

## North Burnett Regional Council Submission

## Economic Development Committee-Issues Paper No.3

**RECEIVED**

28 MAY 2010

Economic Development  
Committee

"Inquiry into developing Qld's rural and regional communities through grey nomad tourism."

**Issues for comment:**

**1. What economic contribution do grey nomads make to rural and regional areas of Queensland?**

These tourists pass through the region utilising the services provided by regional councils, such as free camping and dumping of grey water, however it is recognized that some of the passing travellers arguable do not contribute greatly to the economy, other travellers are major contributors to the local economy.

It is understood that the Caravan and Motorhome Association has approximately 58,000 Members and is the largest motorhoming (RV) Club in Australia. AS noted on the association web site, the following is applicable :

**4. What Economic Benefits do they create?**

Self-Contained RV Tourists are consistent spenders, who purchase a range of household products and services. These tourists spend at places with at least one good-sized supermarket, a reasonable range of other shops and services, and facilities for vehicle parts and servicing.

- RV tourists spend an average of \$500 per week when on the road.
  - When visiting towns, on average their major purchases include \$235 on motoring needs including fuel and vehicle maintenance, \$160 on living expenses such as groceries and medical expenses, and \$51 on accommodation costs (calculated per week).
  - 97% make purchases when stopping in a town.
  - If they are staying and touring within a region, they are more likely to make purchases on the second, fourth and seventh nights, with the likelihood of purchases increasing if they stay for more than one week.
  - Their estimated spend per vehicle per year, based on an average of 163 days travel, is approximately \$10,700 - \$11,500 or \$66 to \$74 per day.
  - International and domestic RV tourists spend more money and stay more nights in regional Australia compared to visitors from other tourism segments
- REF: <[http://www.cmca.net.au/pages/about/government/economic\\_benefits/index.php](http://www.cmca.net.au/pages/about/government/economic_benefits/index.php)>

It is understood that due to economic circumstances sometime the option is to travel as lean as possible. Where extended stays occur, a more realistic contribution to both the community and financial commitment are experienced.

It is believed that when large numbers of nomadic clubs visit an area and stay for a function or event, then a significant contribution to the community and businesses can be experienced through the number of participants. Mature aged international travellers provide a cultural experience for both the community as well as the travellers and as noted above tend to stay more nights within regional Australia.

## 2. Are the available statistics on grey nomads in Queensland useful, current and accessible?

The current statistics are subject to the changes over time and would be encouraged to be refreshed on a regular basis. The dynamics of travellers in this sector can mean accurate data collection can be sometimes difficult.

How were the figures obtained? What is the sample size? How much are the travellers spending in the various communities? What is the return on investment by local community groups and regional councils? These are all useful questions which would assist in the investment of tourism funding.

A potential difficulty with the use of occupancy rates is the source data may not capture many of the stay in "side of road" areas within the Queensland state, both formal and informal sites.

Accessibility is readily available through OSER and ABS, however issue have been brought to the attention of Council in the past concerning the age of the data and in some cases the generalization or non site/region specific nature of the data.

One suggestion has been for local businesses to collect postcodes from the shopping public to assist in monitoring movements of travellers within a regional or area.

## 3. What are the public infrastructure requirements of grey nomads including health services, waste disposal sites and signage?

Essential services, such as fuel, mechanical / electrical repairs, potable water, food, health and support are adequately covered within most regions. Local government personnel service the existing infrastructure.

Roads in many areas are far from adequate for many types of RV type vehicles, which may be compounded by any lack of experience, skills and knowledge of some operators.

Planning of any trips should encompass traveller's medical needs to ensure that they can be met. Local hospitals, medical centres and allied health facilities in most communities are often under resourced for that area, however when extra patients are treated that may require more specialist treatments and skills, the local facilities become over burdened and unable to cope. In a number of

communities, the same facilities and availability to services that are normally available in the larger cities and towns is not available.

Communication facilities including mobile telephone and internet accessibility in many remote areas is limited.

“RV Friendly” towns criteria ensures that certain requirements, such as waste and grey water disposal facilities, oversize parking bays and ease of accessibility, are met prior to being listed. Many of the travellers are aware of their personal and equipment limitations and therefore make allowances for those limitations.

Signage in many areas could be altered to symbols rather than extensive wording. An accurate and maintained directory of complimentary roadside 24 hour camping / stop over areas would assist in the travellers selecting sites for rests.

4. Is the current infrastructure for grey nomads in Queensland adequate? What additional infrastructure is required?

Generally yes, however please see section 3 above.

The return on investment (ROI) for local government bodies for the services provided needs to be investigated. Many of the stop over or one night stay areas are far from the town facilities and services, therefore local community businesses may not be reaping the greatest benefit of the travelling tourism dollar that this sector offers.

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

Privately owned caravan parks are highly regulated. It is often argued that caravan parks may not provide the form of services required for large recreational vehicles and they are not suitable venues for these vehicles to stay in. This issue can cause conflict with caravan parks who can potentially see a real or perceived loss of custom to public rest areas and stop over sites.

The policing of public stop over sites and areas is a cost often borne by the relevant Local Government Authority.

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

Seniors Magazines and RV type literature, however with the many different organizations and publications it is becoming difficult and expensive to ensure that the target market is focused upon.

Most elderly tourists have confidence within the Government Agencies for accuracy and uniform assistance, however with the sale of public assets this confidence is dwindling.

Market what the rural areas offer in the diverse attractions of scenery, geographical formations, etc., through internet, television and radio. The local radio is the main form of entertainment and news availability whilst driving.

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

This is a difficult question to answer. The success or otherwise of these programmes are unknown to the author of this submission.

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

Encourage the travellers to actively seek employment within the areas by providing seasonal calendars for each region. E.g. fruit picking in the North Burnett Region, casual / contract teaching positions within the State Schools and on rural properties.

Promote and / or advertise professional services requirements in rural and "disadvantaged regions" areas where these skills are lacking in an effort of attracting qualified tourists. Perhaps the advertisements can be placed within trade and specialty "grey nomad" magazines and a website.