan Motorhome Club of Australia chairman, Garry Lee, with more than 500,000 RVs registered around the country, the town stands to

gain a major economic boost.

“It is a big market,” Mr Lee said, before officially opening the block and barbecue gazebo, at the corner of Albert St and Napier Rd, on Thursday.

ECCO general manager Anthony Wynne-Hoelscher said Eumundi had the nationally-famous markets on Wednesdays and Saturdays which everyone knows about, “but we also need to boost up the town for the other five days of the week”.

“Since building our new RV facility at the ECCO main carpark, we have attracted growing numbers of visitors from all over.

“And to prime these good folk in advance of serious shopping therapy at our world-famous markets on a Wednesday, Experience Eumundi has even been

putting on a barbecue and bush ballads in front of the brilliant body art mural every Tuesday night.”

Local RV owners staying in town gave the new facility the thumbs up, saying the level ground

made life easier for these lucrative travellers and news of that will soon be spread around the country by RV word of mouth. ECCO built the facilities with proceeds from the markets carpark, and Eumundi

architect Matt Brindley and local builder Brad Pike, of Toobella Homes, helped transform the shipping container.

Mr Wynne-Hoelscher said local “creatives” LisaSista photography designed “this magnificent photographic tribute to the artists and models from past years of the annual carnivale”.

Sunshine Coast councillors Greg Rogerson and Steve Robinson were on hand to help cut the ribbon.



The ribbon is cut during official opening celebrations.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON



OFFICIAL OPENING: Emily, 8, and Ryan Curtis, 4, of Eumundi, celebrate the community amenities facility in Eumundi.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON

Van owners upset over sales freeze

ALEX ARNOLD

OWNERS of holiday vans in Kiama Council's Werri Beach and Seven Mile Beach holiday parks have reacted angrily to a freeze on the sale of vans while the council considers redevelopment plans.

On June 16, Kiama Council adopted a "no sale and no improvement policy" in confidential session.

The policy came into effect immediately and will remain in place indefinitely.

The council said the policy was in line with the NSW government's Crown Lands Caravan Parks Policy, which aimed to reduce the number of privately owned vans located on Crown reserves.

This was to free up sites to meet "increasing demand by the travelling public for tourist sites" as the popularity of campervans and motorhomes rises.

Some van owners have obtained maps of draft redevelopment plans for the two holiday parks giving clues to which sites may go, but in May the council resolved to defer considering the master plan until November.

Concerned holiday van owners have formed an action group and are considering a class action that could involve owners of 168 vans that stand to be affected by any redevelopment.

They are angry at the



Not happy: Van owners' action group member Stefani Aloisio and her son Samuel at Seven Mile Beach caravan park at Gerroa.

Picture: SYLVIA LIBER

freeze, which prevents many people who already have vans for sale from selling. This includes six people who were moving sites within the parks and have been left owning two vans and paying two sets of fees.

However, the majority are concerned about the future of their holiday vans, some of which have been held by families for years.

The van owners were informed of the freeze by letter sent the day after the June council meeting.

"Everyone is really disappointed and really upset by the letter," spokesman for the van owners David Wood said.

"We want some answers, we want to know how it will affect us and if we are to lose our property are we going to get some compensation or reimbursement for what we have invested here?"

Mr Wood said the van owners would take up their fight not just with the council, but also the NSW government.

"We will be talking to people in Crown Lands and the state ombudsman to ensure we get a fair answer."

Vans in the parks exchange for tens of thousands dollars and annual fees are more than \$5000.

Kiama Council said it was made clear that owners of private holiday vans owned

the built asset (the van), but they did not own the Crown land the asset was on.

The council said it had decided to implement the no sale and no improvement policy to ensure potential buyers "were aware of the situation" and that further investigations into options for park improvements proceeded in "the most ethical and fair way".

The council said the goal of the draft master plan was to increase the number of tourist sites and upgrade the parks by improving internal roads and access, disabled access, safety, and the range and quality of additional recreational facilities.



TRAVEL FRIENDLY: Emily, 8, and Ryan Curtis, 4, of Eumundi check out the recreational facility.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON

Eumundi welcomes RV travellers

A RECYCLED shipping container with a bright Australian Body Art Carnivale mural has earned Eumundi the first RV-Friendly Town status on the Sunshine Coast.

Recreational vehicle owners have been visiting the new \$250,000 amenities block and recreational facility, which was gifted to the town by the Eumundi Combined Community Organisation late last year.

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car park, we have attracted growing numbers of visitors from all over."

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Camper cancer spreads

Illegal backpackers moving into city's suburban parks

JACK HOUGHTON

ILLEGAL campers are turning to suburban parks to stay overnight in since one of the city's most scenic waterfront areas was closed off to them.

The appearance of groups of backpackers in the parks has sparked fears they are using social media to tell fellow travellers of places off the beaten track and away from council rangers.

Oxenford residents were yesterday outraged to find more than a dozen campervans had set up in a family park

off Binstead Way. "The littering is what's getting to me this morning," said Oxenford woman Alarna Flinders on a Facebook post about the park.

"There were 13 campers and a 14th tent on a neighbouring oval."

A *Bulletin* investigation earlier this year revealed hundreds of backpackers were illegally camping on the Gold Coast every day.

The biggest hotspot, Doug Jennings Park at The Spit, has since been turned into a film

set for the latest *Pirates of the Caribbean* production.

When the production finishes, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority will start locking the park's gates at night.

Main Beach councillor Lex Bell said the council had not received reports of illegal camping at The Spit recently.

"They can't get into the park now, so they have moved on," he said.

"We haven't had any complaints concerning camping."

Oxenford councillor William Owen-Jones said backpackers were using social media to share secret camping spots around the city.

"Weka Park has a toilet, so I can understand why they were there," he said.

"The guys who are touring around Australia spending all those hard-earned Greek euros are probably using Facebook to talk to each other.

"From time to time we find hotspots of backpackers and council officers respond by

issuing fines and moving the people along. We have had them at the youth centre and the old pony club - it is no different to the story about Doug Jennings Park."

A Gold Coast City Council spokeswoman confirmed people had been illegally camping in the park and said city rangers would start patrolling the area.

"Officers visited Weka Park on Friday and advised some campers to move on," she said.

"However there were also people camping on nearby private land which the city has no jurisdiction over.

"A complaint was received today and city officers visited the park again but there was nobody there.

"City rangers have been informed about the issue and will incorporate this park as part of their regular after-hours patrols."

**HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY
ILLEGAL CAMPING IN
YOUR SUBURB. TELL US AT**

goldcoastbulletin.com.au



letters to the editor

Land questioned

AT the Hinchinbrook Shire Council meeting on Tuesday, June 23, in less than 10 minutes your council took away from the residents of Hinchinbrook Shire and Ingham, a recreational park of 4.5 acres and all but gifted it to an exclusive members only Caravan, Motorhome and camping group.

Perhaps gifting it is a strong response as in fact they have leased this land for the next 10 years to this mob for a paltry sum of \$2650 per year or just over \$50 per week. Now to anybody who has been in any sort of business, renting land or even a house this is a ridiculously low rent and is all but a gift especially for 4.5 acres within 500 metres of the CBD.

Council is also considering reduced rates and possibly waiving headworks charges (developers contributions to infrastructure costs) as well.

Cr Marc Tack's questions on why and how much were expertly avoided as that hadn't really been discussed in detail.

Now here we have a council making half a decision. These contributions are usually an integral part of any development decision process.

Where on the eastern seaboard of Australia could anybody rent this size parcel of land for even 10 times that sum? I've been around enough, including serving with four different local councils at senior levels, to know that it is all but impossible — only in Ingham.

It took less than 10 minutes for this decision to be made despite the 16 objections, none of which were discussed at the public meeting and I believe none of whom were even consulted about their concerns.

However no consultation is what this current Mayor and most of the councillors have made into an art form. This land is Crown land and council are the "custodians" of this public land and administers it under the Land Act 1994. The Act clearly

states that before there is any change of activity on Crown land, any busi-

ness operator or residents that may be directly impacted upon by any change must be consulted. Well surprise again, didn't happen.

And so the rot continues.

What concerned me at this meeting was the very apparent lack of concern by some of the councillors. During the whole decision and discussion time, Cr Patrick Lynch was too busy on his mobile phone, texting or on the internet, rather than taking part in any discussion.

I am also obliged to Cr David Carr for advising the meeting that this will put Ingham on the map. Confused?

At a recent town meeting Charles Ryman told the meeting that he and his "Pub with no Beer" had put Ingham on the map. Just to be sure I checked my 30-year-old road map and, yep, Ingham is there!

Cr Tack also asked the Council why the developer was not directed to try and enter into a commercial arrangement with the current owner of the old caravan park site on the corner of McIlwraith Street and Townsville Road or if in fact if they had tried.

Once again I was floored to see that this question was simply passed over and no attempt at an answer given.

With the exception of a couple of councillors, who are trying their best in what can be described as a hostile environment, most of this elected council continues to display their absolute arrogance and disregard for the rate payers and residents of the Hinchinbrook Shire.

Elections are due in April next year and if you have had enough, then wholesale changes are needed.

Remember the old saying you get what you voted for? Well I am sure there are many voters out there who didn't think they were voting for this inept council.

There are other and better sites for RVs in this shire without taking away public and family parkland.

*Doug Holzberger,
Ingham.*



What do you think about a RV park that will be based near Tyto Wetlands? Email us at hre@news.com.au



Using park as toilet is disgusting

By **JOLENE OGLE**

THERE'S no excuse for using public parks as a toilet, according to Member for Noosa Glen Elmes, who says it simply amounts to bad behaviour and laziness.

Mr Elmes' comments came after Noosa Today last week reported one family's disgust when they witnessed three travellers getting off their hired campervan at Tinbeerwah Park to use the park as their bathroom.

Mr Elmes said the poor behaviour came down to convenience and laziness.

"If you drive around Noosa, within two minutes you will find a public toilet," he said.

"There's no excuse."

As for reports of campervans setting up residence in suburban streets, sometimes for days on end, Mr Elmes said there were plenty of camping options available to visitors.

"There's no excuse for cluttering up public car parks and streets," Mr Elmes said.

"There are camping sites, and in Eumundi and Cooroy there are free overnight RV stops with amenities for people to use."

A Noosa Council spokesperson said most visitors who hired camping vehicles did the right thing, but council needed effective power to "deal with those responsible for anti-social behaviour and leaving a mess for others to clean up".

"Council would like to see changes to legislation to have offences tied to the vehicle,

rather than the driver," the spokesperson said.

"This would mean that the hire vehicle's owner is held accountable as occurs with some traffic offences, and can debit the customer's credit card for the fine.

"This would not only encourage campervan hire companies to better educate their customers on local laws, but also ensure the hirers of these vehicles realise they must abide by the law or face a penalty."