

ADVENTURES ON PRIVATE LAND



To the City Council/Shire Mayor

Western Australia

26th August 2014

Re: Freedom travellers in your Council area

Dear Mayor,

We are a new travel website called www.youcamp.com. Youcamp is run by two of us – James Woodford (senior journalist and author) and Prue Woodford (environmental scientist). We live on the NSW South Coast and we're both landholders and travellers.

Youcamp is receiving a high number of enquiries from people who manage or own private land across Western Australia (including people from your Local Government Area) and are wanting to attract self-contained and low key visitors. The visitors are people who don't use caravan or tourist parks and are after an authentic but inexpensive experience. They are known as 'freedom campers' and their numbers are dramatically increasing. 501,000 RVs are now registered in Australia. There are also thousands of international travellers in rented RVs. Councils right across Australia and in parts of Western Australia are struggling with how to manage the growing influx of freedom travellers parking overnight illegally.

We are looking for West Australian Councils who are interested in treating freedom campers as an asset and want to stimulate their local economy while deterring illegal overnight parking. We believe that part of the solution is allowing backyard (or private land tourism). The model Australia can look to for guidance is already developed successfully in New Zealand with the *Freedom Camping Act 2011(FCA)*:

http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2011/0061/latest/DLM3742815.html?search=ts_act_freedom_rese&p=1



ABN 52 101 815 730



The NZ FCA's purpose is to increase the powers of local authorities and to regulate freedom camping. It introduces an infringement regime that is easy for local authorities to enforce. The FCA provides that freedom camping is permitted unless it is restricted or prohibited in accordance with a bylaw under the FCA or under any other enactment.

Our business has shown that the modern freedom camper is typically after a more old fashioned outdoor experience. They want space, privacy and more flexible rules than they get in public or state campgrounds or in a van park. They actively don't want uniform and generic experiences. They will pay for authentic experiences but not for facilities they don't want or need.

Based on our experience, we are looking for West Australian Councils who can see the value in regulating private land to be used by freedom campers. There are a few scales of regulation we think Councils need to consider:

- 1) Fully self-contained travellers who don't require any amenities. These people will use public dump points for both black and grey water disposal.
- 2) Partially self-contained. Where some toilet and grey water disposal facilities are required.
- 3) Full facilities are required but not to the extent as a van or tourist park.

We are being approached by all types of private landholders and businesses who can see the value of welcoming freedom campers in their West Australian region and on their land - wineries, olive groves, stations, sheep and cattle properties, B&Bs & cottages, country pubs, people with backyards, conservation sites, bush blocks and organic farms. But they are largely restricted by Council regulations that don't recognise the independent and partially or fully self-contained nature of freedom campers.



ABN 52 101 815 730

ADVENTURES ON PRIVATE LAND



As a result of this feedback and the response to our business, we are creating a list of Councils across West Australia that have or are working towards allowing private landholders and businesses to accept freedom campers. We are attaching an article as a recent national example. Mayor Noel Playford of Noosa Council is investigating allowing freedom campers to stay on rural properties in his shire.

Please provide a small update on this issue and how your Council regulations/local laws are currently placed to allow landholders and businesses the opportunity to receive freedom campers. Please also advise us if this issue is currently under investigation by your Council and any timeframes on amendments or new regulations/local laws that may follow.

Thank-you for your time and we await your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature appears to read 'Prue Woodford'.

Prue Woodford.

Co-owner (Youcamp.com)



ABN 52 101 815 730

Drive-by dollar costs dearly

Mayor keen to see RV campers on rural stays

MILLIONS of tourist dollars are driving past Noosa every year in the form of recreational vehicles looking for “home stays” on the sort of hinterland properties we have in abundance.

And Mayor Noel Playford is keen to apply the brakes on this grey nomad-led bypass by supporting local changes to the Noosa Plan, which will allow self-contained RV campers to stay on private rural land. “One of the things we’re looking at doing is introducing the capacity for overnight stops for self-contained recreational vehicles,” Cr Playford said.

This is apart from the push to accommodate travellers in local showgrounds.

Cr Playford said what the council had in mind was self-contained vehicles being “home-stayed” in rural areas for “a night or two”.

“We’ve been getting some Wicked vans in some of the places we don’t want them, but here’s a completely different section of the market completely

It’s something we can make a little bit on the side from.

– Noel Playford

bypassing us every year.

“We’re just talking about using private land – say if people have got a nice paddock,” the mayor said.

“There’s tens of thousand recreational vehicles heading down the highway every year, and they can bring significant money into the town but currently we don’t have that definition in the planning scheme.

“It’s like caravan parks or nothing.

“They don’t need the (caravan park) facilities – they’ve got them all on board, so our local economy can really benefit from that, especially in the rural areas. It’s something we can make a little bit on the side from.”

Cr Playford said this style of stay was strongly supported by the State Government.



MOVE ON: Noosa Mayor Noel Playford wants these vans replaced by recreational vehicles on rural properties.

PHOTO: GEOFF POTTER

“They commissioned and paid for a strategy study some time ago and that market is worth billions and billions of dollars to the Queensland economy,” he said.

“They don’t want to stay in caravan parks even if they can find a slot but they’ll stay up in the rural areas because that’s the sort of experiences they’re looking for.”

He said council staff were looking at the technical issues needed to accommodate this market.

The council is also looking at other relaxations for accommodation on rural

land but, according to Cr Playford, “I don’t think we’re going to be over-run.”

– PETER GARDINER

See accommodation concerns in Perspective on page 24.

ADVENTURES ON PRIVATE LAND



ABN 52 101 815 730

PO BOX 588 MORUYA NSW 2537

PHONE 0427 825 273

INFO@YOUCAMP.COM

WWW.YOUCAMP.COM