



# Camp no-go zones

Noosa to trial a non-invasive crackdown on illegal overnighting vans

By **PETER GARDINER**

ILLEGAL overnight van campers taking in Noosa's million-dollar waters views may be hit with "no standing" fines on their vehicles this summer.

But this planned council crackdown by enforcement officers on these travelling scroungers may not be as rude as they could be, with midnight wake-up calls ruled out.

Councillors Sandy Bolton and Frank Pardon have asked senior council management for an update on actions to clamp down on illegal vans clogging up streets and public parking areas.

Cr Pardon asked what was being done to night-time parking restrictions.

The council's community services director Alan "Fox" Rogers said the council was looking to trial a new system in some of the high-profile areas.

"What we're looking to do is have a no standing zone between say 12 midnight and five o'clock in the morning," Mr Rogers said.

"That way we can say in Mitti St (Little Cove) or the (Noosa) Woods – simply at peak times look at issuing a ticket and a fine."

He said this was an alternative to "having a no camping (restriction) which requires us to actually ascertain if people are actually sleeping".

"It's a lot less invasive in

terms of knocking on the door and waking people up," he said.

"It has been trialled

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## Trial to target illegal campers

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**SUCCESSFULLY** at Byron Bay, so we're looking to trial that over the summer period and also have had some initial discussions with Parks and Wildlife about also including national park."

Cr Pardon said this approach "sounds reasonable" and he said he

was concerned about midnight patrols impinging too much on people.

Mr Rogers said the council may look to start the camping checks from 4am when not many people are around and the enforcement officers could take a more discretionary approach.

He said the main illegal camping spots were "places

where you can see the sea or the river" so these patrols will not be "everywhere". Cr Bolton said she was "very supportive" of the this trial.

Mayor Noel Playford added that the national parks and wildlife officers

he had spoken to were checking to see if they can implement similar no standing zones.



## This Bryon Bay blitz is costly

THE Byron Shire Council website reports that 10 people were fined in Byron Local Court on Thursday, February 5 this year for illegal overnight camping.

Nine pleaded guilty and were fined a combined total of \$5350, including court costs, for improper stays during the busy Christmas-New Year break. One man chose not to plead guilty, but failed to appear in court and was fined \$700, including costs.

Some were German visitors who were found by the council's staff illegally camping near the site of the Byron Community Markets.

A tenth defendant was also found illegally camping overnight by the

council's staff in Border St, Belongil.

The council's legal services co-ordinator Ralph James said it was important the council continued to take action against illegal camping on the community's behalf.

"The reason council continues to direct part of its limited enforcement budget to targeting illegal overnight street camping is because council is committed to supporting positive local amenity," Mr James said.

"At the same time, we need to get the balance right by working to ensure that tourism maximises benefit for the community and does not disrupt town amenity."

And in May last year

the Byron Bay print media reported on two street campers who were hit with a \$500 fine after legally challenging camping fines earlier imposed in the town.

The court fines were connected to a no-tolerance campaign by the Byron Council and were issued to a Victorian registered campervan seen parked at a beach carpark which was signposted as "Camping at any time prohibited".

At the boundary there was a "No Parking 1am to 5am" sign and each vehicle occupant was fined \$110. The applicants did not appear but the court noted the problem of street camping and bumped the fine to \$500.



**CAMPED OUT: These vans outside the Noosa National Park are parked legally for a day visit.**

*PHOTO: PETER GARDINER*



# \$450,000 RV park proposal

By Christopher Testa

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MILDURA Council will consider a planning application for the development of a new recreational vehicle park in Mildura.

If approved, the \$450,000 development on Ontario Avenue would provide parking spaces for RVs, as well as a dump point, cabin-type accommodation, and entertainment facilities.

The city only has one existing dump point for recreational vehicle waste, at the council's depot on Benetook Avenue.

Planning consultant James Golsworthy said the park had been in the pipeline for quite some time, with RV users estimated to spend between \$500 and \$900 per week during their stay.

Land owner Tony Smith, who took over the college lease site three years ago, said he wanted to put the site to a use which was friendly to nearby homes and businesses.

He said, if approved, the RV park would be developed in stages as income came in from park users.

A single dwelling on the 7.2ha block would be converted into a manager's residence, while the development would also involve the construction of "typical Jayco-type" cabins each boasting a kitchen, living area, one or two bedrooms and a bathroom.

The park would also boast a camp cooking area, barbecues, an orchard and a stage.

Dominated by the Grey Nomads, the RV market has been expected to grow in coming years as members of the Baby Boomer generation retire.

RVs would enter the site through a single

entrance on Ontario Avenue, with the access road designed to allow the large vehicles to access spaces on-site without needing to reverse or negotiate tight turns.

"It is responding to the needs of more modern caravans, so vehicles can travel in a forward direction the whole way around," Mr Golsworthy said.

"While it is large, there are significantly larger RV parks around Australia."

Mildura Tourism chief executive Rod Trowbridge said the RV market was increasing, although more clarity was needed on how any new RV park in Mildura would be funded.

"Commercial viability has to be what is paramount," Mr Trowbridge said.

"It has been on our agenda to work with the tourism industry and the caravan park sector to get the best outcome for Mildura."

## Mistake leads to complaint

**THE man behind plans to build a recreational vehicle park on Ontario Avenue has stressed his facility won't be noisy.**

**Tony Smith said he received a complaint about his development application from neighbours who mistakenly thought he was looking to set up a motor racing venue.**

**The definition of recreational vehicle has differed slightly around different parts of the world, although commonly refers to a campervan or motorhome.**

**"It's not going to be a go-kart track," Mr Smith said.**



Planning consultant James Golsworthy and land owner Tony Smith at the site of a proposed RV park.

Picture: Christopher Testa