



Driving the RV campaign

Councillors lend vital support

By SHARON SMALLWOOD

PROSERPINE is a step closer to becoming an RV-friendly town after Whitsunday Regional Council voted in favour of investigating a potential site last week.

The move to create an RV friendly stop is one Proserpine's councillor John Collins is passionate about, believing fully in the benefits it would bring to the town.

Cr Collins told those around the boardroom table last week that data from the first 10 weeks of this year's RV season at Home Hill, showed \$52,000 had been spent by RV travellers between Ayr and Home Hill alone.

"And this is what we're

chasing," he reiterated this week.

"I think the town needs it – the town needs a boost and all along the coast, this area's the only area that hasn't got an RV stop and the money that goes by the road every day is incredible," he said.

Proserpine Chamber of Commerce secretary, Karen Vloedmans, who has also worked long and hard to champion an RV friendly site, said the chamber's members and committee were "absolutely delighted" with the support for the project from Council last week.

"It's something we've been hoping for and driving all year," she said, adding that with Collinsville recently becoming RV friendly, there were further opportunities for a "drive campaign".

The only concern from around the council table last week was voiced by Cr Dave Clark, who said he wanted

to ensure there were no implications to nearby cane farmers in terms of restrictions on spraying.

Cr Collins said he was well aware of these concerns and he stressed

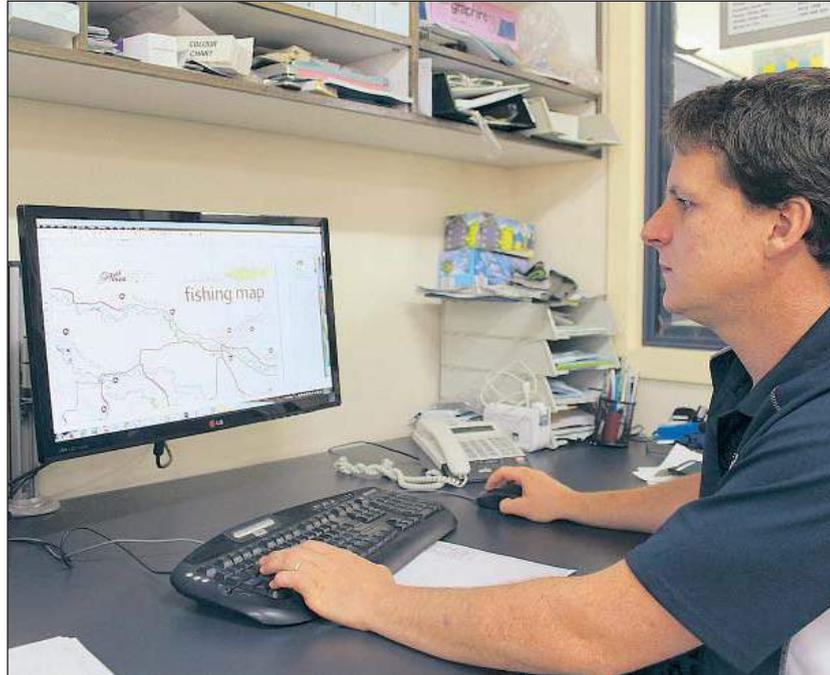
last Wednesday's motion was "just to get the ball rolling" in terms of looking at costings and prospective sites.

Council will now liaise with the Chamber of Commerce and the Canegrowers executive to keep them fully informed.



FORWARD THINKING: Proserpine's councillor John Collins discusses the benefits to the town of an RV-friendly stop with Proserpine Chamber of Commerce secretary Karen Vloedmans.

PHOTO: SHARON SMALLWOOD



WHIZZ: Local graphic designer Eric Dyer, working on the Swan Hill Region Fishing Map.

Gone fishin'

FISHERS, campers, shooters and outdoor fans can rejoice with the release of a map detailing some of the region's best kept secrets.

Local graphic designer at Signs Plus, and keen fisher and camper, Eric Dyer took it upon himself to create the Swan Hill Region Fishing Map after seeing a real need to unveil local knowledge to the burgeoning tourist industry.

"It's something I thought about doing while I was quite young," he said.

"Now that I'm older and I've got the time and skills to do it, I decided to finish it.

"It's mainly to help promote the area to other people [and tourists]."

Mr Dyer completed the map two years ago. After extensive meetings with wildlife and water authorities,

it's finally available to the public.

Much of the information contained within the map has been provided by locals in the know.

"We've got down fishing spots, camping spots, RV friendly spots, and just general information about baits, fish and caravan parks," Mr Dyer said.

Mr Dyer and his father Stephen travelled the region with their GPS, indexing the greater region including places a little out of the way like Kyalite, Goodnight, Murrabit and Reedy Lake.

The map is available from Swan Hill Fishing and Shooting Supplies, Signs Plus, J.C.'s Bait and Tackle and a few other retail locations around the town for only \$3.

Digital copies can be downloaded from fishinmaps.com.au



Collinsville officially RV friendly

COLLINSVILLE has moved one step closer to gaining RV Friendly status, after Whitsunday Regional Council agreed to sign a Letter of Understanding received from the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA).

Mayor Jennifer Whitney said Collinsville's rich heritage made the town an ideal destination for tourists.

"With the Collinsville town entry statement in place and the bronze Pit Pony statue set to be unveiled this weekend, RV Friendly status for Collinsville could not have come at a better time," Cr Whitney said.

"Once council has signed and returned the Letter of Understanding to CMCA, we will receive two RV Friendly signs which can be used to better promote Collinsville to the RV and caravanning markets.

"The number of RV travellers is expected to increase by more than 60 per cent over the next decade, and it's important that the Whitsunday Region is well positioned to benefit from that market growth."

As part of the agreement with CMCA, the Whitsunday council has agreed to allow short-term overnight parking for self-contained motorhomes, campervans and caravans at the Collinsville Showground.



NEWS BITE

Collinsville on the way to RV friendly

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Golden Crest trail brings grey nomads to the Goldfields

Heather Chalmers

A convoy of 10 motor homes rolled into Kalgoorlie at the weekend in an organised tagalong to discover what the Goldfields has to offer.

The group, made up of people who hail from all over Australia, was in the area to follow the Golden Crest Discovery Trail as it

takes part in the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia National Rally 2015.

Goldfields Tourism Network Association chairman Mandy Reidy welcomed the visitors to the region.

“They represent perfectly the people that we want to have around, so we need to look after them when they are here,” she said.

“They have good networks with others travelling around and when they come here and have a good time they pass it on.

“The most positive thing is they go on to promote our region.

“They also inject money into the local economy, and the group have said they will give me feedback about how much they spent ... w have a strong caravanning and

camping culture here and have a fantastic stopover in Kalgoorlie at Centennial Park.”

Ms Reidy added the biggest tourist attraction in the area was the outback tours, most of which were self-drive.



Anne and Ian Astill enjoy the recreational vehicle rest stop at Centennial Park. Picture: Mary Meagher



No drama at RV grounds

Bad PR only problem for showground

Alina Rylko

alina.rylko@tweed
dailynews.com.au

THE MURWILLUMBAH Showground has received a steady stream of visitors to its new short-term campervan facility which opened three weeks ago to help generate funds for the grounds and to attract tourists to the region.

At \$20 per night, each of the 26 sites at the showground offers electricity and access to amenities, but is not an alternative for “free campers” who frequented Bruce Chick Park at Stotts Island before it was closed for camping by Tweed Shire Council last Monday.

On Tuesday, there was four tenants at the showground, but none of those were the free campers who had been moved on from Bruce Chick Park, according to showground secretary Allan Brown.

“We charge an affordable and reasonable rate for short term over-night camping,” Mr Brown said.

“It’s an unrecognised, valuable community facility.”

Mr Brown said some recent media coverage of the showgrounds had not been favourable, with some reports the park was replacing Bruce Chick Park as a place for the homeless to gather.

“That’s not the image we’re trying to create,” he said, adding the showground hoped to attract

backpackers, grey nomads and holiday makers.

“You get undesirables. I’m not sure if they are homeless. But that’s why we at the showground, are short term – one day to one week,” Mr Brown said.

Council’s director of planning and regulation Vince Connell said overnight camping at Bruce Chick Park was banned because “camping threatened the park’s environmental and heritage objectives”.

Mr Connell said council staff had tried to link homeless people with

established state and federal agencies.

Burringbar’s Masterson Park was closed in August 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.

Council is investigating potential free campstay sites in the hinterland.

“That’s not the image we’re trying to create.”

— Allan Brown



OPEN FOR BUSINESS: Murwillumbah Showground secretary Allan Brown at the new RV facility.

PHOTO: ALINA RYLKO