



Old Gipps town's new

By GARY STEVENS

EXPANDED parking for motorhomes and caravans and a revamped entrance to Old Gipps town are planned to help better showcase the park as a tourist attraction for travellers visiting Moe.

Plans include relocating the park's main entrance back to its former position and reopening the cafe.

Extra parking for motorhomes and vehicles towing caravans at Old Gipps town are already part of the proposal for a gateway to the Latrobe Valley at the western entrance to Moe.

Old Gipps town manager Kevin Reardon said he would soon meet with authorities to discuss extending the car park to "make it very user-friendly" for travellers.

"With the improved parking and improved facilities we just expect many more visitors to be able to stop and access Old Gipps town and continue on into Moe," Mr Reardon said.

"For us to have a gateway - and we're located right next to it - is going to be a great boon for business, we believe."

Potential facilities mooted for the parking area include a dump point for motorhomes and caravans, and charging for electric cars.

Mr Reardon said it would better encourage travellers to stop and enter the heritage park.

"It's very important because they are usually looking at somewhere to go when they stop and we've got the perfect outlet for them to come in and have a picnic

and wander around for an hour or so," he said.

"It's a great alternative for them and once they've done that - used the facilities here and rested up - they then continue on to the rest of the town."

Latrobe City deputy mayor Sharon Gibson said plans to make the area more RV-friendly would potentially draw more travellers into Moe and the Valley.

"I think the potential there is huge, there is untapped potential," Cr Gibson said.

"If this can be incorporated (into the gateway project) to increase the exposure and possibilities for Old Gipps town and the greater area of the town as well, that's what I'm hoping will come about from this project."

Make Moe Glow's Marilyn May hopes the plan will allow travellers to base themselves at Old Gipps town while doing their shopping and using other facilities in the town.

"Moe at the moment hasn't got a big tourist attraction and we can see the potential of Old Gipps town being that huge tourist attraction, that's going to be the drawcard," she said.

with VicRoads and Latrobe City representatives on hand.

Details: Landscape architect Steve Wallbrink outlined design plans for the gateway to community representatives this week.
photograph bryan petts-jones





Boost visitors: Candidates agree region needs to secure campers

Goal to grow RV visits

Hayden Johnson

INCREASING the appeal of the Fraser Coast to RV travellers is a common goal of mayoral candidates.

Currently the Fraser Coast's RV policy is documented in the Camping Options Strategy; formed by a stakeholder group last year.

The policy resulting from the group's report was a "stop and shop" plan for RVs stopping at Hervey Bay and Maryborough and a \$10 permit system for Tiaro.

Mayoral candidate Steve Coleman wants the council to do away with the current strategy.

"Scrap the stupid policy of having to show a shopping docket," he said.

"Roll out the welcome mat – look for some suitable places for them to park; it's very simple stuff."

Fellow candidate Greg Schmidt wants RV facilities

to be paid for by the national body.

"I'll give support for RVs but funding should be carefully sought to minimise any cost to ratepayers," he said.

"I'm recommending it be supported by the council but funded by the CMCA (national caravan body)." Chris Loft believes the region should "change the rules so we can

invite them (RVs) in".

"I'm very unhappy with that camping strategy," he said.

"I want us to be super-friendly and I think it's the market we can go a lot harder on."

Incumbent Mayor Gerard O'Connell said the current camping strategy would give the Fraser Coast RV-friendly status.

"This is a major and very positive way to attract more RVs to the Fraser Coast," he said.

"It's about getting them here as well as making sure out existing caravan park owners remain and grow in their viability.

"We can absolutely be the RV capital of regional Queensland."

Jannean Dean said more should be done to attract RVs but be cautious the industry does not take business from existing park owners.

"Remove these penalty charges, remove the shop and stop fees and improve RV sites," she said.

"Businesses are losing money."

“Scrap the stupid policy of having to show a shopping docket.

Steve Coleman



RV for Rocky?

Plans to attract grey nomads

By RUSTY WOODGER

ROCHESTER traders are hoping a bunch of grey nomads can provide a major boost to the town's economy.

Rochester Business Network is pushing for the town to gain RV friendly accreditation — and it could cost little to get the initiative up and running.

The RV Friendly Town scheme is an initiative of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia and towns must meet criteria including access to drinking water and a free dump point.

The CMCA then recommends the towns to travellers so they can plan stopovers along their journey.

Rochester already meets some criteria but would need to find a suitable location for overnight parking for RVs, as well as appropriate short-term parking within the town centre.

RBN executive officer Alan Darbyshire said gaining RV Friendly accreditation would provide a boost to Rochester's economy.

"We are missing out on short-term tourists who continue their journey (past Rochester)," he said.

"Anecdotal advice is that the grey nomads would love to stop if we could provide them with the facilities.

"There is a pre-conceived notion with some locals that they (RV tourists) are mean and do not spend money, but that is an urban myth.

"They love to stock up with supplies, have a haircut and a good

pub meal and rave on about how good the town is to other travellers via the grey nomad websites and magazines."

Mr Darbyshire said the RBN intended to work with Campaspe Shire to identify a suitable site within walking distance of the shopping precinct.

RBN president and Nichol Trading owner Glenda Nichol said she regularly heard complaints about Rochester not having free camping.

Mrs Nichol said the town needed to look at new ways of boosting trade.

"A lot of country towns are benefitting from the extra visitors to their towns and I think we should at least consider it," she said.

Rochester Caltex owner Justin Cleary said RV users regularly passed through his service station and he would welcome the town tapping into that market.

"It is in their nature to buy some supplies on the run — even if it is just basics like ice and so forth," he said.

"Anyone who stays in Rochester is contributing to our economy and we need all of that."

The RBN will be discussing the idea at a meeting at 8am on Friday next week at Rochester Community House.

In Victoria there are 41 towns with RV Friendly Town accreditation, including Heathcote and Kyabram.