



WAROONA JUST GOT A LITTLE FRIENDLIER

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) have approved an application by the Waroona Visitor Centre & Gallery and officially declared Waroona 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, Waroona successfully met the needs of RV travellers and satisfied stringent criteria. CMCA also takes into account the general attitude of the

local council and community to truly identify the friendliest areas in Australia.

This means 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.

Waroona Visitor Centre & Gallery Manager, Tracy Goldsworthy said that the RV Friendly signage will soon be installed and will encourage RV travellers to stop, shop and enjoy.

“It is important to note that the benefit to towns partnering with CMCA can be considerable with road-based tourism in Australia contributing an estimated \$7 billion per annum.

“I encourage our business community to talk to their staff about the importance of making tourists feel welcome and valued. Positive word of mouth between fellow travellers is a powerful promotional tool and has the capacity to substantially increase road-based tourism in our town and region,” she said.

CMCA Director, National Consumer Representative & 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,” he said, “and it is important that towns in Western Australia, particularly

regional towns, take steps to capitalize on the benefits of the scheme.”

For a current list of RV Friendly Towns™ visit the CMCA website www.cmca.net.au.





Council seeks solutions to information centre parking issues

Satellite tourist sites option

MELISSA CUNNINGHAM

SATELLITE tourism sites could begin sprouting up all over the city, in an attempt by the Ballarat City Council to tackle parking concerns at the new visitor information centre.

Pressure is mounting on the council to address parking issues, with the VIC earmarked to move from Lydiard Street to the Town Hall in May.

Initially, the council had plans to widen Armstrong Street to improve accessibility for larger vehicles after a

relocation of the centre, from Lydiard Street North to the Town Hall, was given the nod in September.

But the council's city strategy general manager, Natalie Reiter, said at the council meeting on Wednesday night that the concept was deemed too costly by traffic engineers.

"When the council undertook further investigation into the cost it became

clear that if we widened the street we would have to relocate the traffic lights," Ms Reiter said. "It was clearly a very expensive option and we felt there is a need to investigate other options."

Ms Reiter revealed investigations were under way to establish satellite tourism centres on the Western Highway and at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka.

Declining visitor numbers and a series of unsuitable potential sites have plagued

the centre for three years, but the council believed a move to the Town Hall could secure its future for up to 20 years.

Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia member and Ballarat resident Grant Tillet is a long-time campaigner for setting up a satellite centre alongside Lake Wendouree.

Mr Tillet said without more vehicle-friendly sites, tourism for the trend of emerging 'fifth-wheel vehicles' in Ballarat would be non-existent.

"The Town Hall precinct is simply not the right answer for larger vehicles like campervans, caravans and recreational vehicles," Mr Tillet said.

"There is far too much traffic and confusion and the site does not have the available space needed."

The nearby Civic Hall site has also been identified as a potential site for parking long-haul vehicles.

But council watcher Gary Fitzgerald voiced concerns about the distance between

the two sites.

"For elderly people or people with disabilities it would be really difficult for them to get across to the centre," Mr Fitzgerald said.

Ms Reiter said work was already under way to put out an expression of interest to determine a satellite site for the west of the city.

All councillors voted to push ahead with plans to set up the satellite sites with the exception of Jim Rinaldi.

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Executive set for an exciting year of growth

LAST Wednesday night, March 4, the Proserpine Chamber of Commerce held its annual general meeting.

The mood was extremely positive and the chamber is certainly excited about the year ahead.

The new executive committee was elected for the next 12 months. Chris Patrick of Proserpine Entertainment Centre – Whitsundays is president, Peter Lewis of Whitsunday Printing is vice-president, Brooke Mansfield of P&D Industrial is treasurer and Karen Vloedmans is the secretary, handling business services.

The chamber is experiencing much growth, with almost 50 members now on board. A membership drive continues through the month of March.

Members are extremely supportive of the main projects on the board for this year, two in particular.

One major project is the entry statements at both north and south entry points into our township of Proserpine. The locations of both signage points have been identified and approvals for these are underway with landholders

and the council. The design phase is also underway.

The second major project is for Pat Botto Park to be confirmed as a 24-72-hour free camp site for RVs and caravans. This site would be open to users who are self-contained, as no additional amenities or facilities are being sought. This site would provide a stop and revive site to ensure travellers a safe journey through our area. It also would provide local businesses with a stop and shop opportunity.

Interestingly, this site already qualifies as a RV Friendly Destination under the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia guidelines.

Further case studies are being sought from towns that are already enjoying the success a site has brought.

The chamber also wishes to demonstrate goodwill to events that are held in our area and in one example has partnered with the Obstacles Gone Mad event, which will be held at Kelsey Creek on Saturday, May 30. This event has been extremely successful in other locations, such as the

Gold Coast and Brisbane.

Business owners are delighted this event will be held right on our doorstep, at Kelsey Creek. It is an adventure course for varying abilities, with a 5km course, a 10km course and a mini course for children. Chamber members will be displaying flyers in their businesses in order to support the event and help spread the word.

Another event the chamber will be hosting is a World's Biggest Morning Tea or Proserpine's Biggest Morning Tea to support the Cancer Council on Thursday, May 28. Many families are affected by cancer and sadly there have been many from our own community here in Proserpine.

As a group, we want to show our support to find a cure, so please save the date, with details to follow. Be rest assured, member or not, business owner or not, everyone will be made welcome to join in this event to show their support against this terrible disease.

The chamber wishes to extend congratulations to Australia Post, which is undergoing a paint facelift, also to Spannys Real Estate on its new offices and



relocation, and, of course, to a new business in town, Retro Skate in Chapman St. These are exciting updates to our town. Congratulations again to all.

Before I sign off for the month of March, myself and the executive committee want to say thank you to the business owners of Proserpine who have supported the Proserpine Chamber of Commerce by becoming members, whether for the first time or for the first time in a while. We believe our town is about to undergo an exciting year ahead and welcome many more of you to join us in making this happen.

Karen Vloedmans,
Proserpine Chamber of
Commerce secretary



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RV rally to support the town

MORE than 160 Recreational Vehicles are expected to converge on Numurkah, when the Victorian Campervan and Motorhome Club holds its rally on March 19-23.

Victorian CMCA Chapter Rally organiser Marg Paulo said that RVs should begin to start rolling into town on Monday.

The rally will be held at the showgrounds, where the CMCA had previously held one two years ago .

She said that pre-camping had been arranged at the Wunghnu Recreation Reserve and along the creek in Numurkah, to let attendees relax before the event officially kicks off on Friday.

"They can camp in these staging areas until they get a time to come into the rally site , this will minimise traffic jams in town.

"People will be coming from all over Australia for this."

Events will include a town farmers mar-

ket and a ball. The SES and CFA will put on a barbeque and there will be a roving roast to raise funds for Blaze Aid.

"There will also be an open day for anyone to come into the rally. There will be gold-coin entry which will go to Blaze Aid."

The last rally injected \$60,000 into the local economy. The CMCA has a docket system for members when they shop at local businesses.

Their dockets get collected and go into a lucky draw.

"We can then add up how much they spend in town," Ms Paulo said.



Let's rally ... The Victorian Campervan and Motorhome Club rally in 2013.



**TIFFANY KORSSZEN AND
DANA MCCAULEY**

ILLEGAL city campsites are becoming so busy that free-loading backpackers are even complaining they cannot sleep.

The *Herald Sun* this weekend found camps in Boat-house Drive on the Yarra River and by Elwood beach.

Dozens of vehicles crowded Elwood, with resident David Frank complaining tents had been pitched on the

foreshore.

French backpacker Joris Loyer, 29, who has lived in a van with girlfriend Jeanne Privat for a month, said yesterday: "There are so many backpackers down a little further that we moved up the road a bit to have some peace."

Ms Privat said: "Sometimes it's hard because it's cold and

it's cramped, but otherwise it's a really good life. We are free."

Port Phillip Mayor Amanda Stevens said the council could not replicate the Port Melbourne crackdown because the campervans were on a public road.

"Parking (there) can't be restricted at certain hours of the day or night and access can't be blocked with a gate," Cr Stevens said.

St Kilda police Senior Sergeant Mark Denton pledged to work toward a solution with the council.

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Frenchmen Kenny Auber, 25, Nicolas Roland, 25, (in camper van on the bed) and David Leleu, 25, at Elwood beach carpark, and (above) Belgian Michael Leven, 24, in Boathouse Drive alongside the Yarra River. Pictures: YURI KOUZMIN