



Grey nomads drive caravanning boom

By **SAM RIGNEY**

THEY love the great outdoors.

They dress in polo shirts and khaki shorts, clutch at saddle bags, and sport aviator sunglasses and Akubra hats with crocodile teeth and snake skin adorning them.

They are the "grey nomads", or baby boomers whose children have grown up and left the nest.

And when they're not out finding free camps for a stopover, they're checking out the latest caravan and camping shows to see how they can improve on their already idyllic lifestyles.

The first thing you notice is they know the difference between a motor home, a caravan and a campervan.

They say things like "aah, this one's got an en suite" or "let's go and look at the fifth-wheelers and slide-ons".

And they all know each other, even if they don't.

Cell Caravans sales consultant Marianne Benz, who spends 10 months of the year in a van travelling to expos around the country, says the industry is thriving.

"The caravan industry is booming, the baby boomers are retiring, they've got money to spend, they don't necessarily want to go overseas, they want to see their own country and the majority of them don't want to rough it any more," she says.

"It's very hard to sell a van without an en suite these days because they want it, it's market-driven.

"They want to go see the country, they want to experience it and they want to do it with a touch of style. They don't want to have to rough it and set up every night, so caravans are booming."

Good mates Allan Rickard and Phil Conicella (pictured above) recently attended an expo to scope out the new models of caravans and motor homes.

Though they'd rather "avoid the rat race" and head to the outback where "you find the real Aussies", there were other areas that had plenty to offer, they said.





COUNSELLING CAN HELP

Getting older can be an enriching experience, a well-being worker believes.

Rosemarie Seidler runs yoga classes and also provides private counselling services.

"Getting older doesn't have to be a limiting factor in the quality of life you have," she said. "It can be a time of richness, for people who take opportunities to develop new interests and skills, and take on new activities."

A qualified social worker, Ms Seidler has spent about 30 years trying to help people live healthier, happier lives.

"A lot of that has involved working specifically with older people," she says.

She said there was an expectation people should become better at managing life's challenges, the older they became.

"They think they should be able to manage by themselves, but things happen in life: you lose people, you might develop a disease, have an accident, or your living situation might change," Ms Seidler says.

She said counselling could offer a fresh perspective on an issue.

"Often people get into a circular way of thinking about their situation, and can only see it in one way," Ms Seidler says.

She says some people were still reluctant to see a counsellor.



CMCA RALLY WHO ARE YOU

1. What's your name?
Honi den-Bakker

2. Tell us about your family and friends.

I am married to Chuck who was born and grew up in Durbin, South Africa. I grew up in Orange NSW. We have five children who are all grown up. We have thirteen grandchildren and six great grandchildren. They live all over Australia: Alice Springs, Melbourne, Sydney, Orange and the Gold Coast. We live in Tiaro between Gympie and Maryborough. We also have a large cleared area around our home where our friends can park their motor homes when they call in on a trip past. It is a great spot on the Mary river.

3. What are your hobbies and interests?

Taking our motor home on the road and seeing more of this great country of ours. We also love gardening and country music.

4. How did you get involved with the CMCA?

We had a caravan and four-wheel drive but apart from trips to see family we did not go anywhere. We were working too hard. Then we went to a caravan show in Brisbane and fell in love with a small campervan, that was fifteen years ago. We joined the CMCA and also our local

Suncoasters Chapter and a year later updated to a beautiful Coaster van: THE CHUCK WAGON. We have now attended twenty one Rallies and have been Volunteers for twenty and love it!!!

5. Had you heard of Robinvale /Euston before coming here?

Yes, we sure did! Our friends Ray and Mim Jones told us all about this area and we promised we would come to the Rally and also have a look around the area. We stayed at the lovely caravan park in Euston, also a lovely spot on the river for 4 days before coming in to work. We went to the club for lunches etc. Wonderful great staff, a very happy club.

6. What are your impressions of Robinvale thus far?

Lovely and the river is so beautiful. The surroundings with the vineyards are amazing.

7. What do you think of the facilities available around town?

Great, so close to town and the best IGA I have been to. Everything so close and handy.

8. What are you most impressed with in Robinvale?

The River !!! Just love it!

9. Which activities are you most looking forward to taking part in while in Robinvale?

We are hoping to take a couple of bus tours to

find out more about the area when we have our days off!

10. What do you look forward to most at the rallies?

Finding new areas and meeting up with our friends every six months, then all the happy hours with lots of laughter and catching up, seminars, and the ladies shed.

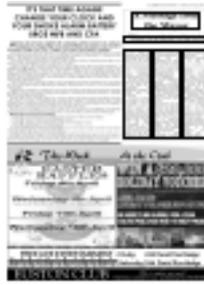
11. What stays with you after a rally?

The new friends you made, the areas you would like to spend more time exploring, and the fun.

12. What makes you return to a place that you 'rallied' at?

The surroundings and the people who made you welcome.





A Message from the Mayor

What a week we are all in for here in Robinvale, with the arrival of the 28th Anniversary CMCA Rally. About 1000 motorhomes have arrived in town and will be here until 6 April.

The rally will be set up in a large area between the highway, Riverside Drive, Latje Road and the Leisure Centre. Their site will be a hive of activity with entertainment, trade exhibitions, seminars and activities.

But the visitors will also get out and about in our region, and I encourage all Robinvale residents to make them feel welcome.

Council's Economic Development Unit has organised a range of tours around our region's wineries, food producers and a tour of the Swan Hill and Lake Boga areas. Visitors are also being encouraged to visit tourist attractions in Swan Hill and Lake Boga, to play golf at Robinvale and to play

bowls at Euston.

What an exciting week it will be for Robinvale. I would like to congratulate Ray Jones and his team on their hard work so far and look forward to visiting the rally next Thursday.

ACT Robinvale

I was also pleased to represent Council, alongside our CEO Dean Miller, when we travelled to Melbourne to advocate for the continuation of Robinvale's Advancing Country Towns (ACT) program.

We recently met with Minister for Regional and Rural Development Peter Ryan, Member for Mildura Peter Crisp as well as Robinvale District Health Services (RDHS) CEO Mara Richards and MADEC CEO Laurence Burt.

ACT is a State Government program,

being led by RDHS, that aims to create new opportunities for Robinvale, especially in the areas of economic development, education and integrated services. The current funding ends in October, so we met with the Minister to advocate for that funding and the program to continue.

Council has worked in partnership with RDHS on a number of ACT projects, and sees it as an important program to build services, skills and long-term prosperity in the Robinvale area.

Current projects in the pipeline include an Integrated Early Years Centre in the Robinvale P-12 grounds, and a community library.



Gain access to camping sites on road

TWEED caravaners can now access a comprehensive listing of NSW's caravan and camping sites and a range of product suppliers all through their mobile device.

A downloadable app of the Caravan, Camping and RV Holiday Touring and Products Guide 2014, launched by the Caravan and Camping Industry of Australia's NSW branch, will allow users to find more than 400 holiday parks and over 200 RV product and services suppliers.

The industry's chief executive Lyndel Gray said the new service, which is the first in a series of 'Digital Glove Box' features available through the touch of an icon on a mobile tablet device.

The latest edition of the 2014 NSW Caravan, Camping and RV, Holiday, Touring and Products Guide has all the information on where to go, what to see and where to stay across NSW including detailed maps, distance guides, local attractions and events, details on sites for larger RVs, internet access, dump point facilities and disabled access.

Download the guide for iPad or tablet through the App Store, or Google Play.

Visit: www.caravan-camping.com.au.



Rest stop disgust

RICHARD Fox understands it can take time for government departments to react but waiting nearly 12 months for a simple repair to a picnic table seems a bit too long.

Mr Fox lives near the Belford rest area adjacent to the New England Highway and over the years has taken a keen interest in its state of repair.

“So many people still use the facility, in particular people with caravans and camper-vans,” he said.

“Most nights the area has at least a couple of vans camping there - I think it’s popular because its off the highway and therefore much quieter than the rest area at Whittingham.”

Due to its high usage, nearly

12 months ago Mr Fox reported to the Roads and Maritime Services(RMS) that the seat on one of the two picnic tables was broken and dangerous.

“Within 24 hours the damaged seat was removed but now, all these months later, it has not been replaced,” he said.

“If they can come and take it away that quickly why can’t they come back and put a new seat on the picnic table.

“With more and more people likely to use the area following the opening of the Hunter Expressway it would great to see the place fully operational.”

Mr Fox will soon be carrying out his own Clean Up Australia Day event around the rest area.



MISSING SEAT: Belford resident Richard Fox brought his own milk crate to sit on at the Belford rest area because nearly 12 months after reporting the broken seat, it has not been replaced.



REGIONAL ROUND UP

CENTRAL WEST

Government offices relocate

THE NSW government proposes, from 2015 to move the Office of Environment and Heritage, EPA and Office of State Revenue, from Hurstville, the Sydney CBD and existing Parramatta offices to be co-located in Parramatta, and the Ambulance Service of NSW, will move from Rozelle to North Parramatta;

Police HQ for sale

THE building accommodating the headquarters of the NSW Police Force, at 1 Charles Street, is for sale by expressions of interest, which close on March 27. The lease expires in May 2024, with a further five-year option. The building was constructed in 2003

Firm wins award

COLEMAN Greig Lawyers, in Parramatta, has won the "Best provider to the professional services sector" in the Beaton Research + Consulting/BRW Client Choice Awards.

Display suite and sales office

THE Lidis Group has approval to use premises at 333 and 339 Church Street, in the Parramatta CBD, for a display suite and sales office, for a 400-apartment tower and mixed-use redevelopment of the Lennox car park site, at the rear of the premises.

CCIA campaign

A NEW digital campaign by Destination NSW and the Caravan and Camping Industry Association of NSW (CCIA), based at Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, will run until mid-year; the campaign includes 30 new pages dedicated to caravan and camping venues.

Swimming in the river

PARRAMATTA City Council expects to distribute, mid-year, a brief to potential consultants regarding the feasibility of bringing swimming back to the Parramatta River

Document's promotion delayed

THE promotion of a prospectus, Parramatta: Investing in Western Sydney, aimed at attracting new businesses to Parramatta has been delayed because of resignations in Parramatta City Council's economic development team.



RV roadblock

I REFER to Kevin Collins's article concerning RV tourists in Port Adelaide (*Portside Messenger*, March 26).

What a great idea to lure visitors to an area that has got a lot to offer, but unfortunately the Port Adelaide Enfield Council will be your stumbling block.

Why? Based on the fact that the council has condoned free overnight camping in the car parking areas between Bower Rd and Semaphore Rd for up to 30 vehicles per night during the past three months, so cynically, why would they even think of setting Port Adelaide up for paid parking?

Furthermore, I have unsuccessfully sent two emails to the appropriate council member questioning this free camping, with no response.

So, based on that fact, what hope has Kevin got in waking up this group with a constructive money-making idea that would benefit all ratepayers and help to liven up the Port?

**BRUCE ROBINSON,
Semaphore Park**



Sleeping rough

IS ANYONE else concerned by the dramatic increase in the number of people sleeping in cars in car parks? Over the last two weeks, I have been noticing this trend emerge, particularly at the Largs Bay Kiosk car park, adjacent to the play ground.

Each morning, there are on average eight vehicles which includes, sedans, four wheel drives and camper vans, which have obviously been slept in.

Some of these vehicles are from interstate, well-

stocked camper vans, and also have South Australian licence plates.

This practice sparks concern with me. Are these could be holiday-makers not paying for a legitimate camping site, despite there being a caravan park located on Military Rd, Semaphore Park.

As we all know, where there are humans, there is rubbish, and the cost of their holiday is then passed on to the local community through financial and environmental factors.

It is unclear if people are forced to sleep in their cars due to honest situations of homelessness and poverty, which is alarming if there are children involved.

With the nights getting colder, the health and well-being of those in situations of genuine hardship can be supported through appropriate supports and interventions.

However, this is only effective if people in hardship are aware of their options.

I would also assume that some people are employed, and if so, is living in this manner a personal choice, or are other systemic failures influencing these be-

haviours? Whether you agree with these points or can see a different perspective on the situation, the fact remains that without the council stepping in and asking some questions and taking meaningful action, this practice will continue.

NAOMI O'GRADY,
Largs Bay



GETTING OUT

Poor taste lines roll on

Govt considering which way to go on Wicked Campers

By **JANINE HILL**

WICKED Campers have copped another caning for offensiveness, but their politically incorrect slogans will be a sight on the Sunshine Coast for a while yet.

Although a call last year to exclude the infamous campervans from Coast caravan parks won support, no such ban has been implemented.

The State Government is also still considering possible controls on outdoor advertising that may apply to

the campervans.

Wicked Campers have been the subject of complaints for their trademark cheeky slogans, which include racial and sexual jokes and sometimes foul language.

The Advertising Standards Board recently upheld a complaint about a van scribed with "fat girls are harder to kidnap!"

The complainant said the slogan was offensive and objected to kidnapping being used as humour.

The board found that the reference to fat girls was "tasteless" and "not nice", but did not discriminate against or vilify anyone.

However, it did find that the reference to kidnap was "making light of and encouraging" behaviour that was not in line with community standards.

Sunshine Coast Mayor

Mark Jamieson expressed support for a ban on offensively worded vehicles last year, saying standards should be upheld.

A spokesman said council

was waiting for the State Government's response to recommendations from a parliamentary committee inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising.

Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie said the government

was considering the report's recommendations.

The report makes nine recommendations, including the development of a code of ethics for outdoor advertising and that an adjudication board be established to consider breaches of the code.

The report recommends that the board have the power to investigate ads that use sex, nudity or sexuality, even without complaints.

WICKED SLOGANS (THAT WE CAN PRINT)

- Drink til she's pretty
- Dig a lil hol, planta lil seed, grow a lil tree, smoke a lil weed!
- A fool and his money are soon partying
- Inspect her gadget
- Honk if you're not wearing undies
- A diet is a penalty for exceeding the feed limit



BEST OF OUR BLOGS

WICKED Campers have copped another caning for offensiveness, but their politically incorrect slogans will be a sight on the Sunshine Coast for a while yet. Although a call last year to exclude the infamous campervans from Coast caravan parks won support, no such ban has been implemented.

Lots of attention

THEY'RE getting exactly what they want – loads of attention.

killerjools from Sippy Downs

Police must act

THE police should put this

car off the road. They control what is allowable on the road. Police, do your job.

KoalaCrt from Little Mountain

Moronic eyesores

GET rid of these revolting eyesores and the morons that own them. Would not hire or recommend them.

Girlie01 from Little Mountain

Wicked wowsers

FURTHER reinforces Queensland as the wowser state. Presumably a new bunch of fat cats are being appointed to “monitor the situation”.

maxwell52 from Bargara