

Britz, Maui deals for domestic campervan holidays

TOURISM Holdings Limited (thl) is reporting strong demand for its Britz campaigns targeting Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

The company's general manager marketing and customer experience, Kate Meldrum, said the campaigns were designed to increase awareness of the Britz kind of holiday, thl's brand specifically and to stimulate the market.

"We are working with Tourism NT and Tourism Western Australia domestic marketing teams on both of these campaigns," she said.

Deals on offer include 50 per cent off selected Britz two wheel and four wheel drive campervans collected from Perth.

For those who wish to travel from Perth to Broome the deal also sees one-way fees and

the Broome location fee waived, which offers a saving of over \$1000.

This deal must be booked by April 6 and travel is from April 1 to June 30 2014.

Also on offer is a deal which sees travellers booking a Britz campervan at least 120 days before they travel receiving five per cent off the vehicle hire.

■ MAUI, another thl brand, has joined Destination NSW and the Caravan and Camping Industry Association of NSW (CCIA) in a digital campaign directing potential clients to visitnsw.com for information on driving routes, accommodation, destinations, tips and deals.

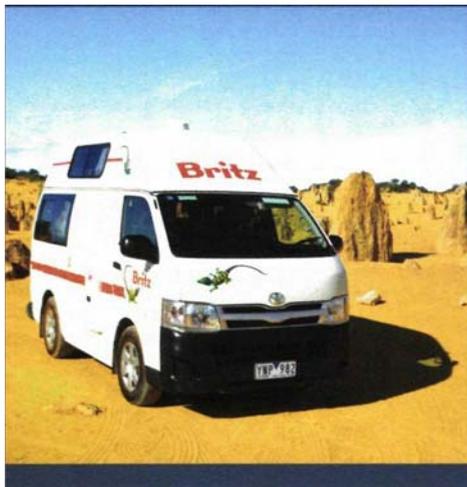
Maui is offering up to 25 per cent off bookings

for travellers exploring NSW before June 30.

The company's general manager marketing and customer experience Kate Meldrum said: "We hope the initiative will inspire more Australians to explore their own backyards. Regional NSW is the perfect backdrop for a self-drive holiday – from gourmet local food offering and stunning wineries to the many coastal playgrounds and natural scenic beauty.

"In addition to housing handy tips and extensive information all on the one website, we hope our deals during the campaign will see more Australians jump into a Maui and explore all that NSW has to offer."

She likened Maui's choice of vehicles to "apartment style living on the road".





Parks 'under threat'

Operators call for free camping buffer zone

AT LEAST five caravan park operators in the Wattle Range Council area are united in their opposition to a proposal they claim threatens their livelihoods.

The operators from Penola, Millicent, Southend and Beachport are against the council's intention to establish free camping.

In response to council's call for public comment, caravan park operator Gloria Withers said the free locations would cut their patronage and incur further costs for the council.

Together with her husband Allan, she has owned and operated Millicent's Hillview Caravan Park for the past 16 years.

"We are not opposed to such free parks as we have used them ourselves in the past in our own travels around Australia and intend to do so in our retirement years," Ms Withers said.

"We all believe such proclaimed free parks should be restricted to remote bush camps or located at least 20km away from a town or an established caravan park.

"The limit is recommended by the Caravan and Camping Association of South Australia.

"It is our view that Wattle Range Council will be up for additional costs as these so-called free parks will have to be supervised, cleaned and maintained and this expense would have to be borne by ratepayers."

She said fellow park operators in the council area regularly had problems with travellers who camp in Beachport, Millicent, Southend and Penola at no cost.

"A great number of the travellers don't have self-contained facilities in their vans and many attempt to use our park's showers and toilets," she said.

"There was a situation in the

Penola caravan park where 20 travelling backpackers tried to use the showers and the police had to be called.

"We anticipate these kind of problems would arise if the council set aside places for free parks.

"By managing the five caravan parks as well as we do and providing clean and comfortable facilities, we feel we are encouraging travellers to stay extra nights in this area and boost the local economy.

"This is why we have taken the unprecedented step of making a joint submission to council."

Wattle Range Mayor Peter Gandolfi said the council sought public comment on the designation of limited short-term vehicle-only camping areas in various locations across the council area.

Mr Gandolfi said more people were travelling with self-contained vehicles and currently there were no designated areas where they could camp.

"Visitors are currently stopping throughout Wattle Range during

their stay and council is well aware that some are camping at inappropriate areas, including town parklands," Mr Gandolfi said.

"As a result, council aims to limit the camping to appropriate locations and regulating these stays through its by-laws."

He said refusing free camping altogether would encourage travellers to move to neighbouring council areas to camp, taking economic spin-offs with them.

"Some owners of self-contained motor homes and caravans choose not to stay in caravan parks," Mr Gandolfi said.

"To cater for these people, council established a by-law allowing short-term stays.

"And now we are in the process of identifying suitable areas where free camping can occur."

The locations at Penola, Millicent, Nangula, Tantanoola and Kalangadoo will be for self-contained motor homes and caravans only, excluding the erection of tents.

Council is seeking feedback from the public - including caravan park and other business owners - on the proposed locations for recreational vehicle-free camping.

The closing date for submissions is April 30.

• **Read the letter to the editor from the park operators on page 6**



FREEBIE BACKLASH:
A designated area at Greenrise Lake will be open to free camping for self-contained vehicles under a Wattle Range Council proposal.



UNDER THREAT: Hillview Caravan Park proprietor Gloria Withers says a council proposal to establish free camping areas will threaten her business.

Picture: FRED SMITH



RESPONSE FROM LOCAL TRADERS ON THE CMCA RALLY

The Sentinel visited with many local traders to get their thoughts on the rally from a trade perspective. Overwhelmingly, the traders were very positive about the benefits of the rally to their businesses and the community in general. Not all businesses thrived during this period but all enjoyed extra traffic and the chance to interact with the extra people visiting the town.

Riverside Caravan Park

Kelly and Kane Millard enjoyed an influx of visitors from the rally. Members stayed on while they waited for the rally site to be set up then moved out, only to be moved back in! The rally members that stayed at the caravan park before the rally began were more than happy to be ushered back into their previous sites as they enjoyed their spots right on the river. "We loved having the members staying with us. They were a great bunch of people. Most of the members used our facilities buying need items and gas from us. It was a very positive experience for the park," Kelly stated.

Bargain Basement

On the day of the visit, Dougal Leslie's shop was packed with CMCA members shopping along with a smattering of locals. The paper had a hard time catching up with him as he raced off to help shoppers even Tara Parish was pulled from her post at the Art

Display at the rally site to help in the store. All hands were on deck on the day.

"We can't speak highly enough of the people that have come into the shop," Dougal said. "Everyone has been very pleasant and patient as we have tried to keep up with the supply for items.

"No one knew what this event would bring to the town. So far, it's been great for everyone involved. We've reaped the benefits and more importantly, the town has reaped the benefits. We are over the moon!"

Bargain Basement has also

been the site of many sausage sizzles and fundraising events during the week. The Robinvale P-12 College Year 12 group raised money for Relay For Life and St. Mary's CWL fund raised for Blaze Aid with the Mallee Scrubbers playing to draw in the crowds.

The Opp Shops

Both the opp shops in town have extended their hours and worked extra hard to find volunteers to fill extra shifts. In typical Robinvale fashion, all the volunteers pulled together to offer extra service to the influx of visitors to their stores. The rally members stopped in to browse and look for suitable items for their Half-Formal; Half-Normal Ball.

Bobby Surf

Bobby commented that her store has been quite busy over the week. A lot of people have stopped in the store to have a look especially after the fashion show on the rally site. Bobby Surf outfitted all the items on display during the fashion show.

"I really want to thank Ray and Miriam Jones for all the hard work they have done to put this together for the town. I hope the members had a marvellous time and I wish them safe travel on their journeys back home," Bobby said.

Work n' Wear

Work n' Wear has been providing the rally members with embroidered shirts over the week.

John Tate stated that the sales had been going really well not only on the shirts but on other items in the store. He said the CMCA members had been very supportive over the

days of their stay.

"This rally has been a really good way to showcase the town. We have to remember that these people have been here before and after the rally. The word of mouth that this creates will be priceless," John decreed.

"I have to say congratulations to Ray, Mikelle, and Miriam for doing such a good job on organising this event for the town."

While visiting the shop, a

CMCA member, Yvonne, was happily shopping in the store looking to have a shirt embroidered. She commented on her recent experience of receiving a pedicure in town in preparation for the ball on Friday night. Yvonne had ventured over to the store to shop while her friend finished up with her pedicure. Both ladies were heading back later to have their hair done for the ball.

Becca's

Becca was extremely excited about all the traffic in her store. She talked about how supportive the rally members were of her shop. Becca enjoyed seeing all the extra people in town wandering the streets patronising local businesses.



CMCA OPEN DAY

Crowds flocked to the gates of the CMCA Rally site to enjoy walking around the grounds, visiting the market, and dreaming about a life on the road while looking at the motorhomes on show. There were many vendors showing motorhomes for visitors to walk around and get an idea of what life on the road might be like. Vendors included Wirra-Away out of Mildura, Trakka, Jacana, Paradise, and more. Jacana Motorhomes is operated by Barry Drury. All his motorhomes are custom built and start from \$100,000 and go up to over \$500,000. A Jacana motorhome is completely self-sufficient with solar panels, back up batteries, generator, satellite tv, washing machines, and the usual amenities inside

Another highlighted motorhome on the day were the Paradise models with their clever design and attention to detail. Both models on the day included the ever crowd pleasing ceiling to floor wardrobes. The cupboards were set against the wall providing the much-needed space for storage without adding bulk to the area. The beds lifted up to provide more

storage and an extra portable dining table. The kitchen rivalled any small unit kitchen with its ample counter space and soft close drawers with magnets holding the drawers in place during travel. Just in case one thought it was all about practicality, the people at Paradise added a cleverly placed bottle rack under the dining table. To the side of the bottle rack, is a felt-lined glass holder.

Life on the road never looked so good!

After enjoying the motorhomes, visitors were treated to a fantastic display of vendors in the main marquee. The marquee featured many local vendors including Lucy Albanese selling her homemade biscuits and grapes, Phyllis Chirchiglia with The Body Shop, Rose Giofrelle selling her candles, Mary Ienco with her famous Italian biscuits and

delicious minestrone soup, the Millen Family selling almonds, Rosa Barone, the Boram Family, and the Calabro Family selling local produce, the Leslie Boys selling grapes, Brian and Jan Englefield representing The Royal Flying Doctors, and the Lamattina Family promoting their new beverage, Curlwaa. Besides local vendors, the CMCA members themselves set up

dence.

Outside the market area, the food vendors were cooking up a storm. The Rowing Club had steak sandwiches on offer. Ice cream was a popular choice on the warm day along with quick snacks of wedges and hotdogs.

The CMCA members on ground were friendly, stopping to chat with visitors to answer questions and talk about their trips around Australia. One member was kind enough to show the Sentinel her home and answer questions

about solo driving and setting up of her home. She drove a Toyota Hiace with a back tent/storage area and side annex. Jan had travelled from Wagga Wagga for the event and had enjoyed her time in Robinvale. She likes to drive her van over to Perth many times a

year to visit her family.

Overall, the open stalls to sell items that they have made themselves or items from their area of resi-

day was a fascinating opportunity to get a glimpse into the benefits of being a part of a motorhome club and how the members have been living over the last week in Robinvale. Many locals stated they enjoyed coming down to the site to witness the CMCA city and visit with the members. All money raised on the day went to support Blaze Aid. Blaze Aid is a volunteer-based organisation that works with families and individuals in rural Australia after natural disasters such as fires and floods.

Working alongside the rural families, our volunteers help to rebuild fences that have been damaged or destroyed.







WANDERERS ON THE ROAD OF LIFE

Two CMCA members sat down with the Sentinel to talk about their lifestyle of travelling around Australia in their motorhomes and attending rallies with the club.

Ted Faulkner and Keith Small are both avid motorhome travellers. Both of them travel with their wives spending anywhere from five weeks to four months on the road at a time. Mr. Faulkner is from the Gold Coast and Mr. Small lives in Port Macquarie.

Ted and Keith are avid members of the CMCA and enjoy the benefits of belonging to the club. The CMCA has a series of chapters across Australia that members can visit when on the road. As a member of the CMCA, they can join in on local chapter trips and activities while in the area.

They both travel to the rallies twice a year. Each time they visit a rally, they like to make the journey there and back into a trip. Mr. Faulkner and his wife will take upwards of five weeks travelling to and from the Robinvale rally. On the day of meeting, Mr. Faulkner still could not say which route they would take back to their home in Currumbin Creek on the Gold Coast. He does not like to plan too far in advance when travelling as he likes to take things as they come allowing himself to discover new places and sights along the way.

One of Mr. Faulkner's biggest trips was eight months right around Australia. He attended one of the rallies then kept travelling until he reached the next rally six months later. Mr. Faulkner then took his time ambling back home.

Ted Faulkner reckons his favourite part of Australia would be the Atherton Tablelands. Every year, he and his wife attend the 'Dam Fine Rally' in Townsville then move on to Mareeba for a rodeo and to celebrate Christmas in July. Another of their favourite places in that area includes Bramston Beach Resort. Mr. Faulkner describes the place as an old holiday resort that has never been developed. Because of the lack of development, the place remains relatively quiet and off the tourist radar. Famous Australian TV couple Bob and Dolly Dyer used to holiday and fish in Bramston Beach. Now, the resort bar sports a bar top that is shaped like Bob's old fishing boat. Stories like that abound when speaking with the gentleman as they are both passionate about Australia and the beautiful sights the country has to offer. Mr. Small's

favourite place would be Cape Leveque North of Broome. The road travelling to the Cape is

unsealed and corrugated making arriving there an adventure. Once there, the local national park only allows a few people in at a time to preserve the integrity of the area.

The lifestyle of visiting different places is what attracts both travellers. They both believe it is something better done sooner rather than later. On the road, they have met some striking travellers that have not let life's circumstances stop them from seeing this great land. Motorhomes have been outfitted with ramps for disabled travellers and other such conveniences that suit the situation of the traveller. They spoke of people they have met that live their lives on the road. Some follow seasonal work to make enough money to fund the rest of their year on the road. Many an ex-teacher will do small con-

tracts along the way to make enough money to fund the next leg of their journeys. Others volunteer their time with organ-

isations such as Blaze Aid, fixing fences and offering support to displaced families after natural disasters. Ted and Keith enjoy going home in between their trips. They like the comfort of having a home base.

Although, Keith mentioned that after about three weeks at home, he is ready to return to the road. The many innovations of motorhome technology and the introduction of portable devices allows the trips away from home to be more comfortable and easier to stay in contact with family.

For both Ted and Keith, motorhoming across Australia is the good life and they plan to live it to the fullest.

