



## Input wanted over planned changes to caravan park laws

CAMPING and caravan lovers are being urged to comment on proposed state government changes to caravan park and camping ground laws.

The proposed changes, outlined in a consultation paper, include:

- Giving park operators longer licences, lower compliance costs and greater flexibility to meet consumer demands.

- Giving users greater choice and more affordable holiday options.

- Providing simpler and flexible laws to meet the needs of the locality and allow tourism to evolve and flourish.

Local Government Minister Tony Simpson said WA had more caravan, camper trailer and campervan registrations than any other state: 30 for every 1000 peo-

ple. The paper comes as the government pushes ahead with its \$21 million Parks for People scheme, which will provide more high-quality, low-cost holidays and at least 450 new campsites created in 16 national parks.

Comments close on September 1.

- [www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/CPCG-Consultation-Paper](http://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/CPCG-Consultation-Paper)



**RV- FRIENDLY FURORE**

# Ad sparks outrage

**Emily Smith**



emily.smith@cnbttimes.com.au

MONTO'S best-known assailant of free choice camping ignited social media uproar last week, and has left some travellers threatening to boycott the town.

But both Big 4 caravan parks and the Caravan and Motorhome Club of Australia have issued media statements, encouraging members not to lose faith in the Monto community.

Big 4 Cania Gorge caravan park owner Peter

Rankin has taken a public stand against the council-proposed RV-friendly standing ground at the end of Monto's main street, stating "grey nomads" wanted the "mums and dads of Australia to fund their million dollar lifestyle" (CNBT, May 29).

Big4 Holiday Parks acting CEO Kari Hunter wanted to assert her company did "not share the views of Peter Rankin".

"We are disappointed that this branded advertisement was placed without consultation," she said.

"This action is not in the spirit of our organisation and we are discussing this directly with the individual park involved."

CMCA members set up a BlazeAid base in Monto to help the community during the floods, and although that group has promised to "continue to support you (the North Burnett shire) in any way we can", they also wanted to set the record straight.

"Contrary to Mr Rankin's claims, CMCA members are not typically 'rich people who drive RVs worth anywhere between \$100,000 and \$500,000'," CMCA chairman Vincent Moran said.

He said Mr Rankin's claim the CMCA were an "insurance/co-operative based business" as false and said: "Our members represent a cross-section of Australian society".

"If RV tourists feel they will not be welcome in a particular town, they will simply bypass it and stay elsewhere," he said.

"This will in turn cause the whole town to miss out on the economic stimulus these travellers help provide.

"If we are supported, we will continue to visit (the North Burnett), to purchase goods and services from your businesses and support you in any way we can."

The North Burnett Regional Council is awaiting word from the State Government over the land use at the end of Monto's main street, before any decision regarding an RV standing ground is made.

It has been suggested Monto may have to be proactive to salvage its travelling tourism industry.



## What's the cost?

THERE are a couple of words in the English language that don't necessarily mean what they seem they should mean.

Fitful and noisome.

These words are kind of opposites of each other.

Fitful is the sort of sleep you would imagine you would like to have, and a noisome night would, so you'd think, prevent it.

In fact the opposite is true, a fitful night is one full of fits and starts and not much sleep, whereas a noisome one is quiet and dark and would probably result in a good rest.

The same is true with the hoary old chestnut perpetrated by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia, that free camp spots are good for business.

First of all, it is not free, it is paid for by ratepayers, and the myth that their members should not have to pay for what they don't want is discounted by the fact that they do want security and access to police, hospitals, water, toilets and all those other facilities that our rates pay for, yet they somehow feel that they shouldn't have to pay for that either.

Someone must and that someone is us, the ratepayers.

What reason has the council for pushing the CMCoA line instead of taking their responsibility to the ratepayers to effectively manage our mounting rates?

How much is it really costing ratepayers?

**Tommaso Marinucci,  
The Manda Inn,  
Gayndah**



## FROM THE MAYORS DESK

**NATURALLY Beautiful**  
North Burnett welcomes travellers to the region to enjoy our environment and lifestyle.

There are a number of premier visiting sites for the region including the range of recreational dams and attractions such as the RM Williams Australian Bush Learning Centre.

Recently, the council completed the necessary planning requirements to allow RV friendly status vehicles to stay overnight at the centre.

The centre contains a gallery, the Reginald Murray (RM) Williams display and the visitor information centre.

A council-owned caravan park also operates within Eidsvold which charges

commercial rates.

The council has done some preliminary investigation to an RV friendly rest area in Monto but does not have tenure to the land.

The council has RV friendly status for five towns and believes both registered caravan parks and RV friendly areas are important as part of the overall fabric of the self drive tourism area.

The council believes that both registered parks and RV friendly areas services the differing needs of the travelling community.

The council will continue to promote tourism throughout the region as one aspect of our continued Economic Development.

**- Mayor Don Waugh**



# BUSH RETREAT IN PRINT

Hopetoun's Mallee Bush Retreat has been featured in the latest issue, 203, of Caravan and Motorhome magazine, after local caretaker Bert Hallam was interviewed for the publication.

A double page spread, as part of 'the future of freedom' feature, highlights the free camping opportunities at Lake Lascelles.

"Many holiday-makers are spending a lot of money on being self-sufficient caravanners and mobile home owners," says Bert.

"They don't need power and many are pensioners looking for a

longer holiday."

"Some big rigs need more room than parks provide."

Bert describes the lake as a place for both types of holidays – free and paid.

"With a council-run caravan park close to Lake Lascelles, it is proof that all camping types can co-exist for the benefit of the entire district."

"We feel that caravanners support our local shops and by making camping more affordable, we are inviting people to stay and support our town."

Bert feels that free camping will con-



**Feature:** *Mallee Bush Retreat's free camping facilities have drawn plenty of interest, featuring in the latest Caravan and Motorhome magazine.*

**Photo contributed**

tinue to be developed to meet the needs of retirees with self-sufficient means, in the near future.

"They worked hard all their life, so why not?"



# RV CASH INJECTION

**ALEXANDRA SHEEHY**

[alexandra.sheehy@news.com.au](mailto:alexandra.sheehy@news.com.au)



LOCAL businesses are receiving a much-needed cash injection from campervan travellers as a national group officially declares Ingham an RV friendly town.

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia made the announcement this week as the Hinchinbrook captures its slice of the grey nomad market.

The club's Ken Kipping said the value of road based tourism in Australia is estimated to be \$7 billion per annum.

"The designation of RV Friendly Towns continues to encourage all RV travellers to stop, shop and enjoy all that various towns in your State have to offer," he said. "It is now up to these communities to make the tourists welcome. If you see them around the town, say hello and tell them about some of the great things to see in the district."

The news comes after the

“

**I think it is a very successful project and the council need to be commended for getting it started**

**Charles Ryman  
Lees Hotel**

Hinchinbrook Shire Council approving a six-month trial of a 48-hour recreational vehicle parking site opposite the TYTO Wetlands Information Centre in April in an attempt to snare a portion of the billion dollar business.

Ingham Newsagency owner Robert Castellani said since the trial started he had noticed an influx of RV tourists and that he was beginning to reap the economic benefits as a result.

"We are definitely getting benefits from the new parking site," he said. "It isn't just ourselves either, but a lot of other retailers are seeing the benefits too as the tourists are walking all around town.

"Each spend they make

adds up too. Plus it is just another avenue to stop people here to showcase what Ingham has to offer."

It is understood that council had been investigating a self-contained RV facility since 2003.

But over the past 12 months, council said community feedback had shown that there "appears to be a high level of support from local businesses and residents" for an RV parking site.

Ingham pub owner Charles Ryman is another businessman who says the trial is a seeming success.

"I think it is a very successful project and the council need to be commended for getting it started," the Lees Hotel owner said.

"We have had a lot of RV tourists coming through here. The great advantage of the site is that it is within easy walking distance of the town centre. This means people are far more likely to walk into town and have a look at the clothes stores, buy a coffee and go for lunch and we have already seen that starting to happen. So really all the businesses are benefiting from

this initiative so I hope it continues. I think anything we do that helps tourists can only be a good thing."

Council's Development and Planning manager Rosemary Pennisi said last month alone more than 80 RV tourists stopped at the parking site.

"We have received some really positive feedback from visitors about how beautiful the site is and how close it is to town as well as how welcomed they have felt by the wider community," she said.

"I think by allowing them to stop here for 48 hours it gives them a full day to see what the Hinchinbrook has to offer, so they want to return or extend their stay here and book into one of our local caravan parks. So over the next few months I'm hoping the numbers continue to increase and that their spending will continue to overflow to local businesses and caravan parks, so everyone gets some benefit of having the site here." The six-month trial will run until the end of October before council decides whether or not they will continue the facility.



## Ingham is RV friendly

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) has officially declared Ingham as an RV Friendly Town.

By promoting the partnership between recreational vehicle (RV) travellers and small towns, CMCA hopes to encourage the expansion of tourism related infrastructure and services, and also boost the economy of those small towns providing RV tourist specific amenities.

In order to qualify for the scheme, towns must successfully meet the needs of RV travellers and satisfy stringent criteria including: access to medical facilities, a pharmacy, a dump point, a general shopping area, provision of appropriate parking, a Visitor Information Centre and vehicle service centre.

CMCA also considers the general attitude of the local council and community, so as to truly identify the friendliest areas in Australia.

Therefore, travellers can enter any RV Friendly Town with the knowledge that they will be welcomed and adequately provided for.

In return, CMCA supports and promotes towns with an RV Friendly status.

CMCA Director, National Consumer Representative and Government Liaison, Ken Kipping says the results of the scheme continue to be promising.

"It is great to see an increasing number of towns qualifying as RV Friendly," Mr Kipping said.

"CMCA strives to promote a number

of schemes that will facilitate improved relationships between RV travellers, government and the community.

"This way we are ensuring that everyone's interests are considered and our programs are mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

"The advantage of Ingham becoming an RV Friendly Town is that the business communities will benefit from the dollars spent by these mobile travellers.

"The value of road based tourism in Australia is estimated to be \$7 billion per annum.

"It is important to the economy of the State, particularly in the regional areas, that as much of this revenue as possible is spent in this State, rather than in the adjoining States.

"The designation of RV Friendly Towns continues to encourage all RV travellers to stop, shop and enjoy all that various towns in your State have to offer.

"It is now up to these communities to make the tourists welcome.

"If you see them around the town, say hello and tell them about some of the great things to see in the district.

"The best form of advertising is word of mouth, and as they tell their fellow travellers about the joys of staying in the region, their numbers will increase."

A number of RV Friendly Towns exist around the country.

For a current list, visit the CMCA website at [www.cmca.net.au](http://www.cmca.net.au)



## Aussie holiday ideas



# Winter delights

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



## Carla Adams packs up her family and goes cruising the highways

I'LL gladly defend Queensland on every level – food, entertainment, lifestyle and holiday experiences.

But there's one time the southern states outperform our sunny home – winter.

To give our Miss Six and Miss Eight a true “winter” this year, we hired a

big friendly giant motorhome from Apollo Motorhome Holidays, taking him (it was definitely a him) south to alpine Victoria.

Miss Six and Miss Eight were positively bouncing with excitement at the prospect of living and travelling in a “cubbyhouse on wheels”.

The best part, we thought, was the chance to visit friends and family without having to sleep on their floors but that was just the half of it.

During the getting to know him lecture at the Apollo branch, we found out where to store and stash our gear (hooray, no luggage limits), learned how to work the gas cooktop, microwave, TV/DVD player, onboard hot water shower and the ... ahem ... etiquette of changing the toilet tank.

The good news is toilet chemicals completely neutralise any odours and the entire job can be done in a few minutes at any approved waste station by a handy husband.

The BFG was far easier to drive than I expected. Our six-berth Euro Deluxe had a double top bunk over the

driver's cabin for the kids and the dinette at the rear converted to a spacious double, long enough for my 186cm husband to sleep in comfort. Because there is a secondary dinette where the kids' seats clip in while driving, we left the rear bed made up during the whole trip.

We arrived at Bright, in the Alpine region of Victoria, as the leaves were turning. Now this is winter – a daily visual rotation of greens, golds, pinks and reds, all hung on the branches of poplars, maples, liquid ambers and huge oak trees.

Time for scarves, jackets and big boots, hot chocolate with marshmallows and hearty red wine in front of a fire.

Bright offers year-round activities but summer and autumn are the