



The Secretary
Home Hill Chamber of Commerce Inc
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Economic Development
Committee

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Sub 82

Mr Evan Moorhead MP, Chair
Economic Development Committee
Queensland Parliament
Brisbane

Ms Lyndel Bates Research Director
Economic Development Committee
Queensland Parliament
Brisbane
edc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Re

Economic Development Committee Issues Paper No. 3 April 2010
Inquiry into developing Queensland's rural and regional communities through grey nomad tourism

Dear Mr Moorhead,

During the past month, the Home Hill Chamber of Commerce has conducted a simple survey of visitors to Home Hill staying at the Comfort Stop for a night or two. Although the sample is not large, their comments would be reflective of many who stay in our town and continue their way around Queensland. The majority of those who stay at the Comfort Stop would belong to the group referred to as grey nomads.

The survey results presented here are primarily concerned with Home Hill but many refer to Queensland generally. Business owners were reluctant to answer these questions, but the grey nomads were very willing. We would like to suggest that two different surveys might be designed, and could be finalised before the public hearings in September – one for business operators in regional areas and a more detailed one for the nomads themselves. Our stopover point is unique, and we would be more than happy to oblige by collecting further information should it be required.

I can be contacted by telephone 4782 1308, or email secretary@homehillchamber.com. The President is Uli Liessmann of Liessmann & Sons Hardware, ph 47821612.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Finn
Marie Finn (Secretary)

2. No one was aware of the statistics on grey nomads.

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

Health Services

- Advertise safe walking routes in town
- Large sign in Comfort Stop or other central point with phone & address for chemist, doctors and hospital
- Have trouble with getting appointments with doctors
- Need dentist, physiotherapist in Home Hill and similar smaller towns
- Doctors are reluctant to take new patients.
- Chemists available on weekends in Home Hill – Sunday? Phone numbers?
- Medical centres in regional centres. Financial help for RFDS
- Unsure what is available
- Doctor, dentist, chemist
- Chemist for scripts
- Access to clean drinking water, more taps

Waste disposal sites

- Lack of rubbish bins near Comfort Stop
- OK – can be a queue
- More needed throughout Queensland
- Well signed dump sites needed everywhere
- Easily accessible at Home Hill but not well signed
- Easy in Home Hill, not everywhere in Queensland
- More dump points needed in other towns
- Grey Nomads would stop more often where there are good waste disposal sites
- Great dump point in Home Hill
- These are a must
- Good in Home Hill
- Very good
- Good here

Signage

- Invest in the positive culture of Driver Reviver strategy – instead of ‘Tired Drivers Die’ (negative) make signs which promote Driver Reviver spots as fun interactive or social places. They need to appeal to all age groups eg grey nomads, backpackers, business travellers. The staff should be paid and not

reliant on volunteers so that opening hours can be longer eg 6am to 6pm. Improve the locations eg at Bowen you can also walk down to the beach, although not well signed. Sandy Corner is hardly ever open and there is no real reason to stop there.

- We travel on roads other than Bruce Highway and signage in some areas is woeful. Does anyone check if signs have been turned the wrong way?
- Good in Home Hill, bad in some towns along the Bruce Highway.
- Poor to Home Hill – clear signs needed both ends, clearer for Comfort Stop, Wunjunga, Groper Ck. Ayr signs need attention.
- Larger and early, signs approx 15km out of town would help.
- Where is the bakery? Each town needs clear signs about such important locations.
- Good to see km to Home Hill on road signs north of Bowen – appreciated. Why is Ayr given preference in small road signs – A 20 eg? We were headed to the Comfort Stop at Home Hill and had to do the calculations.
- Comfort Stop signage needs to be clearer.
- More X km to next fuel signs along Highway 1 and others as well
- Bigger, clearer signs on off-main roads. Some new ones are excellent. If place names are large, make a bigger sign; don't cram the letters on a standard sign.
- No signage at Proserpine; inadequate parking at Mackay. Excellent parking for big rigs in Mareeba opposite supermarket.
- Signs for Comfort Stop could be improved as we, and others, have passed the turn before we saw it. A speed limit sign is needed to reduce the dust factor in Railway Av.
- Make it easier for people to find places- eg Charlie's Hill is poorly signed and not much when you get there.
- Good at Home Hill, but not always elsewhere.
- Home Hill signage is fine – I wish other towns were as good!
- Very good
- Small towns marked on the map are not signposted.
- Easy to find 'fantastic' Comfort Stop.

Other

- More bins are required around Comfort Stop.
- Public toilets lacking between Sarina and Home Hill.
- Bowen has good free booklet about all facilities.
- Driver Reviver stops open more during week. Sandy Corner not open.
- Signs are not always clear or early enough to avail ourselves of facilities.
- Deep gutters in too many places for fuel access eg Kuttabul.
- Secure caravan sites at the bottom to allow access to out-of the way or awkward steep climbs eg Inkerman Hill, Eungella
- Lay -by sites along Bruce Highway with shade – appreciate signs truck stops and RACQ warning signs.
- More 24 hr fuel access – many not open early enough. Some towns eg Monto, not open on weekends.
- Appreciate info on welcome signs eg population info. Boring signs sometimes indicate boring towns.
- Passing lanes every 10-15 km. Should be enough so that you know there will be one coming up soon and your mind stays relaxed, avoiding frustration or worse, road rage.
- Eliminate narrow bridges on Highway 1. Until these have been removed, adequate warning that a bridge is nearby.
- The further north and west you drive, the fewer public toilets; greater distances covered.

4. Is the current infrastructure for grey nomads in Home Hill adequate? Y / N

What additional infrastructure is required?

- We appreciate the free 48 hrs and spend in town to support the town.
- Excellent in Home Hill
- Everything you need is handy, and 48 hrs to do it
- We always make a point of supporting business in Home Hill when we overnight stop at the Comfort Stop
- The services & facilities you provide are wonderful – thank you. It is hard to imagine (or expect) there is anything else you could be doing.
- Footpaths around town; Rock Shop to Court House;
- Good that trees have been trimmed to above 5 m, preventing damage to RVs.
- Permission for parking on grass near railway line near Comfort Stop
- More toilets, showers along the Bruce Highway
- Tables & seating on grassed area near Comfort Stop
- Garbage bin concerns – not enough
- No garbage bins except for business ones
- Garbage concerns are health concerns
- Home Hill not adequate: 3 double power points on bench site for the number of people; 2 outdoor bbqs with power sockets; shelves under power outlets for toasters etc; not big enough parking area – have had to drive on in the past.; 3 showers ea for Males and Females. As word gets out and popularity increases, more such facilities will be required.
- Need better parking facilities – road is uneven
- Tables & seating on lawn area at rest site
- Caravan is on a slope.
- More parking for vans, big buses;
- Something to do in Home Hill – museum, mini cinema, public art eg sculpture, more seating, mill tours
- Home Hill fuel outlets have very deep run-off gutters – drag on road and footpath – gouges left.
- Excellent
- Grass on area to the north of Info Centre- gravel only now.
- The gentleman in the Info Centre gave us a lot of attention and help with info about the region.
- Plant lawn near Info Centre- only weeds here.
- Bird faeces on seats and tables in Comfort Stop. Has it been cleaned today?
- Have to place chocks under the wheels in the gutter.
- Last time, we were not impressed by comments in one shop that Aboriginal children were throwing stones at the vans. We stayed one night and were totally safe.
- Very good facilities x 2
- Signs to be double sided in case they are missed!
- Public toilets need to be cleaned eg Seaforth is a disgrace!
- Driver reviver stops should be open every day during the winter months when grey nomads are on the roads.
- Designated parking for bigger rigs at shopping centres (6 car spaces)
- Guthalungra (advertised) but not a public toilet
- Mareeba has a pullover bay for big rigs in town for easy shopping. Mackay has inadequate parking facilities

- Great bins along the Bruce Highway in Mackay Shire – clean shady tables and seats under shade
- Toilets at fishing spots
- Home Hill - friendly and welcoming. Childers has good parking for big rigs.
- Hughenden doesn't welcome travellers.

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

- More provision for off road stops. Home Hill is the best service we have come across so far. Top marks for such forward thinking. Thank you!
- Credits in National Parks are a good idea, as is booking online.
- 72 hrs sites good – only shop when we stay more than one night.
- Cost of sites; poor public amenities; locking of sites at 7pm; pets in camping area; 72 hrs sites; Carmila Bch needs expanding
- Cleanliness, presentation
- Make Showgrounds available for big rigs
- Kingaroy does not want motorhomes – town attitude travels
- National parks should be free to stay
- Solution to people abusing privilege of rest stops by overstaying limits
- Water is undrinkable at Mountainview Park, Giru.
- Set prices for powered/ unpowered sites. M/homes are self-contained, do not need utilities – prices could reflect this to encourage M/h to stop in parks.
- Do not need fancy pools etc. Even Show Grounds are OK when you are allowed to use them.
- Ongoing attacks by Caravan Park owners who cause councils to close free camp areas to the detriment of other businesses. Roads in some parks are too narrow, no drive-through or large sites available.
- Van parks complaining about rest areas. The cost of parks is too much for fixed / low income people.
- The inadequate provision, and closure, of free camps is a problem for us. The Home Hill facility is unique – many more would be wonderful
- Being a grey nomad with limited income, some caravan parks are too expensive (because of pool, playground, equipment etc. Need caravan parks with basics – power, water, dump point and laundry.
- Many caravan parks we are familiar with have closed. Where are the replacements?
- More pet-friendly sites
- Not enough free camping in Qld

6. *What are good methods of marketing the Home Hill community to grey nomad tourists?*

- Be friendly
- More signage
- Value in the name 'Comfort Stop'
- Internet; Veterans Affairs newsletter; Over 50s sites; info sites in other states
- Radio, internet, word of mouth, advertise in specific magazines
- Camps 5 is a must (mentioned 4 times) (supplied in some hired vans)
- Brochures in the Comfort Stop
- Advertise that this area is close to shopping, walking distance
- Friendly and welcoming

- Feature article in RACQ magazine with ad
- Comfortable rest stop, friendly locals
- Make a feature of the bridge and make it more accessible; mill tours
- Seniors Magazine, Courier Mail and Sunday Mail travel articles
- Magazine articles CMCA, Over 50s magazine
- Advertise in CMCA 'Wanderer', Camps 6; and other magazines
- Travel magazines, DVDs, good service, welcoming to travellers.
- Word of mouth from other travellers
- Ads in Motor-home and Caravan books
- We write for 'Caravan World' magazine and have twice included the Comfort Stop in travel articles.
- Cheap 'Grey Nomads' meals at pubs.
- 'Grey Nomads welcome' signs

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

- Most of us are retired and don't want to work.
- Change tax laws to assist pensioners to retain pension
- Allow pensioners to earn more money before affecting the pension.
- Just look at Barcaldine!
- Not everyone wants to be paid! Use volunteer websites which are easily accessible
- Have info available at Visitor Information Centre, aimed at grey nomads; perhaps a town committee to coordinate local possibilities and potential grey nomad helpers.
- Don't want to work but change tax penalties; too hard to volunteer, Blue card etc regulations
- Better tax arrangements;
- Not enough advertising about current programmes – reach out through professional retiree networks about volunteer possibilities.
- Programmes advertised as for backpackers
- Have a list of contacts at Info site with personal contact info; easy at Rockhampton, harder in Home Hill
- Highlight the need clearly in areas they stay
- Ease restrictions on what you can and can't do.
- Offer free camping and facilities where workers are needed
- Signage in the area re various shops in Home Hill
- Paid staff in Information centre familiar with local needs. An incentive eg, meals may appeal to some GNs to encourage them to assist
- Provide information on work available to the Information centres. Set up a web site, accessible from all Info Centres on work available in regions.
- Interaction with High School students about other job prospects – a coordinated job shop talk in different towns throughout the state at different set times.
- Advertise positions & needs
- Ads in newspapers
- Local radio stations