

Overnight RV push

Chamber of Commerce backs idea to secure overnight parking for travellers: **Page 4**



RV PARKING: Chamber of Commerce president Ren Cini supports overnight parking in Childers for RVs.

PHOTO: JODIE DIXON

Overnight RV park needed

TOURISM is a major contributor to small town economies and with the steady flow of travelling caravan, there is a greater need to have suitable overnight parking and facilities to keep the tourists in Childers.

The Crescent St carpark, last Friday morning was crammed with holiday makers stopping for a bite to eat and a browse around the main street shops.

Cars towing caravans were parked along the entire length of the street;

one holiday maker from Newcastle, who asked to remain anonymous, said it was disappointing to be told by a caravan park manager they don't except caravans.

"Childers is a beautiful town and it would've been nice to park here for the night, and at the moment Apple Tree Creek isn't too inviting," he said.

"My wife and I have been on the road for two years. The parking on Crescent St is perfect and it's level,"

Being central to all the

services of Childers, holiday makers are keen to spend more time and venture out around the region and experience what it has to offer.

The Childers Chamber of Commerce is in full support of overnight RV parking in Childers.

A spokesman on behalf of the chamber said they understand there are enormous economic benefits for the town by doing this.

"Richard Mainey, from

CMCA (Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia), confirmed a study undertaken by them

identified that this group spends on average \$238 per day," the spokesman said.

At a recent meeting between the BNB, BRC, CMCA, CCC and the commercial operators in the district, all people in attendance agreed there would be economic benefits by allowing overnight parking in Crescent St.

After the meeting a letter



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was sent to the council from the Childers Chamber of Commerce confirming all attendees agreed the proposal should go ahead.

The letter requested the council to develop the necessary signage and for the community of Childers to be granted RV parking.

The chamber's position on this matter is one of very strong support and they are motivated to push this proposal through to support the businesses of the town.

It is important the community understands: by not allowing RV overnight parking, businesses risk losing these visitors and the economic benefits they bring.

“Visitors to Childers will purchase their newspapers, coffees, meat, bread, milk and many other daily staple items from local businesses.”



RV PARKING: Childers Crescent St is full with parked holiday makers.

PHOTO: JODIE DIXON



DSC looks at an RV friendly strategy

TOURISM | Shane Nichols

RECREATIONAL vehicles – or RVs – are a booming travel segment and Douglas Shire wants to make sure we get our share.

This week council voted to adopt a discussion paper by its economic development officer, Brendan Leishman, to continue work on a strategy to boost RV visitation to the shire.

These days RVs are the biggest single category of motor registrations. This style of tourism is being increasingly adopted by retirees and families as a form of travel, and it is vastly concentrated on touring the regions, not cities.

There are huge ambitions for this sector.

The state government launched its tourism drive strategy 2013-15 to encourage more driving holidays in the state.

Research says that every \$1 spent by RV owners generates \$1.38 in the community.

The state's 2020 vision is to double overnight visitor ex-

penditure from \$15 billion to a whopping \$30 billion a year in just four years.

The drive tourism market already plays a significant role in the Douglas region, the DSC says.

The area has 15 commercial/tourist park operators, with a combined 890 RV/caravan camp sites, with two more parks proposed, adding 77 camp sites.

One idea is that Teamsters Park at Craiglie could be a site

where RV tourists could access thorough information on the location of camp sites, their facilities, waste water disposal and other things.

The strategy will eventually be put out to the public for consultation.

The discussion paper looked closely at RV strategies of three other shires.

One example it will be keen to avoid is that of Cooktown, where the shire opened a free RV park next door to a commercial park operator.

Among ideas under discussion is the possibility that local

landowners may be allowed to rent out space on their properties for up to three RVs at a time.

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SNAPSHOT

GOALS OF THE DISCUSSION PAPER:

1. Access to information – RV travellers will have relevant and current information to assist with planning their visit.
2. Signage – To help travellers find parking, services and amenities.
3. Protecting the environment – RV travellers to have information and easy access to the right facilities to help protect the environment.
4. Provision of facilities, initiatives and implementation of policies which support and encourage RV travellers.

Specific elements of Draft Douglas RV Friendly Strategy will "require engagement with key stakeholders such as commercial caravan operators and tourist parks".



PORTLAND DECLARED RV FRIENDLY

PORTLAND has become the first accredited RV (Recreation Vehicle) Friendly Town on the coast west of Melbourne. Portland is one of three declared RV Friendly sites in the Glenelg Shire, which also include Heywood and Casterton. The sites are for self-sufficient motorhomes and caravans to stay overnight. Signs are currently being installed by Glenelg Shire staff across each of the localities, directing the tourist traffic to the camping locations which are endorsed by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia.