



Council resolves issue of freedom camping in Cobar

Council resolved at last Thursday's meeting to undertake no regulation of free camping in the Cobar Shire.

The meeting had a full gallery of onlookers interested in the outcome of the matter.

Council's general manager Gary Woodman and acting director of planning and environmental services Stephen Poulter presented a report to councillors updating them on the research into the legality of 'freedom camping'.

Mr Woodman said council officers had undertaken extensive investigations as it was such a complicated matter.

He said it was necessary to ensure all facts and information in relation to the issue had been checked legally for appropriateness and correctness.

"Appropriate legal advice has been obtained to ascertain council's legal obligations from Marsdens Law Group in respect to a number of matters," he said.

"The report provided the legality of unregulated free camping that included information on the use of other crown reserves and locations within Cobar Shire for camping when associated with and without events," he said.

"Council officers will continue to specifically regulate certain offences such as liquid waste disposal, littering and traffic related offences which at times relate to free camping," Mr Woodman said.

"Council officers will work with the Cobar Caravan Park operators to help ascertain alternative measures to the regulation of free camping in the Cobar Shire that will increase the financial standing of the Caravan Park," he said.



The Riverland to star in driving holiday promo

The Riverland will feature in a range of new self-drive tourism routes to be promoted at the Royal Adelaide Show this week.

The South Australian Tourism Commission has developed five routes highlighting wine regions, scenic coastal and Murray River drives, outback discovery routes and the state's freshest seafood and produce.

The Riverland is included in the Mighty Murray Way drive, which would see tourists take in river scenery from Renmark to the Murray Mouth.

Other drives including the Epicurean Way, a wine region tour, and the Southern Ocean Drive from Mount Gambier to Adelaide via Kangaroo Island.

Tourism Minister Leon Biggins said self-drive tourists were a major proportion of all visitors to South Australia and the new routes would make explor-

ing South Australia by car much easier.

"There were 3.9 million domestic overnight leisure trips made in South Australia last year and 84 per cent used a private, rented, hire vehicle or a campervan or motor home as a means of transport," he said.

"That's almost 3.3 million leisure purpose driving trips made in our state.

"Self-drive holidays are one of the fastest growing tourism sectors and promoting these routes puts us in a great position to attract interstate and overseas visitors to SA.

"These touring routes make South Australia more accessible, and make planning a road trip easier as they highlight some of our must-do experiences in an easy to follow format."

The five routes are:

□ Epicurean Way – McLaren Vale to Clare Valley via the Adelaide Hills and Barossa

□ Explorers Way – Adelaide to Darwin via the Flinders Ranges

□ Seafood Frontier – Adelaide to Eyre Peninsula via Yorke Peninsula

□ Mighty Murray Way – the Murray River from Renmark to the Mouth

□ Southern Ocean Drive – Mt Gambier to Adelaide via Kangaroo Island

The routes will be promoted in downloadable maps and suggested itineraries on the southaustralia.com website.

The website will also feature an interactive map that will provide more detailed information about experiences along the routes.

The South Australian Tourism Commission's stand at the Royal Adelaide Show will feature touch screens displaying the routes on an interactive microsite as well as a flyer highlighting the five touring routes.



Cooroy one step closer to RV Parking

COOROY is one step closer to Recreational Vehicle parking since the Council Ordinary Meeting on 28 August, where councillors voted to:

A. Enter into formal negotiations with the Combined Coastal Car Club to allow for a 12 month trial for an RV Stopover utilising the open space included in the Club's permit to occupy over part of Lot 1 SP242414, 17 Mary River Road, Cooroy;

B. Submit an application for material change of use to allow temporary use of the site for up to 2 years by fully self-contained compact recreational vehicles (excluding big rigs over 12.5 m in length), subject to satisfactory arrangements being made with the Combined Coastal Car Club;

C. Develop a detailed minimum design and associated estimate of costs for a waste dump point and associated facilities to be located within Lot 1 SP242414, 17

Mary River Road, Cooroy, together with associated directional and user signage with a view to a request for funding being submitted to the quarterly budget review process to allow construction to occur during 2014-15;

D. Prepare a feasibility assessment of the project to ensure that all financial and risk issues are addressed including the approach to the management model for the 12 month trial; and

E. Investigate options and estimated costs to provide parking spaces for long "recreational" vehicles in close proximity to Cooroy town centre and revisit usage of the Council freehold land opposite Cooroy Library for an interim parking area for longer vehicles until a permanent solution can be implemented.

"We are really excited about this decision. The Cooroy Chamber of Commerce

has been working on this project with various governments for more than 10 years, lobbying to get caravan and RV day parking and some overnight stops in Cooroy. "We constantly see caravans and RVs parked on the roadside and across multiple car parks in town and many of our members report that they are constantly asked by visitors if there is a place they can stay overnight with an RV.

"So we know there has been a need, but it has been a challenge to find an appropriate spot. This is a really positive step and a big thanks to the Noosa Council for getting us a bit closer to a solution," said Cooroy Chamber of Commerce President, Danielle Taylor.

There is still a bit of work to go and it will be a few months away at least but this is the biggest step forward we've had to date."



Plenty on show at big outdoor expo

WELCOME: Tina Black from Caravan Mart invites visitors to join her for a cuppa aboard one of the many caravans that will be on display at the three-day Mackay Caravan, Camping and Boating Expo starting tomorrow. **STORY: PAGE 2**

PHOTO: PETER HOLT

150-PLUS EXHIBITORS: CARAVANS, CAMPERNS AND FISHING ALL COVERED

Vans galore at Expo

Everything for the great outdoors will be on display

Luis Narvaez

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THE grey nomads may have begun their slow migration south but there will be no shortage of caravans when the Mackay Caravan, Camping and Boating Expo hits the showgrounds this weekend.

Everything from fishing

gear to luxury campervans will be on show when the expo opens tomorrow.

Expo organiser Bob Carroll said there would be more than 150 exhibitors from around the country at the three-day event.

"These days there is much

talk about online shopping but the simple fact is that shopping locally is more convenient, plus you have the advantage of enjoying friendly customer service and accessibility," he said.

"Sustainable communities come about because lo-

cals support local businesses and I would urge Mackay residents to (visit) the many local retailers who will be at the show and expo."

Entertainment includes cooking and fishing demonstrations, live music and children's activities.



The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) this month announced Queensland as the friendliest state for Recreational Vehicle (RV) travel.

“Research shows Queensland is consistently rated the number one destination for domestic RV tourists,” CMCA chairman Vincent

Moran said.

“RV tourists provide up to 70% of all tourism revenue in some regional locations.”

According to the CMCA, the camping market is the fastest growing segment of the Australian domestic tourism market and generates an excess of \$5.4 billion per annum in total spend.

EXPO

Mackay Caravan, Camping and Boating Expo and Spring Home Show

■ September 12-14, Showgrounds

■ Adults \$10, Seniors \$8, Children free



BIG EVENT: Ross Green and Tracey Ford have some fun as they set up their DreamPot stand for the Caravan Show in Mackay.

PHOTO: PETER HOLT



When home is the open road

IT SOUNDS like a movie plot; buy a van, sell your furniture, live and travel indefinitely in a home with wheels. But for a growing number of Aussies, life really is a highway.

More and more retired baby-boomers – who often own their own homes – are trading a suburban life for a nomadic lifestyle.

In 2010 research showed 16 per cent of all Australia's recreational vehicles were "actively travelling", said Colin Balfour, manager communications of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia. Ten years ago, in 2003-04 the percentage was only 3 to 4 per cent.

There are about 450,000 registered vehicles in Australia including 60,000 campervans and motor homes.

"Consider this: once you own the vehicle you can live in it for about \$700 a week on average including all site costs," Mr Balfour said.

"I am guessing you can usually rent out your home in Melbourne or Sydney or wherever for about the same, which is why it is a compelling proposition for growing numbers of people."

Of course caravan homes are also a low-cost fixed housing option.

The 2011 ABS census revealed more than 163,000 Australians have made permanent homes in caravan parks.

Many own the dwelling and rent the land their home sits on. Bonds are

not usually needed and if you rent a permanent on-site van from a park, most come fully furnished and there

are no ongoing costs for electricity or water, according to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.

Caravan-park fees usually cost about \$30 daily for a permanent van, says Skye Sears from Albury Wodonga RV World. It costs from \$30,000 to buy a second-hand caravan with en suite. A top-notch self-contained motor home including satellite TV, solar panels, LED lights, shower, toilet, laundry and generator costs from about \$100,000 although you can spend up to \$500,000.

"It is still cheaper than a holiday home with all its ongoing hassles, costs and, on the coastline north of Sydney, declining values," Mr Balfour said.

airstreambeauty

Lisa Wood and husband David have lived in their self-renovated motorhome since 2010.

They move with David's work and currently home-school three of their five sons in their 10m converted motorhome, which started life as a Bedford school bus. Lisa bought the vehicle for \$18,100 on eBay.

Over recent years they have parked their mobile home in Queensland towns including Yandina, Sarina, Mackay, Bundaberg and the Sunshine

Coast. They currently live in Wollongong, NSW.

"At the end of this year we are open to the idea of travelling wherever our hearts takes us," Wood said.

"We sold our house before renting

and then deciding to buy and live in our motorhome and can never see ourselves returning to a bricks and mortar home; when we had a home we had to sink so much money into

renovations and upkeep that we had no money for living and fun times."

We can never see ourselves returning to a bricks and mortar home

British writer and traveller Charli Moore and partner Ben (www.wanderlusters.com) have lived overseas since 2010 including long stints in campervans in Australia and New Zealand.

Today they live in a 6m four-bed

caravan. Its homey features include a gas hob, oven, shower, toilet, hot water system and electric heater.

Moore estimates her nomadic housing arrangement costs about \$38 a day on average.

"This is probably comparable to renting a small place in some parts of the world (but) we feel being mobile offers us a better quality of life."

www.realestate.com.au



Winnebago Motorhome: the nomadic lifestyle is growing in appeal



Andamooka named RV friendly town by CMCA

Andamooka may experience an influx of visitors soon with the town being named a recreational vehicle (RV) friendly town recently by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA).

A number of things had to be altered in the town and criteria met to obtain this status but in a letter sent the Andamooka Town Management Committee (ATMC) from the CMCA all criteria was met.

Street parking across from the shopping precinct for motorhomes, campervans and caravans has been allowed by the ATMC as well as allowing short and long term overnight parking for these vehicles at the Andamooka Camping Ground.

A free public dumping point has also been agreed on, in the water dispensing unit on water way, as well as enabling access to coin operated portable water available at the same place.

The status lead to immediate promotion of Andamooka with the town being promoted in CMCA's magazine *The Wanderer* while also being promoted in its website.

"This will put our name out there," Andamooka Community Administrator Deb Allen said.

"Hopefully the title will attract a few more people to come and stay."

This status will be reviewed yearly and by the CMCA and the ATMC has agreed to notify them of any changes that may occur. **BY PATRICK GLOVER**



Dimboola gets friendly

DIMBOOLA has recently been declared an RV Friendly Town by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia.

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 and 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, to

truly identify the friendliest areas in Australia, so that 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 fantastic to see an increasing number of towns qualifying as RV Friendly," he said.

The advantage of Dimboola becoming an RV Friendly Town is that the business communities will benefit from the dollars spent by these mobile travellers, with value of road based tourism in Australia

estimated to be \$7 billion per annum.

Hindmarsh Shire chief executive officer Tony Doyle said Dimboola's qualification as an RV Friendly Town is

fantastic news for the Hindmarsh Shire.

"Dimboola has many

natural and heritage based assets and the inclusion of the town into the RV Friendly Town scheme will certainly increase the promotion of these and the town to travellers on the Western and Boring Highways," he said.

"We are currently

undertaking the installation of RV facilities in Jeparit and Rainbow and now that Nhill has potable water we will be applying for all three towns to become accredited RV Friendly Towns in the near future as well," Mr Doyle said.



Dimboola Banner, Dimboola VIC

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General News, page 2 - 353.00 cm²

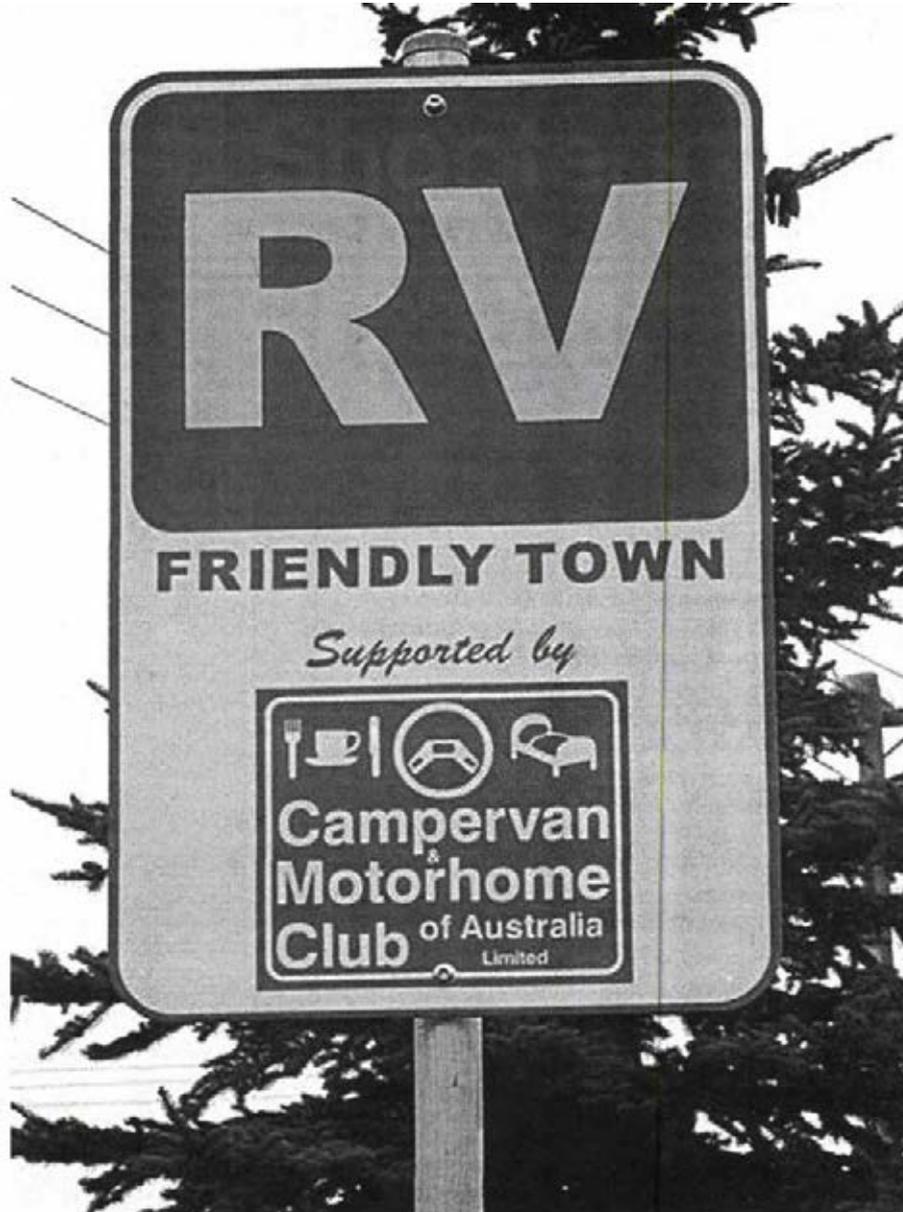
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BRIEF CMCA-AUST INDEX 1.7



PAGE 2 of 2



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Dump point makes Foster the place to go

A JOINT venture between the Foster Community Association (FCA), the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) and Evans Petroleum has seen the town of Foster

get a dump point at the local BP service station. It was officially unveiled last Friday.

Evans Petroleum kindly donated the site, provided a disposal

gloves dispenser and will manage the dump point, which campers are invited to use at no charge.

The CMCA supplied

the Dump-Ezy head and paid for the installation.

The Foster Community Association paid for blue and white signs alerting motorhome travellers of the new dump point.

Local plumbing contractor Joel Anderson Plumbing installed the dump point as well as a couple of taps, one for hosing down the area, the other to provide a

source of water for travellers.

"I can't stress enough the support we've had from Evans Petroleum and the CMCA," said

David Jones, who is a member of the Foster Community Association and a keen caravan traveller and was the driving force behind installation of the dump point in Foster.

Fellow FCA member Vivienne Jones, who also lobbied hard for the dump point, said that installation of the dump point was a step towards Foster gaining the status of an 'RV Friendly Town.' She said that research has shown that access to dump points encourages travellers to stop in a town and spend their money, creating a boost to the local

economy.

The dump point will be publicised through the CMCA network.



• *Vivienne Jones from the Foster Community Association (front left) tries out the new dump point at Evans Petroleum's BP service station in Foster, helped by Mick Flynn from Evans Petroleum (right) and (from left at rear) Rob Jones, Roger Nicholson (manager of the BP service station at Foster), CMCA member Shirley McConville, FCA member David Jones.*