



Back to the drawing board

BY BEN KELLY

GOOLWA - Residents have spoken loudly against turning a Goolwa residential park into a low cost camping site for Recreational Vehicles (RVs).

The proposal to establish a low cost or free RV camping site at De Castro Square, located a few blocks from Cadell Street and Goolwa Primary School, was dropped by Alexandrina Council at its meeting on Monday, April 2.

At the meeting councillors and mayor Keith Parkes said they were inundated with concerns from Goolwa residents about the proposal.

Mr Parkes moved a motion not to proceed further with the proposal for an RV park at that site.

"Given the enormous community backlash against the proposed location in De Castro Square, Goolwa, (I move) that council does not proceed any further with the proposal for an RV park at this site," Mr Parkes said.

"The amount of phone calls and emails I've had and the distress it has caused some of the residents is outstanding. The response from this community is emotional and worried.

"There's no reason we can't find a location that is not right in the town, but on the edge of town."

Councillors had previously considered a number of locations within Goolwa that may be suitable for an RV park and decided De Castro

Square, between Dowland Street and Richards Street, was the best location.

Resident Kaylene Brook's property is on De Castro Square. She said residents were immediately concerned by the proposal, which was to go to public consultation.

"Councillors received community backlash very quickly and it got quashed within a week," Mrs Brook said.

"We held neighbourhood meetings, we essentially investigated the land, the pros and cons, which they should have done, and we just couldn't get around the non-viability of the site.

"You can't drive a long RV vehicle through that block because there are too many trees."

Mrs Brook said the proposal for a low-cost camping site next to housing and close to Goolwa Primary School was problematic.

"The potential increase of heavy RV vehicles on the roads, especially past the schools, could be a significant risk for pedestrians and road users," she said.

"There would also be loss of amenities to a park area and the potential devaluing of surrounding homes.

"I'm more than happy for Goolwa to have an RV park, just not in a residential area."

At council's April 4 meeting Cr Ben Brazzalotto voted against the proposal and said: "I note that the recommendation is for De

Castro Square, it would be a non-complying form of process on Crown Land".

Councillors will consider other sites for an RV park.



Push to ban sexist vans

BY B.C LEWIS

BLUE Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill says “Wicked” campervans offend the sensibilities of Mountains residents and tourists and he wants them outlawed.

At the next council meeting on May 24 he will present a mayoral minute calling for a ban on the “Wicked” car rental campervans at council’s two caravan parks.

He wants to “explore the options available to us to ban Wicked camper vans with [their] offensive, misogynistic, racial and degrading slogans from council-owned tourist parks.”

He will also “call for the Australian government to take action to get rid of these vans with their sexist and degrading slogans.”

The mayor believes their artwork should be deemed as a form of outdoor advertising and subject to the same standards as commercial billboards.

“Aside from being grossly inappropriate and distasteful, the slogans and imagery displayed on many Wicked campervans are an unwanted souvenir for visitors to the Blue Mountains.”

He says the slogans do not meet community standards and “are at best, degrading to women, and at worst, condone and normalise sexual sexual harassment and assault.”

When he posted his message on social media it attracted a raft of comments.

Labor councillor Don McGregor will back the

move, adding he would also be supporting Byron Bay council when they take this matter up nationally at the Australian Local Government Assembly next month.

One resident, Fiona Lenord, said she was “so happy to see so much momentum growing in New Zealand, and now in Australia to ban these vans”.

But one constituent, Maggie Streater, said: “I think there are more things to worry about than kids in ‘Wicked’ camper vans.”

Council runs two parks at Prince Edward Street in Blackheath and Katoomba Falls Road in Katoomba.

Some campgrounds in New Zealand have banned the budget vans, and one is imposing \$300 fines for the offensive slogans.

In 2014, a Wicked slogan was removed after a protest saw 127,000 people sign a petition to have ‘inside every princess is little slut who wants to try it just once’ erased from the van’s fleet.

Sydney mother Paula Orbea began the petition after her 11-year-old daughter saw the slogan while travelling through the Blue Mountains.

After media pressure Wicked issued an apology and committed to removing the offensive slogans, which has not occurred.

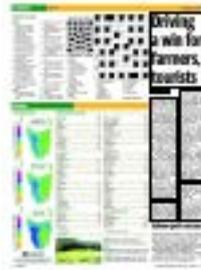
Wicked Campers has since said they will contact police if individuals or groups ma-

nipulate the artwork on the vans.

The company was approached for comment for this story.



BAN THEM: The budget campervan business is in the sights of Blue Mountains mayor Mark Greenhill.



Driving a win for farmers, tourists

ROGER HANSON

A TASMANIAN company launched at Agfest aims to provide an opportunity for farmers to tap into 70,000 recreational vehicles in the country.

Farmgate Mate director Hans Kerkvliet said farmers could reach domestic and international visitors in a growing market, with up to 70,000 recreational vehicles on the road across Australia.

A 2013 survey of the RV market found travellers spent on average \$500 to \$900 a week.

Mr Kerkvliet's business allows registered farmers to become hosts on their own property providing an area of flat, stable land on which guests can park a motorhome, campervan or self-contained caravan.

Travellers who are members of the Farmgate Mate program stay on the farm free for up to 24 hours. About 20 farmers have already signed up.

"It's a win-win for both

farmer and traveller. Farmers showcase their products to a new market of potential purchasers, providing an additional source of revenue for

their produce," Mr Kerkvliet said. "There is no cost to the farmer and they do not need to provide anything other than the land to park on."

Farmgate Mate travellers can venture off the main tourist routes into the regional and rural areas of Tasmania.

"Based on current trends and the ageing population, RV travellers are expected to increase by more than 60 per cent over the next 10 years," Mr Kerkvliet said.

Farmgate Mate is modelled on similar international programs including the European market leader France Passion, which has been in operation for more than 20 years, as well as programs in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Britain, the US and New Zealand.

"In France, for exam-

ple, there are about 9000 participating farms and properties for members to choose from," Mr Kerkvliet said.

Farm hosts can include any type of property, from boutique to broadacre farms, wineries and gourmet producers.

For details visit www.farmgatemate.com.au.