



## **RV friendly site being trialled at Kilcoy**

Somerset Regional Council is trialling an RV friendly site at Kilcoy to give travellers more opportunities to enjoy the region.

A site adjacent to the southern end of Seib Street and Kilcoy Creek has been established as a suitable spot for overnight parking by caravans.

Vehicles are permitted to park at the signed location for overnight stays up to a maximum of 20 hours.

Council will monitor the use of the site and look towards development of the location if it is well utilised by travellers.



# Your Letters



## Stop the free camping

**THIS sign outside the Noosa National Park, in the foreground, goes unheeded - as campervans spend the night, undisturbed, in the best free parking space in Australia.**

**Please may I suggest that council's 2P parking signs are changed from the very generous 8 to 5, to No Standing 1am to 6am, so all camping is illegal. Early walkers and surfers rightfully need a place to park at the Noosa National Park, and this is unfairly being taken up by free campers. These campervans have occupied every available space for the last 10 days, including all parking on**

**the surrounding roads - Pandanus, Kareela, Mitti, Alderly.**

**I live nearby and wish so fervently, that Noosa be kept lovely for everyone. Free camping should not be encouraged. No one polices it. Our streets are choked with overnight campers.**

**All council needs to do is change the street signs. As it is, it is an open invitation to stay the night. Throughout our area council are busy booking vehicles parked on nature strips. It is \$44 fine. Cheap for a day's outing.**

**LOCAL RESIDENT**



# Access deal for disabled

Reports by **MICHAEL MCGOWAN**  
Port Stephens

A NEW disability access policy approved by Port Stephens councillors seeks to end the “neglect” of the region’s disabled population.

Last night councillors voted to adopt the new policy, which will see the council introduce disability policies between now and 2018.

It also adopted an amendment moved by deputy mayor Sally Dover that will see the council prepare a disability access list to prioritise key disability access works.

Cr Dover said the policy would “keep access issues from being neglected in the future”.

“I believe this is an area that has been neglected,” she said.

“On top of this policy we need a list of items in Port Stephens that are in need of attention.”

The council estimates there are more than 16,000 people in Port Stephens living with a disability, based on figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Because of its older population, the percentage of Port Stephens residents with some form of disability could be as high as 25 per cent.

While the council argues it is making gains in making the region more disability friendly, its report into disabled access found the

■ A \$20,000 sponsorship deal approved by Port Stephens Council last night secured what was called “the largest single event ever staged in the Nelson Bay area”.

The council agreed to sponsor the 2014 Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Rally in October, as well as waive the \$30,000 hire of the Tomaree Sports Ground near Nelson Bay to attract the event.

Council staff estimate the event will generate \$2 million in direct spend while Cr John Nell said it would “certainly” bring a big influx of people to the area.

region still has a long way to go when it comes to making life easier for its residents.

Consultation with disabled residents found respondents were “all generally unaware of any recent upgrades and or works that improve access to services in the Port Stephens area”.

It found the majority rated the community’s attitude towards people with disabilities as “uncomfortable”.

Cr Dover said some areas with disability access in place, such as Little Beach, were far from perfect.

She told the council she had heard from disabled residents who were injured by fishing lines while swimming near a disabled access ramp.



# Albany tops for caravans

■ **Jordan Gerrans**

Albany is in the top five cities for caravan and campervan registrations in Australia, according to figures released by the Caravan, RV and Accommodation Industry of Australia last week.

WA has the highest combined caravan and campervan registrations in Australia at 29.8 per 1000 people.

Albany was one of two WA cities in the top five for registrations, ranking fifth, while Mandurah topped the list, with Bundaberg (Qld), Fraser Coast (Qld) and Toowoomba (Qld) ranking second to fourth respectively.

Cameron Caravans owner Michael Cameron said his business did well last year.

“As much as we don’t want Albany to be branded a major retirement area, there is an older demographic here that buys campervans,” he said.

“It is also a farming town — a lot of our customers come from farms outside of Albany to buy.”

Albany will host a rally for the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia in October next year.

Between 800 and 1000 campervans and motorhomes and about 2000 people are expected to descend on Albany for the rally, estimated will bring \$2 million to \$3 million into the local economy

CMCA general manager Richard Barwick said it was positive there was an interest in caravans in the Great Southern already.

“What we want to do with our rally is bring people into the area with campervans,” he said.



# We still love the open road

## There's now more than 500,000 RVs on our highways

**KARL CONDON**

THERE are now more than half a million registered caravanning and camping products in Australia according to figures released by the Caravan, RV and Accommodation Industry of Australia.

As the Australian car making and component manufacturing industries begin a downward spiral towards eventual closure, a report on the RV industry shows an upward trend with combined registration of RVs reaching 505,025, many of them made in Australia. Queensland figures are prominent in this increasing market.

The CRVA is the national peak body for the Australian caravan and holiday parks sector and also the caravan, motorhome, camper trailer, tent trailer, camping, cabins, other RV's and industry suppliers.

The Caravan and Campervan Data Report produced by BDO continues to show the strength of the Australian caravan and camping industry according to the CRVA.

Chief executive office, Stuart Lamont, said; "Caravanning holidays continue to grow in popularity as families, baby boomers and older Australians increasingly choose to explore the country by road. This is reflected in these new registration figures."

Mr Lamont said that caravanning and camping remained the quintessential Australian holiday, providing escape from everyday life to quality time with loved ones at some of Australia's most spectacular locations.

Findings of the report include:

- Caravan registrations increased 5.96 per cent, the highest recorded against other vehicle types.
- Caravans continue to represent 89 per cent of total registrations with campervans totalling 11 per cent.
- Queensland has the highest percentage of campervan registrations and Victoria the largest fleet of caravans.
- Western Australia has the highest combined caravan and campervan registrations per head of population at 29.8 per 1000.
- Tasmania continues to have more than twice as many registered campervans per head of population than any of the mainland states.
- The average age of Australian campervans is 17.6 years, with all states except Western Australia and South Australia showing a decrease in average age over the past five years.
- Camper trailers continue to make up the greatest number of caravan registrations by far, although there is a

growing trend towards caravans in the 1.6-3 tonne range, reflecting the popularity of family vans.

Mandurah in Western Australia has the highest combined number of caravan and campervan registrations followed by Bundaberg, Fraser Coast, Toowoomba and Albany in Western Australia. Gladstone had the greatest increase of those postcodes with more than 1000 registrations at 13.2 per cent. Campervans travelled about 255,000,000km per

year, the equivalent of Sydney to Darwin via Melbourne and Adelaide for each vehicle.

Mr Lamont said the local manufacturing industry remained strong despite stiff competition with the locally made product exceeding 20,000 units for the fourth year running in 2013.

This, coupled with strong consumer demand, demonstrated a healthy industry.

"The affordability of an Australian caravanning and camping holiday provides an experience for all," he said.

"The ability to re-use a caravan or campervan for short getaways or long holidays, or to pass on to someone else continues to make caravanning or camping one of the best value holiday options in Australia today."

### Show hits Brisbane

MANY of the new camping, caravanning and RV products that make up this buoyant market will be on display at the 2014 Brisbane Tinnie and Tackle Show and National 4x4 and Outdoors Show to be held at the Brisbane Showgrounds from April 4-6.

The combined shows are a merger to create Australia's biggest annual 4x4, off-road, touring, towing, fishing and boating expo.

There will be more than 20,000sq m dedicated to everything outdoors with more than 200 exhibitors showing off their latest products. This amounts to hundreds and thousands of products and plenty of specials.

Event director Paul Ma-

thers said Australia's best known precision driving team, Isuzu Ute's Team D-MAX would feature.

"Team D-MAX made its first appearance for us at the National 4x4 Outdoors Show in Melbourne last year and we're thrilled to have them for both Brisbane and Melbourne shows this year," he said.

"The skill of these drivers and their ease behind the wheel when tackling things that should never be tackled in a car, particularly not on two wheels, needs to be seen to be believed. We are confident Brisbane show visitors will be impressed."

Along with Team D-MAX shows, this year's Action Arena presented and hosted by Isuzu Ute will include displays from 4x4 stunt cars, ATV's, demonstrations and test drives all of which can be viewed from the XXXX Retreat.

Teams from the 4x4 A-Struck Extreme competition will tackle a purpose-built track metres from spectators in the grandstands.

It will bring the sport of extreme four-wheel driving to the show. The course requires competitors to make their way up, over and through obstacles without the use of winches, while racing against the clock.

The Tassie Devil monster truck will also do displays in the Action Arena, raising awareness of the cancer plight threatening these animals.



The schedule for the Arena with a full timetable of appearances and activities will be on the show's website.

Marine Insurer Club Marine will again present the Tinnie and Tackle side of this year's event, alongside 4x4 Outdoors Show.

Event manager Kiri Ngartata said a wide range of marine and marine product exhibitors had been confirmed for this year ensuring something for everyone in the area of boating and fishing.

Host of TV's *iFish* program, Paul Worsteling will give regular talks and workshops on the Fishing Expo stage.

He will also be at the Kids Marine Zone to help teach the next generation of anglers the basics of knot tying, rod casting and bait netting.

At the three saltwater tanks, children can learn how to identify different types of sea creatures including estuary fish and see dangerous marine life up close such as sting rays, sharks and bluebottles.

Tickets to this year's show are \$18 for adults, \$12 for seniors and children under 15 free. A two day adult pass is \$25. There is a free train loop.

Go to [tinnieandtackle.com.au](http://tinnieandtackle.com.au) or [4x4show.com.au](http://4x4show.com.au).



**Gutsy performers: Team D-MAX in action.**



That sense of freedom ... RV registrations, including caravans, have now topped half a million in Australia.



## Shire President's Message



I want to take this opportunity to address some of the concerns surrounding Recreational Vehicles (RVs) and backpackers visiting our region. The two are often talked about in conjunction, but are actually two separate matters, which are discussed regularly by Council.

In 2013 all local caravan park owners were invited to discuss our town sites becoming RV friendly, a notion which the Shire has twice been approached on by the Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia. Four of our Councillors also inspected RV friendly towns including Cranbrook, Woodanilling, Kojonup and Boyup Brook. Council recently considered a report outlining the benefits and requirements of becoming an RV friendly town, and further investigations are now being undertaken into potential locations and costs.

The topic of itinerant workers or 'backpackers' becomes more prevalent at this time of the year as the horticulture and fruit picking industries are at their peak and our Shire becomes a hot spot for casual employment. Some of these travellers choose not to use commercial accommodation, favouring the option of sleeping in their vehicles and utilising the public facilities. Often this causes a disturbance to the public and to the amenity of the area, as mentioned by Mr Lucas in last weeks letter to the editor.

Council is in a difficult position in that there is a contradiction between embracing itinerant workers

because our industry needs them, and enforcing a regulation that would turn them away from camping in the area. Our Rangers are being vigilant, requesting that campers move on as research into how other Local Governments deal with such campers has revealed the issuing of infringements is ineffective. Furthermore, activity that many residents would consider undesirable is allowed under the State's *Caravan and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997*, that being - that a person may camp for up to 24 consecutive hours in a caravan or other vehicle in a road side rest area, or for up to 24 consecutive hours in a caravan or other vehicle on a road reserve in an emergency.

Council is developing a policy guiding the way authorised personnel deal with illegal campers, whilst trying to strike a balance between embracing and supporting their presence in our region as a vital workforce and moving them on.



On a different note, I'd like to welcome and introduce our newest Australia Citizen. At the last Council meeting in Walpole, I swore in Senior Constable Mike Smith who has been working out of the Pemberton Police Station for about three years. He is pictured here with myself and his wife, Ros. Congratulations Mike!

Last Sunday the 'Mates 500 relay' left Mukinbudin on the 1500km run to Manjimup to raise money for the Regional



Mens Health Initiative and Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. The finish will be celebrated at Fonty's Pool in Manjimup on Thursday 3 April – the runners are due in at approx. 6pm. Come along and show your support or visit [www.mates500relay.org.au](http://www.mates500relay.org.au) and make a donation.

With the Easter break almost upon us, I encourage you all to be mindful of driving carefully. I hope all of our locals and visitors get home to their families and/or countries safely. Please stay safe and have a happy Easter celebration.

*Wade J. Camp*



# Roll into Robinvale

## Motorhome rally expected to pump \$2 million into local economy

By Graeme O'Neill

THE JOY of owning a motorhome is that you can be outdoors and inside at the same time, and living the good life.

And it's that kind of unhurried existence, pausing often to smell the paper daisies and fragrant smoke of a eucalypt fire, that will take 1700 well travelled citizens of the senior variety to Robinvale this weekend.

The 28th anniversary rally of the Campervan Motorhome Club will feature somewhere around 900 motorhomes – or recreation vehicles (RVs) – assemble at the Robinvale recreation reserve for a week-long rally.

Organiser Ray Jones, manager of the Euston Club, says the visitors are expected to

pump up to \$2 million into the Robinvale and Euston economies over the five-day event, and there'll be a bit of spill-over into the economies of Mildura and Swan Hill, which, along with Lake Mungo and the Walls of China, are designated destinations for tours during the event.

By day there will be seminars on travel and camping, followed by entertainment every night.

"All the restaurants in Euston and Robinvale are booked out, and even with only 150 motorhomes in town, it's hard to get a table," Mr Jones said.

"All the shops in Robinvale are doing very well, and the coffee shops. There are around 45 traders in town and by Monday, we'll have a similar number inside the venue."

Mr Jones said that some of the RV owners are doing the grey nomad thing, living almost permanently on the road as they travel around

Australia, but there are also owners who enjoy the conviviality of the club's rallies,

which happen twice a year.

All you need is membership of the club, a Winnebago, or one of the many local variants of the motorhome genre, which will set you back anywhere between \$50,000 and \$1 million - although Mr Jones says the most expensive motorhomes at the Robinvale rally will probably top out at around \$750,000.

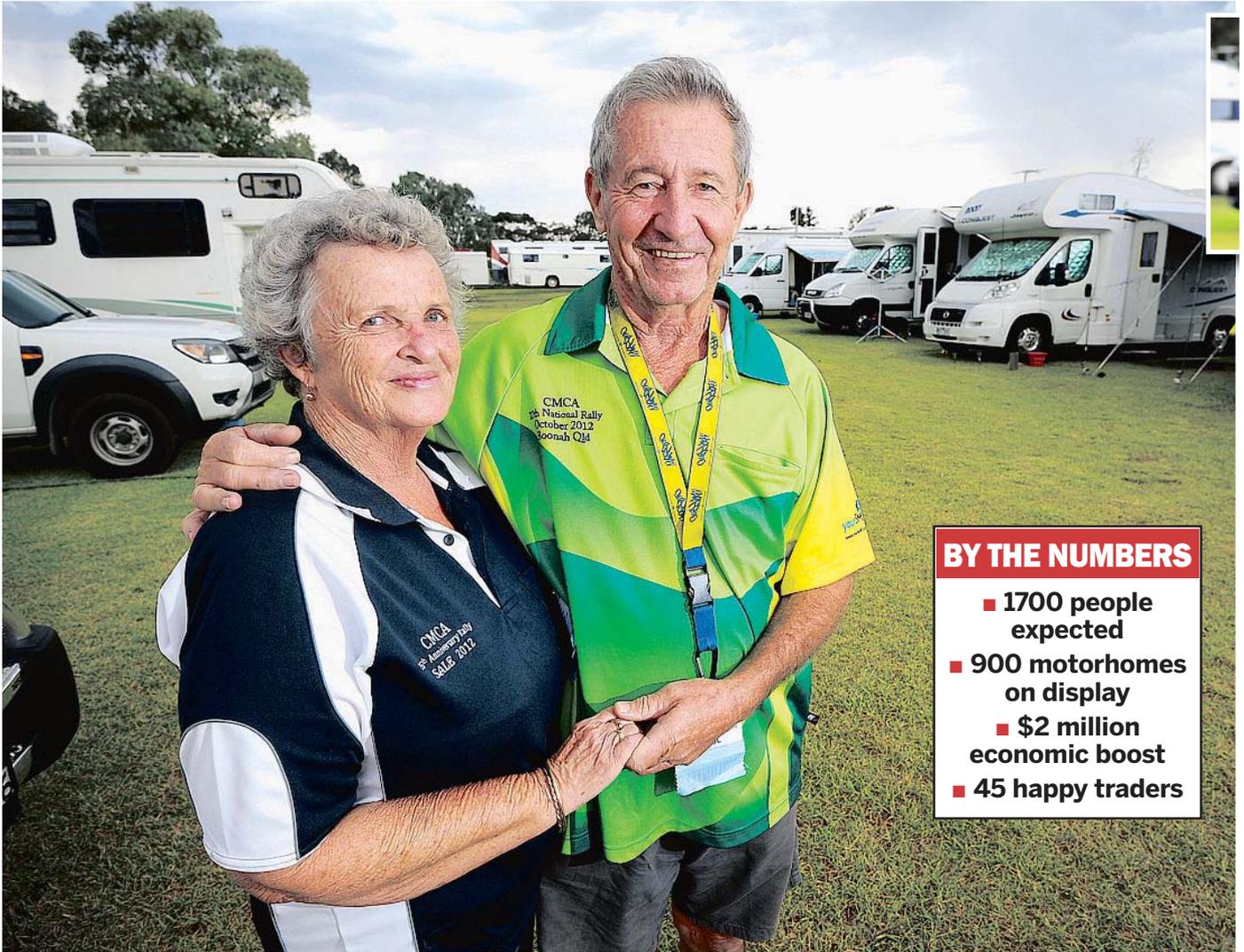
It's a tough life, but someone has to live it, and increasing numbers of Baby Boomers in their sunset years are enjoying life on the endless black ribbon.

In crowded suburbia, contact with neighbours tends to be minimal, but when you're out on the road touring, you're among friends.

There are about 45 traders in town and by Monday, we'll have a similar number inside the venue



**REGULARS:** Clive and Judy Brushett from Howlong and Beth and Ron Tidd from Corowa.



**BY THE NUMBERS**

- 1700 people expected
- 900 motorhomes on display
- \$2 million economic boost
- 45 happy traders

**IN THE CLUB:** CMCA members and volunteers Paul and Denise Holt from Tweed Heads have been coming to these events for 10 years.

Pictures: Clancy Shippides



## WestWHEELS CARAVANS, CAMPING

# Travel by the book

Driven by the lack of good information on caravanning in Australia, one Englishman has taken up the challenge



PETER POAT

**ARGUABLY** the most comprehensive book for caravanners ever to be published in Australia has been released.

It covers just about every aspect of purchasing a new or second-hand caravan and includes a wealth of information on maintaining, insuring, towing, loading, weight regulations, gas and electrical systems, accessories and living on the road.

I could not think of any aspect of owning a caravan that is not covered.

The only query I had after being given access to the proofs of the 200-page book before it went to print was its title.

Known as the Caravan Buyers Guide, it is very much more than that and will be a worthwhile addition to the library of any caravan owner.

It was written by Sydney man Andrew Woodmansey over an 18-month period and is edited by RV technical guru Collyn Rivers, who himself is an acclaimed recreational-vehicle author.

Other industry experts also were called on for their

specialised technical expertise.

Woodmansey was born in England and migrated to Australia 14 years ago. He is the general manager of enterprises for Sydney Opera House, following stints in a number of high-profile government and private roles in

NSW.

"I have happy childhood memories of family holidays in our caravan in the UK," he said.

"It was a way of connecting with each other and discovering our shared interests of exploring, cooking, eating and conversation. It brought us closer together and gave us a reason to meet new people."

He has been on a five-year mission to buy a caravan in readiness for his retirement and has been to more caravan shows than he can remember.

He is an advocate for extensive research before making a decision to purchase and says it is never too early to start planning.

He explains what led to him researching and writing the book.

"I searched high and low for the perfect caravan to take my wife and me around Australia," he said. "The longer I looked, the more frustrated I became."

One of the baffling challenges he recalls facing was the total lack of classification for the different classes of caravans. "Unlike motor vehicles, there is no clear

definition regarding the different off-road types and that extends to the variety of on-road models," he said.

He has attempted to rectify this in part with a suggestion for four classes — light, medium, heavy duty and all terrain — explaining the types of caravan available with their strengths and weaknesses.

Not only does the book cover all the questions potential owners may have, it also challenges buyers to ensure that they are suitable or ready for the caravanning lifestyle with some very pertinent questions for self-examination.

Once that suitability has been established, the book has clear guides on making the correct

purchasing decision by outlining all the factors to be considered. This includes budget, towing capacities and a walk through the paperwork attached to purchasing a van, including insurance and warranties.

He examines the merits of owning a motorhome as opposed to a caravan, making cases for both sides. Although various caravan brand names are mentioned in the book, there is no recommendation on any particular variety or model.

The regular purchase price is \$34.95 plus \$5 postage, however, a \$5 discount is offered for purchases before April 30.

■ Visit [caravanbuyersguide.com.au](http://caravanbuyersguide.com.au).

**I searched high and low for the perfect van . . . The longer I looked, the more frustrated I became.'**



**The Weekend West, Perth**

29 Mar 2014, by Peter Poat

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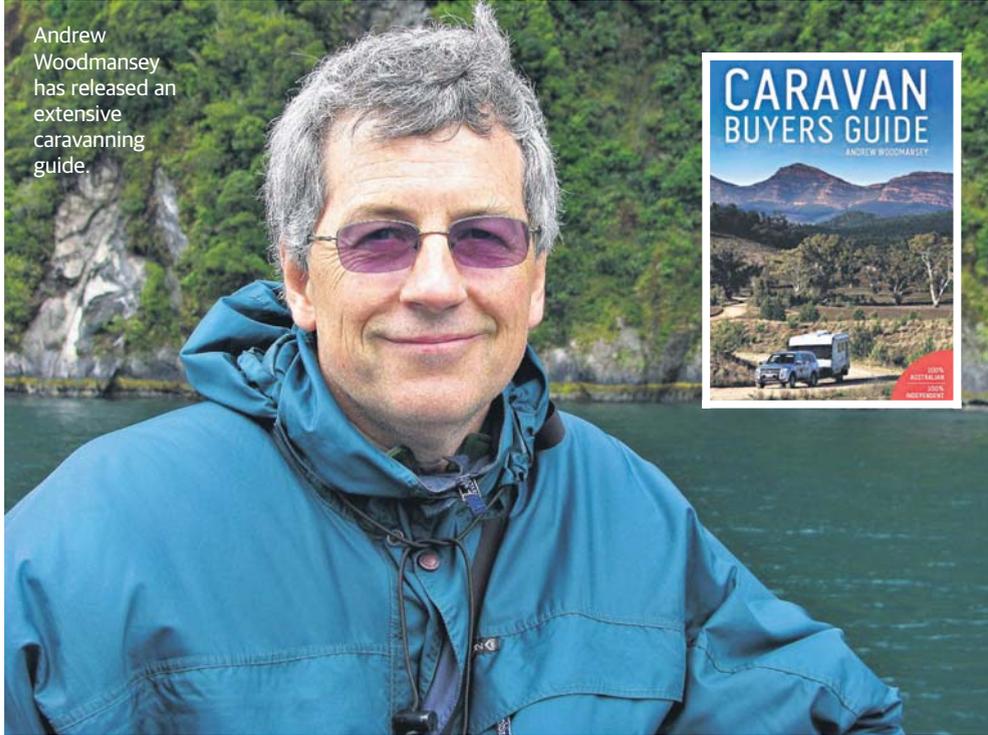
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BRIEF CMCA-AUST INDEX 1.8



Andrew Woodmansey has released an extensive caravanning guide.



# Peak bodies link to boost caravan/camping tourism

A MAJOR commercial partnership formed this week between two New South Wales peak industry associations will further promote one of the tourism industry's fastest growth sectors.

The Caravan & Camping Industry Association NSW and NRMA Motoring & Services have come together in a "natural fit" partnership to strengthen the caravan and camping sector's promotion of travelling and holidaying in areas such as the Coffs Coast.

"Together we will be able to better promote and market the fantastic holiday offerings available to the NSW motoring public and extend awareness of the caravan and camping lifestyle," CCIANSW President Theo Whitmont said.

"Whether towing a caravan or camper trailer, driving a luxury motorhome, pitching a tent, or staying in a luxury cabin at one of the hundreds of holiday parks across the state, there is something for everyone on a caravan and camping holiday."



**GREY NOMADS:** What better way to spend your retirement years than seeing the sights of this great land.

**“It’s a traditional family holiday that our members love**

– NRMA CEO Tony Stuart

NRMA Group CEO Tony Stuart said thousands of NRMA members and their families camped and caravanned for their holidays every year.

“The NRMA has a lot of skin in the caravan and camping holiday sector, including owning four

holiday parks, because we know it’s a traditional family holiday that our members love,” Mr Stuart said.

“That’s why it makes sense for us to partner with the CCIA.

“NRMA sees this relationship as the perfect opportunity to provide even more of the valuable caravan and camping advice we provide and ensure as many members as possible have the knowledge to travel safely and happily.”