



A parking space for travellers

WELCOMING the grey nomads into town is more than just presenting a smiling face according to Cr Dave Pahlke.

“One of the things we have discovered is that drivers of motorhomes and caravans are seeking parking close to town.

“And now that we have opened up the showgrounds to short term travellers we are definitely seeing more vans and campers moving through the area.

“That is why we are considering providing a parking space suited to the longer vehicles.”

The area under consideration is the bus stop directly outside the Cobb and Co Heritage Park opposite the Supa IGA.

“I think we have all got into the habit

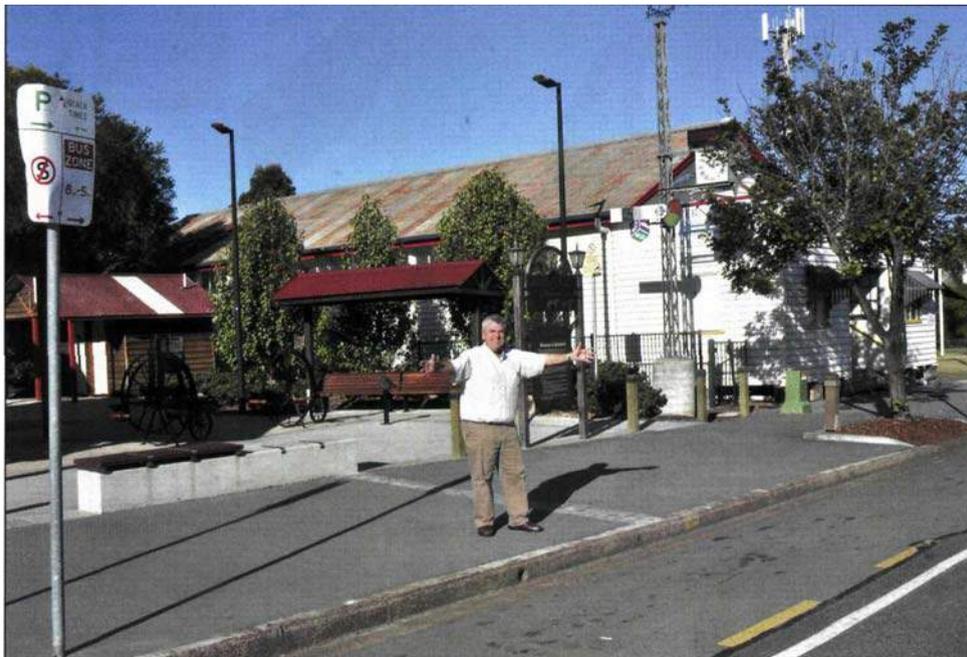
of using this spot but the need to accommodate the traveller is paramount at the moment,” he said.

“Every time a traveller pulls into the main street and parks they spend much needed dollars in the town.

“We need to make these travellers welcome whether they are just passing through or staying overnight and this is another way of doing that.

“It benefits our whole community when visitors come to town and shop locally.”

Cr Pahlke said he expects that permission will be given to create the parking area, adding that if a bus park is needed there are other locations that can be used.



Cr Dave Pahlke announces that the current bus parking bay is set to become a space suited to tourists travelling in caravans and RV's.



Glenelg Shire briefs

RV friendly town

PORTLAND has joined Heywood and Casterton as a RV (Recreation Vehicle) Friendly Town.

The three towns provide a safe and secure site for self-sufficient motorhomes, campervans and caravans to stay overnight.

Signs are currently being installed by Glenelg Shire staff across each of the localities, directing tourist traffic to the camping locations which are endorsed by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA), a club featuring more than 66,000 members.

The sites include:

Portland – long-term parking of 72 hours at Henty Park, near the cable trams and short-term parking at Lee Breakwater Road, opposite the Yacht Club and Hurd Street near Hanlon Park.

Heywood – long-term parking of 48 hours at Hunter Street East near the dump point and short-term parking at Cameron Street near the

playground.

Casterton – long-term parking at ESS Lagoon up to one month and short-term on Murray Street East behind the local supermarket.

Glenelg Shire Mayor Cr Max Oberlander said the region was now the state's regional leader of RV Friendly camping sites.

"This RV Friendly Town accreditation ensures that this huge pool of travellers consider Glenelg Shire as a priority stopover point, because of the ease of finding an appropriate camping site," he said.

"Research shows that this RV community spend an average of \$100 per day whilst travelling, money that will be directed into supporting our local retailers and food outlets, supporting local jobs for our community.

Online platform

A NEW online engagement platform will assist Glenelg Shire residents to have a greater voice on

council matters.

Your Say Glenelg <http://yoursay.glenelg.vic.gov.au/> is a new consultation tool that gives Glenelg Shire residents direct online link to council's decision-making processes.

The website provides access to key information of the council's core business, such as new strategies and plans, and provides a variety of tools for the public to have their say and provide feedback.

These tools include online discussion forums, guestbook feedback, surveys and forms, a storyteller mapper, quick poll and a Q&A section. The site also includes news feeds, photo galleries and project libraries with links to social media.

Mayor Cr Max Oberlander said the website

would transform the way the council involves residents in decision making processes.

"Never before have ratepayers had such a direct connection to our council," he said.

"This is a one-stop-shop for all of the latest business council is currently working on. Your Say Glenelg provides a reliable, responsive and cost effective tool to undertake community consultation with residents in the shire. It will ensure a greater percentage of our residents are engaged on matters of importance.

"In this new digital landscape it will ensure everyone can be kept up-to-date and have a say on matters of importance with the click of a button."

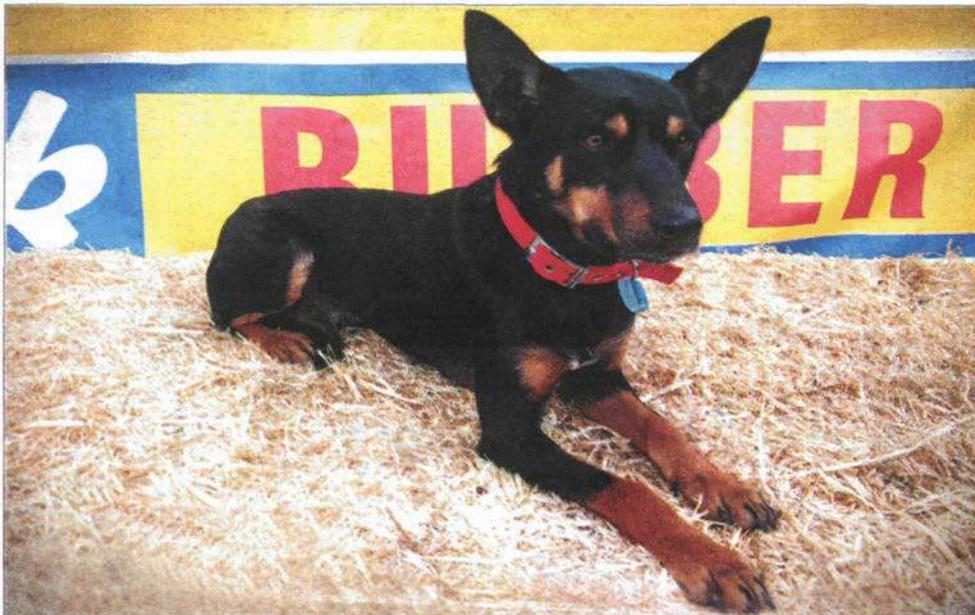
Content included on the new site includes such things as the Draft Portland Industrial Land Strategy, Portland Heritage Gap Study, Glenelg Rural Land Use Strategy, the future of Portland's Old Marina Jetty and the council's proposed budget for the new financial year.

Register today at <http://yoursay.glenelg.vic.gov.au/>. All user details are confidential, and only used for consultation purposes.



TEHAN Egan and bailey celebrate their new world record high jump of 2.951m.

Picture: NATASHA ROBERTS



THE highest priced dog at the working dog auction was Burge a 17-month Black and Tan Kelpie that was sold for \$10,000 by Andrew Kennedy to Rob and Toni Buckley of Trafalgar.

Picture: NATASHA ROBERTS



Loddon Valley the choice for RV Friendly Travellers

LODDON Shire, in Central Victoria, is an inviting prospect for travellers keen to explore new places.

No surprise that veteran travel writer Fred Wright was so impressed with what he saw that he once declared the region "Victoria's best-kept secret".

Approved RV-Friendly stopovers now exist at Boort, Bridgewater, Wedderburn, Pyramid Hill and the Simply Tomatoes enterprise at Yando.

Motorhome owners can start at either end of the Shire and make their way through, confident of enjoying its varied scenery and welcoming small towns.

In the south, Bridgewater offers an RV-Friendly site in the local reserve, as well as a brand-new caravan and camping park alongside the Loddon River.

Visitors can sample the wares of the Water Wheel Winery or the renowned Bridgewater bakery, before a short



drive to Inglewood to browse in its famed collectables stores or the enlightening Blue Eucy Museum.

Close by, Tarnagulla is rich in goldfields history, catch the story of the Welcome Stranger nugget at Moliagul, explore Kooyoora State Park or take a tour through Eddington.

Wedderburn's RV-Friendly site at Hard Hill Tourist Reserve permits travellers to see

eucalyptus processed in a stew pot, pan for gold or step back in time at the Coachhouse Museum.

Pyramid Hill invites visitors to climb the iconic hill made famous by Major Thomas Mitchell, delve into their ancestry with the community's resourceful historical society or take a short detour to Terrick Terrick National Park.

Up north, Boort boasts a local institu-

tion in metal sculpture artist John Piccoli (known as the "Spanner Man"), award-winning olive producer Salute Oliva, its native wetlands rich in flora, fauna and indigenous history and its pretty lake, popular for camping and all manner of water sports.

Just outside Boort is Simply Tomatoes and Aussie Wool Quilts, where the Lanyon family welcomes visitors to its RV-Friendly site.



New home for campers

Welcome on track for RVs

ALEX LUTTRELL

PART of a New Norfolk horse racing facility is set to be converted into an RV park for members of a national motorhome club in time for the next tourist season.

The Derwent Valley Council is in discussions with the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia to develop a space for self-contained vans and motorhomes in an under-utilised 2ha corner of Kensington Park.

At last week's council meeting, Greg Winton was authorised to undertake further discussions with the CMCA.

A report will be presented to a future council meeting before any agreements for site lease fees are signed. Mr Winton will negotiate a lease prior to development application being lodged.

"Realistically we would like to have it operating in three months before the summer," Mr Winton said.

The intention was to provide self-contained and secure

accommodation for about \$6 a night for CMCA members only, with no tents to be permitted.

Maximum stays for campers would be around three nights. "It's an alternative to a caravan park as their members don't necessarily need the facilities of a caravan park as they are predominantly self-contained," he said.

"I think it's an opportunity that shouldn't be missed as it could mean economic advantage for us. There'd be a good spin-off for local businesses and shops here."

The racecourse is mainly used for the annual New Norfolk Cup as well as harness racing time trials on an occasional basis. Another section is leased to a pony club.

After finalising leasing arrangements, the CMCA would undertake all infrastructure needs including a "dump point" as well as water and sewerage connections.

Other infrastructure may include landscaping, fencing, levelling of sites and building a communal shelter area such as a pergola.

Volunteer caretakers would spend three months on site for a maximum of three months for security and site opera-

tions.

The development comes after the council banned caravans, motorhomes and tents from Tynwald Park due a number of "free campers" using the site, with allegations of fires, public urination, excrement and rubbish in the area.

"There were issues earlier this year at the tourism season with free campers where we had people parking at places, Tynwald Park was one place but there were a number of others as well," Mr Winton said.

He said the council would also try to find a suitable area for such campers in the future.



OPPORTUNITY: Derwent Valley Council general manager Greg Winton at Kensington Park where the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia members are negotiating to set up camp.

Picture: ROGER LOVELL



Booming industry

HERE'S a statistic to ponder: in 2010, campervans and motorhomes travelled about 607,000,000km crisscrossing the nation.

To put that in perspective, that's the same distance as driving to the moon and back 790 times.

It's no wonder then caravans and campervans have consistently been the fastest growing vehicle type in Australia by registration.

Caravans make up 90 per cent of registered recreational vehicles (RVs) in Australia and motorhomes make up the remaining 10 per cent.

The good news is more than 70 per cent of RVs purchased are made in Australia.

The Caravan Industry Association of Australia (CIAA) is the peak body responsible for compiling data about the industry, identifying trends and measuring performance.

This information then provides manufacturers, or anyone else involved in the industry, with a guide to investment and quality benchmarks.

CIAA chief executive officer Stuart Lamont described the sector as large and dynamic.

"The industry comprises of caravan holiday parks, caravans, motorhomes, camper trailers, tent trailers, camping, cabins, plus other RV's, and industry suppliers and this is about 4000 individual businesses," he said.

The research has found three-quarters of the Australian population has had a caravanning or camping experience at least once in their lifetime and 88 per cent of campers say it is something every child should experience.

"The desire to see more of

Australia was cited by 73 per cent of respondents as the reason for sparking their original investment in caravanning and camping," Mr Lamont said.

A final thought to ponder: Caravanning and camping visitors spend about \$7 billion when travelling across the country — that's got to be great news for places such as Mildura.



PAUL SCOTT

A friendly destination for oldies in their RVs

HAVE you noticed all the superannuated old farts driving self-contained recreational vehicles (RVs) around this gorgeous nation on their ski*tours?

You probably haven't if you rarely leave Newcastle. As a city, we've done nothing to welcome them. The tourism gurus in Newcastle have largely focused on attracting the top-end-of-town and binging them into flash hotels. Little attention and no welcome has been extended to the bring-your-own mob and that is a lost opportunity. It's also ironic given the national office of the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia is based at Wickham.

But that may be about to change.

Among the papers for tomorrow night's Newcastle City Council meeting sits a notice of motion from Greens councillors Osborne and Doyle. Item-7 on page 137 is a proposal for Newcastle to become an official RV friendly town or destination. Whether we list as a town or destination depends on the ability to meet specific criteria, with 'town' requiring the provision of more facilities than 'destination'.

More politely known as grey nomads or the RV (relaxing vacation) set, at this time of year - in fact during much of the year, except during the summer months when they surrender the humid highways to the crassness

of the Wicked campers and Griswold-like families undertaking tours-of-duty to the Goldy - the New England, Pacific, Newell and Hume motorways are chockers with the species as it makes its way north to warmer climes.

It's now as much part of the Aussie bucket list psyche as buying jousting sticks and complaining about referees. Retire, get the machine, fit-it-out and just take off for no other reason than to have a relaxed optic nerve and abandon the routines of the schedule slave.

And some of these recreational vehicles are not modest like the caravan sauna gulags I remember being forced to endure as a kid. Some are luxury apartments on wheels - shower, loo, bedroom, kitchen, lounge-room, satellite tele and sound systems that you can turn up to 11.

So, what's in it for Newcastle and what do we have to do to get us some of that sweet RV coin?

Figures quoted by the Campervan and Motorhome Club indicate that members of the RV community in Australia spend an average of \$100 per day while travelling.

If Newcastle goes for the higher-level accreditation, we must provide appropriate parking within the town centre (lol) with



access to a general shopping area; provide short term, low cost overnight parking for 24/48 hours as close as possible to the CBD, access to potable water and a free dump point at an appropriate location.

Perhaps, given the above criteria, it is more likely we can achieve the designation of an RV friendly destination. That category requires the provision of short term, low cost overnight parking for 24/48 hours for self-contained RVs, the parking area needs to be on a solid, level surface and there must be enough room for large vehicles to manoeuvre.

The hard sell is managing any increase in visits by non self-contained RVs (no more poos in the bushes at the dog beach thanks very much) and convincing locals that the RVs can resist the urge to stay in our beautiful city for more than short periods.

**Ski- spending kids inheritance (no apostrophe, because the inheritance does not belong to the kids).*

Twitter @paul_scott_ or emailpaulscott@gmail.com