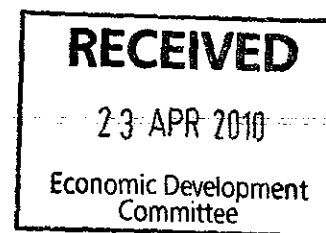


Sub 22

From: webmaster@parliament.qld.gov.au
Sent: Friday, 23 April 2010 2:37 PM
To: Economic Development Committee
Subject: ONLINE SUBMISSION - 'Grey nomad tourism'
ONLINE SUBMISSION - Grey nomad tourism



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Importance of grey nomads to the Queensland economy:

1. What economic contribution do grey nomads make to rural and regional areas of Queensland?
2. Are the available statistics on grey nomads in Queensland useful, current and accessible?

1. I am currently returning from a 4 month trip to Tasmania and have kept accurate spreadsheet record of expenses and spending. We are of moderate means being partly pensioned and partly self funded. From speaking with others on the road I would consider our expenditure to be in the light side. We have averaged \$60.11 . There were approx 1000 motorhomes from our club attending a rally down there and many others not attending. The number of caravans and camper trailer was unknown but extensive. It would be save to assume therefore that the benefit to Tasmania was in excess of \$60000 per day just from our club members and more likely in excess of \$100,000 per day to the economy. I have no access to travelling grey nomad figures for Qld figures but would expect that the average cost of travelling would be far greater as distances travelled are much higher, therefore increasing the fuel expense, one of the major expenses of grey nomad travel. It is not infeasible that figures of \$300,000 or \$400000 per day and potentially much more are likely.

2. I have no access to these statistics on grey nomads in Queensland to be able to comment except to say in nearly nine years of travel nobody has ever asked for my statistics. I would have doubt of their accuracy or usefulness.

Infrastructure requirements:

3. What are the public infrastructure requirements of grey nomads including health services, waste disposal sites and signage?
4. Is the current infrastructure for grey nomads in Queensland adequate? What additional infrastructure is required?

3. The public infrastructure for health services would appear adequate from my point of view (being in good health) even though Qld health services are in crisis generally. With regard to waste disposal, Qld has much to learn from States like Tasmania where dump points for black and grey water disposal are prolific being available in just about every town, both major and minor. Qld is lagging a long way behind what is required in this aspect of grey nomad travelling. I am aware of the grant given to the CMCA for installation of dump point but this is a drop in the ocean compared to what is required.

4. In short NO! The rapidly coming trend on self contained vehicle, the caravan park industry and the local councils are way out of touch with what this rapidly increasing segment of tourism requires. Once again Tasmania is leading the way and other states, including Qld need to become aware and instigate actions to attract this sector which will be (AND ALREADY IS) of increasing economic benefit. The Grey Nomad sector just wants a safe place to camp with minimum supporting structure like dump points, potable water and perhaps toilets and showers being available on occasions. Features like swimming pools and children's play area etc are a very low priority except for those prefer the "resort" style caravan park. Much can be learned from Tasmania where basic, safe, short term 48/72 hour accommodation has brought much economic benefit to many towns/villages

Government coordination:

5. What are the major issues relating to the regulation of Queensland's camping and caravan parks?

5. Here we have an area where the ruling bodies both state and local are out of touch with the travellers sentiment. The Caravan Parks Association have been very active in lobbying the government at all levels to achieve via various means with amendments to laws and regulations to achieve what is in effect a privileged position which no other industry enjoys, ie the attempt to "force" the use of their establishments by removal of the right to choose others type of camping/short stays. Examples of this has been the attempted closure of rest areas for overnight stops. The ruling by the Qld Ombudsman on use of crown land and subsequent changes to sites like the Barcaldine Showgrounds amongst others. The recent decision of the Maryborough Regional Council and the blatant misrepresentation by the Caravan Parks Association and the countering presentation made my former Chairman of the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, Mr Frans Hamer, are examples of just what is going on. If caravans park are to survive, and on present indications they are doing very well thank you, they must compete with alternative styles of accommodation and provide what the travellers wants, not be have a protected position in the business community to the detriment of other businesses in the towns. Talking around the camp-fires their is already a backlash against them and towns that adopt an RV unfriendly stance and this can only be reversed by removal of Rv unfriendly laws and regulation.

Marketing and promotion:

6. What is the best method of marketing Queensland's rural and regional communities to grey nomad tourists?

6. Word of mouth is by far the best method of promotion and there is a very strong grapevine in the RV community. Towns need to attract the RV tourist by providing an RV friendly environment, Tasmania has done this very well in recent years. Visits by locals to a camp-sites to welcome RVers, Provision of RV parking bays to do one's shopping, councils leaving notes on your windscreen, welcoming you to the district, are all small things that attract the RVer and are appreciated. The Grey Nomad is a unique category of tourist, often quite well off but adverse to being ripped off, well experienced in life and responsible (generally). Their needs are relatively simple and low cost to provide but the return to the community can be immense. First impressions must be favourable (speaking from personal experience) or they can be very damaging. Many towns need to develop a "uniqueness" or they are just another town to drive through. Towns need to have a reason for us to stop and spend. I have yet to see a campaign of "Qld is RV Heaven" but instead we see multi million dollar campaign to attract the overseas tourist who often spends his money in overseas owned hotel/resorts after flying in on overseas owned aircraft. The ever growing Grey Nomad tourist group is treated like the poor relation in relation to promotion. One thing that is often overlooked is the the Grey Nomad travels often, not just once a year (personally every month) and although to some it may seem seasonal there is a constant tourist segment on the move, providing turnover and profit to business.

Utilisation of grey nomad skills in regional and rural Queensland:

7. How successful have existing programs been in utilising the skills of grey nomads in rural and regional Queensland?

8. What can the government do to encourage grey nomads to use their skills by undertaking work in rural and regional areas?

7. I cannot comment on this section as I have no direct experience but have heard of many benefits to local communities. Refer to my local CMCA Chapter web site "Community Benefits" <http://wbw.comfypage.com/10.htm> for an indication fo what just one small group has done for the community. 8. Once again I cannot comment but provision of facilities to attract them to the regional and rural areas would be a start.

Comments:

I am not a professional lobbyist, just an ordinary Grey Nomad who has worked hard and been successful in career and business over the past 50 years. I am often horrified by decisions I see made by so called experienced councillors who erect "no camping" signs in response to pressure from vested groups like the Caravan Parks Association who think of nothing else but their own members interests, even to the detriment of others. Having been in business I know only too well how much business comes from out of town. I partake in many Caravanners and Motorhoming forums on the internet and have spent many a long hour around the campfire discussing the various views I have expressed here and I can assure you I am not alone in my opinions. Many towns have developed an RV Unfriendly tag as indeed have states like WA and to some extent did Qld with the closure of rest area fiasco of a few year back. It behoves all of us to make Qld RV friendly but this particularly must start at the top with State Government followed closely by local Government. I would be happy to discuss my views with my local member or the Economic Development Committee if they so desire.