



Shire preps for campervan influx

CRANBROOK and Frankland River are preparing for an influx of caravans and camper vans in October, just before the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) rally in Albany.

Shire economic development manager Cassandra Hughes said she was expecting about 200 recreational vehicles over a week in October, as Cranbrook had CMCA "official staging post" status.

"We've already got a booking of 15. We've got five or six individual bookings already," she said.

"We will also be utilising both caravan parks, Cranbrook and Frankland River."

She said Frankland Hall would host an exhibition of local crafts.

"We'll also be running tours out to the Frankland wineries," she said.

"The town of Cranbrook itself will be a staging point and the Cranbrook Shire has put together - with the support of the community - an extensive program of events over the course of a week."

She said this included darts and dinner, fashion parades,

morning teas, bowls and golf which CMCA members would be invited to try.

"They are coming to stay for anything from a day to a week for the week prior to the rally," she said.

She said promotions began when Cranbrook Shire, the City of Albany and the Hidden Treasures group shared a stand at the CMCA rally in Murray Bridge, South Australia, earlier this year.

"We produced 1000 brochures and took them to Murray Bridge," Ms Hughes said.

"We don't have staging points specifically in Frankland River because we need logistics to manage all of that, but we'll be running tours out to the area.

"We are recommending they use our Bunnbury to Albany map which we're using to promote the area. We're working with all of our stakeholders including the cafes and wineries."

Cranbrook will be an official staging post between October 19 and 24, ahead of the CMCA rally in Centennial Park, Albany from October 26 to November 1.



PENRITH

Expo offers caravan and camping inspiration

 MORE than 160 exhibitors and 80 RV brands will be on display at the Caravan, Camping & Holiday Expo in Penrith on September 11-13.

"The Penrith expo is like a megamall of shopping for caravan and camping enthusiasts," Caravan and Camping Industry Association

chief executive Lyndel Gray said. "It brings together hundreds of brands and thousands of products all aimed at making your next holiday great."

Ms Gray said visitors to the expo would also have a chance to take part in the Passport competition with a \$4000 travel voucher to

spend on accommodation at BIG 4 Bungalow Park on Burrill Lake over the next 12 months, plus other prizes.

The expo will be held at the Penrith Panthers Exhibition Centre from 9am-5pm.

You can buy tickets for \$15 for adults or \$10 concessions online at caravan-camping.com.au or at the door.



We're RV friendly!

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) has officially declared Parkes as an RV Friendly Town™.

The designation of RV Friendly Towns continues to encourage all RV travellers to stop, shop and enjoy all that destinations have to offer.

Parkes Shire Council's Tourism and Marketing Manager, Katrina Dwyer is thrilled with the rating.

"With low-cost overnight parking at Spicer Caravan Park, existing facilities and the installation of RV dump points and directional signage, Parkes was in the ideal position to be recognised as RV Friendly by the CMC," she said.

"Parkes now joins Tullamore and Peak Hill as being recognised as RV Friendly, providing many tourism benefits to the whole shire, including direct promotion as an RV Friendly destination to over 70,000 CMCA members."

CMCA Director, National Consumer Rep-

resentative and Government Liaison, Ken Kipping said there are many advantages in Parkes being an RV Friendly Town.

"The business communities benefit from the dollars spent by these mobile travellers. The value of road based tourism in Australia is estimated to be \$7 billion per annum," he said.

In order to qualify for the scheme, towns must successfully meet the needs of mobile travellers and satisfy stringent criteria including:

- Provision of appropriate parking within the town centre, with access to a general shopping area for groceries and fresh produce.
- Provision of short term, low cost overnight parking (24/48 hours) for self-contained recreational vehicles, as close as possible to the CBD.
- Access to potable water.
- Access to a free dump point at an appropriate location.



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Traders suffer in park plight

Real estate agent calls the closure 'insane'

By DIGBY HILDRETH

TASMANIANS Bob and Evelyn Leonard weren't aware they couldn't park their motorhome and stay in Burringbar's Masterson Park.

The law-abiding "freedom campers" and several other travellers spent a night in the park this week – despite its official closure by Tweed Shire Council two weeks ago.

"We heard about the Burringbar park from a friend in our motorhome club, and it's one of the loveliest spots we've been to," Evelyn said.

Council officers closed the park as a "free campsite" on August 7, following complaints from residents about the anti-social behaviour of some visitors, who had set up camp semi-permanently and were damaging bush and lighting fires.

Burringbar is one of many user-friendly campsites the Leonards have stayed at on their four-month, 200,000km trip "up the middle", through Central Queensland, then out to the Gold Coast and points south on the way home.

"This is what we're all about," said Evelyn, who finds most caravan parks too claustrophobic to enjoy.

"We're free campers, not freeloaders," she said.

"In a town like this, we spend money on fuel and food."

The Leonards' motorhome was one of only five at the site one morning this week – well down on the usual turnout, and a shock to local retailers' bottom line.

"It's affected my business already," butcher Brett O'Keefe said.

"I've noticed a big difference."

He would like to see the park stay open.

"I can't see why council rangers can't come around and move any troublemakers or overstayers on," he said.

Bob Leonard has encountered a similar problem in other places.

"The few ruin it for the majority," he said.

But local real estate agent Stuart Cahill said the park's closing was "insane", the result of "hysterical" overreaction by a few locals to the presence of one man who was a nuisance.

"Council has gone to a lot of trouble to improve the park for campers and they've got \$60,000 to spend on a shower block," he said.

"Businesses and most

people in the town want the park to stay open. Campers spend hundreds of dollars at the store or the sports club and have a good time.

"I'm disgusted with what's going on here."

The recently-formed Burringbar Community Association is gauging local feeling about the park.

Some in the community were not happy with the "rapid increase" in travellers to Masterson Park in the past 12 months, the association said, "especially as it is not legal nor policed".

"Now we are looking for a way to move forward within a proactive environment," the group said.



FREE CAMPERS: Evelyn and Bob Leonard, who enjoyed a night in Burringbar's Masterson Park this week, despite it being officially closed.

PHOTO: DIGBY HILDRETH