



Missing out: MP Bruce Saunders says it's costing us tens of millions

M'boro bypassed by RVs

Carlie Walker

MARYBOROUGH is missing out on the RV market, potentially costing the city tens of millions of dollars a year, according to the city's state member Bruce Saunders.

Mr Saunders said he was keen to push to make Maryborough RV-friendly because at the moment it was being bypassed on the Bruce Hwy in favour of Gympie and Bundaberg – and it was time for that to change.

Mr Saunders said he wanted to join with the Fraser Coast Regional Council and push to build an RV park somewhere in Kent St.

"We are missing out – they just bypass us," Mr Saunders said.

"It's a perfect location, there's so much in Maryborough."

Fraser Coast Mayor Gerard O'Connell said much was being done to attract RV owners to the region, with a camping options strategy recently adopted, aiming to bring travellers to the area.

Cr O'Connell said councillors had sat down with stake-

holders across the region, including business owners and caravan park operators, in an effort to plan a strategy that would bring travellers to the area.

He said there were already free stopover areas available on the Fraser Coast.

"We have well and truly rolled out the welcome mat," Cr O'Connell said.

Passionate Tinana RV owners Alan and Nan Ott are also determined to put Maryborough on the map.

Nan said Maryborough had an incredible amount of potential to be a hot spot to visit for RV owners.

The Maryborough Heritage Markets would offer a unique point of appeal and visitors would enjoy stopping in to see a show at the Brolga Theatre or visit local shops, Nan said.

"They would love to see the heritage buildings or take a stroll by the riverside," Nan said.

Nan said at the moment, RV owners were actively avoiding the region as it was believed that there were no free sites.

But if RV owners were encouraged to come to the region, there would be a flow-on benefit for the whole Fraser Coast, she said, from auto-electricians needed to do running repairs, to visitors doing whale watching tours in Hervey Bay.

"We would love to (see Maryborough) get RV town status," Nan said.

“We are missing out – they just bypass us.”

– Member for Maryborough
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HAPPY CAMPERS: Experienced RV Motorhome campers Alan and Nan Ott and Brenda and Terry Zillmann want the council to make more RV-friendly sites in Maryborough to attract visitors.

PHOTO: BONI HOLMES



Time to re-visit RV-friendly 'ban' 'Big Cod' - Yes, big welcome? Not sure

GOONDIWINDI is missing out on possible millions because it won't throw out the "welcome mat" for "Grey Nomads".

Former Goondiwindi businessman, Ken Jenkins, has re-ignited the debate about whether Goondiwindi should be RV friendly.

The self-proclaimed "grey nomad" has been lobbying the Goondiwindi Regional Council to become RV-friendly for years.

The Council has remain steadfast in its opposition, arguing a change in status is unfair to existing acarvan parks.

It also argues there are enough "free" parking areas at rest stops close to town.

It's a stance which is costing the local economy millions of dollars according to Mr Jenkins.

"I understand what Council is saying about caravan parks but what about the other 99percent of businesses in town which miss out because Goondiwindi isn't RV-friendly," Mr Jenkins said.

He also argues caravan parks won't miss out as much as council has presumed.

And if the more-than-100 comments and more than 14,000 hits received by the *Argus* facebook Page, are anything to go by, he's not the only one.

It all began with a letter.

"I still call Gundy home," Mr Jenkins wrote.

"Goondiwindi councils have over the years refused any thought of becoming RV friendly.

"Signs have been erected at the western end of town in the Old Waggamba Park saying, 'Parking absolutely prohibited fine \$3,750'.

"When the odd self-contained RV parked in the car park shared by council and the bowls club, a sign suddenly appeared saying, 'Overnight parking prohibited' when the bowls club actually owns more than half of the parking area.

"In my travels around Australia it's distressing to

hear more and more fellow travellers electing to bypass or drive straight through the town.

"How does that help the caravan parks or anyone else?" he asked.

Mr Jenkins tied in another contentious issue to

highlight what he sees as a "consistency issue": Coles' application to open on Sundays.

"The GRC has strongly supported the caravan parks in the town but apparently not other businesses having decided to sit on the fence over Coles' seven-day trading application."

Mr Jenkins says this showed council is out-of-step with other nearby communities which have actively opposed similar applications by Coles.

He also believes Council could have the best of both worlds.

He suggested council lease council-owned land so RVs could park overnight.

"Council makes money and the economy gets a boost from travellers staying in town," he said.

He also argues if RV owners can't stay for free or at least a "minimal cost" they just move on.

They are however he says, not "free-loaders".

"Most have spent so much on their RVs or campers they have to count pennies.

"But if you get them to stay they spend money not just on petrol, but food, at the pub, on going out for coffee, having lunch and might even go to the movies.

"Instead of overnighing or not staying at all many will stay two to three nights. Let's face it, once you get them to stay we can keep them here. Goondiwindi is a great place."

GRC Deputy Mayor, Cr Rick Kearney said there were enough free-camping sites close to Goondiwindi so that "grey nomads" could still use Goondiwindi as a base.



Lion Peter Smith with Goondiwindi's latest tourist attraction, the 'Big Cod'. It's just part of a big, big world. We asked for pics last week. You can see what else is out there, on our Facebook Page. There's the Big Strawberry, the Big Toohey's Can...



Low-cost sites equals big payout for towns

YOU asked for feedback re-RVs overnighting in Goondiwindi.

We are regulars in town as we have friends living alongside the river

Our motorhome is a pretty normal, everyday sort of motorhome which is fitted out with solar panels for power, gas for cooking and hot water; we have a shower and toilet + internet coverage, in other words a home away from home

We avoid caravan parks like the plague ~ they repeatedly refuse to recognise that with a fully self contained RV we do not need, nor will we use any of their facilities via offering any discounts for that non-use

We love to go to showgrounds etc where we have wide open spaces around us and where we are not herded in like sardines in a tin.

IF Goondiwindi does not allow RV travellers to overnight at the showgrounds (where the local community gets some dollars from our fees), then please, please set up a spot somewhere where we can have a low-cost overnight parking location for self-contained travellers

The town will benefit, even if the caravan park misses out - which they are doing anyway as we will not stay there regardless.

Phil Jones
via email

NO freedom camping, no visit from me.

This means no diesel, groceries, chemist, repairs, hair-dressing and hardware. Will go to where I am welcome

Patricia O'Neill.
via email

In the Argus Of 16-9-2015, you

were asking for comments about should parks be open to campers I am not saying parks should be open to campers, but Goondiwindi should be moving to be more RV (Recreational Vehicle) Friendly and have an area available for campers.

Over the last three years, I have made many trips, one around Australia, and my comments are based on my experience.

One has to be a traveller to know how big the industry is. On the last two trips, on the roads, after the precinct around towns, about 50 percent of the vehicles passed, apart from heavy transport vehicles were cars with caravans, or camper trailers and motorhomes.

Many of these travellers or travelling workers as I discovered, do not stop in Goondiwindi, because the word has been passed around that the facilities are not here –

that Goondiwindi is not a RV Friendly town.

Just remember many of these caravans and motorhomes which are fully self-maintained do not want to pay \$40 to \$50 a night to go to a caravan park; but they have to buy food and fuel, and as I found have a vehicle service replace a tyre, and other costs.

One of the problems to get these people into town is there has to be something to pull them up on the highways, not just a sign. For example a museum, information centre or noticeboards, they must see it to stop them.

Two examples – the Big Rig in Roma and Kunurra in WA which had information boards on the highway each side of the town.

These boards displayed the layout of the town, with plenty of parking and in the informa-

tion centre in the town had four to six people giving out information and you still had to queue up.

Albany in WA was an example of what not to do.

The information centre is in an old part of the city down on the water edge, and no parking for big rigs for 300 metres and the day I was there only one or two staff.

John Slack-Smith
Goondiwindi



Let the good times roll

DAVID HUDLESTON

KEA campervans and motorhomes let you enjoy the good times while on the road.

They are built on either a European Mercedes Benz or VW chassis and fitted with six-speed Shiftmatic automatic gear box that combines the functionality of an automatic with the characteristics of a manual gear box.

The 2.2-litre, four cylinder turbo diesel engine meets Euro IV emission standards and delivers 100km for 13 litres. Fuel capacity is 75 litres.

Diesel heating allows the campervan to be heated while driving, so all passengers will be toasty and warm in the cold, and the bathroom can be used as a drying room for your wet clothes or walking boots.

They are designed with comfort and convenience in mind with big beds, solar panels, large water tanks,

The three-berth 2+1KQ campervan offers a couple or two adults and child, plenty of space to relax.

DVD players, microwaves and rangehoods, wine glass holders and panoramic windows and large storage spaces

Safety features include power steering, airbags, dynamic stability control, ABS, rear airbag suspension and three-point seat belts.

Security features include key locking bonnets, engine immobilisers and laptop-sized

valuables safes. These vehicles are made for Australian conditions with insulation and built-in

heating for cold winters, tinted windows for hot summer days and a body made from marine grade fibreglass – they are built to last.

They are also environmentally friendly with interior timber from renewable plantations with environmentally friendly veneer, engines complying to the highest European and

international emissions standards, and all vehicles are certified to the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia's stringent leave no trace self-containment guidelines.

These campers can be driven on an ordinary licence and are easy to manoeuvre.

The KEA 6 KQ motorhome has all the comforts of home.

The large, spacious interiors with two separate living areas offer real flexibility and let the outdoors inside through incredibly large windows – without the mossies.

Kids love the Luton bed above the driver's cabin. If it's not a bed it can function as a cave to play or laze around in.

The kitchen is equipped with a large fridge/freezer, four-burner gas cooker, pantry, microwave and mini-grill.

It comes with a shower and toilet, three large double beds, only two of which have to be put away for day travel. It also has extra-large water storage tanks to help out with freedom camping.

As a general note, campers with toilets and showers mean that you can do a lot more free camping at

roadside stops, national parks and places with little to no facilities.

The three-berth 2+1KQ campervan offers a couple or two adults and child, plenty of space to relax after a day

exploring. The third passenger seat is positioned directly behind the driver, so your child can be close to you while on the road.

It also has an external slide out barbecue and reverse cycle air conditioning to make life easier on the road.

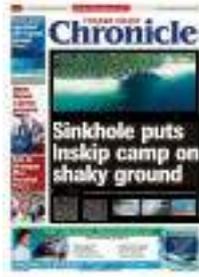
The kitchen has a stainless steel three-burner gas stove, 110L fridge/freezer, rangehood extractor fan, microwave and filtered water.

**WA dealer: KB Campers, 54 Rigali Way Wangara
w: kbcampers.com.au**





The KEA 6 KQ motorhome has all the comforts of home to allow for luxury while freedom camping.



Sinkhole puts Inskip camp on shaky ground

Car, caravan and campervan swallowed up during incident

Eliza Wheeler

AS holidaymakers recover from the shock of a huge sinkhole opening under their feet at a camping ground at Inskip Point, the question remains – is it safe to continue using the area as a popular camping spot?

The Department of Natural Parks, Sport and Racing is currently investigating

the incident and deciding on the future use of the area and its camping grounds.

A four-wheel drive, caravan and a campervan were swallowed up by the sinkhole during the incident, with some saying it was a miracle no lives were lost.

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Photos from the scene showed the changed shoreline and one of the vehicles in the water.