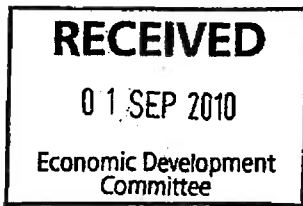


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Your reference
Our reference
Contact Officer Mr Alan Brown
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Mr Evan Moorhead MP
Chair
Economic Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

30 August 2010


Dear Mr Moorhead

Re: Inquiry into developing Queensland's Rural and Regional Communities through Grey Nomad Tourism

Please find enclosed Ipswich City Council's late submission to the above Inquiry as per your request.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Alan Brown on (07) 3810 6689.

Yours faithfully


Carl Wulff
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Inquiry into developing Queensland's Rural and Regional Communities through Grey Nomad Tourism

BACKGROUND:

Tourism is a key component to economic sustainability within Queensland, accounting for just under 5% (\$9.1 billion) of the States' gross domestic product as well as being a large employment generator by indirectly contributing a further \$6.4 billion. An integral part of the value of tourism to Queensland is the 'Grey Nomads' market, of which there are over 59,000 registered with the Campervan Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) with their membership growing by an estimated 800 registrations per month.

Ipswich City Council recognises the economic benefits of Grey Nomad tourism to the region and has been proactively working towards attracting this portion of the tourist market to our region as we feel that Ipswich offers a visitor experience that could benefit the Grey Nomads in particular.

For over two years, Council has been working with the private industry sector and Show Societies as well as investigating the opportunities of a Council operated park. With the assistance of the CMCA, we have been promoting the attractions of Ipswich and the Western Corridor Region with its proud heritage and historic attractions.

It is envisaged, promotion of this region will reduce congestion of our highways, by redirecting vans and motor homes onto arterial roads that will allow the Grey Nomads to explore experiences outside the capital cities while contributing to rural and regional economies.

ISSUES:

Black Water Dump Sites:

- 1) Council has investigated the placement of these facilities in an area within the region where Vans set camp and dispose of their black waste. This raises concerns for Council as these facilities cannot be monitored and managed seven days a week to prevent illegal dumping.
- 2) The location of the Bundamba Advanced Water Treatment Plant within the City of Ipswich, places additional conditions on the monitoring and testing of water flowing into the plant. The chemical composition of black water from motorhomes is generally unknown and presents further issues ensuring the quality of recycled water.
- 3) Ipswich City Council has investigated the option of installing Black Water Dump Sites over a secured septic system. This option necessitates an ongoing and unsustainable financial burden of the waste being removed and treated as industrial waste by a licensed waste disposal company.
- 4) The land and administration requirements needed, (including infrastructure management, enquiries, bookings and cash management) also make this a financial burden on council resources.

Large Commercial Holiday/Caravan Park Operator Issues:

- 1) Investment in time and money to secure suitable areas of land, infrastructure and on site management make the establishment of large Holiday/Caravan Parks within the City of Ipswich an unsustainable venture. These operators advise there is very little return on investment as they consider Ipswich to be too close to either the start or end of a journey. Operators rationale is that Ipswich is located within 40kms of Brisbane City where established overnight holiday/caravan park facilities already exist.
- 2) A lack of substantiated data on the full economic benefit of the Grey Nomad market impacts on commercial decisions to invest in the infrastructure and services by operators required to service this market.
- 3) Cost of services to sites (potable water and electricity), is considered a service that is now impacting on bottom line profits to operators due to large cost increases by State Government owned corporations. The operators advise that these costs are impacting on what they need to charge campervan and motorhome owners using their facilities. Grey Nomads have minimal potential to absorb these increases.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- 1) The Ipswich Show Society in establishing an 'over flow park', which allows for a maximum of 16 van sites. The Ipswich Show Society has invested in infrastructure with the installation of hard stands, black water dump site, power and the refurbishment of ablution blocks. The Show Society managed park received DERM approval to operate in 2009 and is proving popular but is limited to servicing demand.
- 2) Council staff have been working with a potential accommodation provider looking to establish a small motel and holiday/caravan park facility in the rural region of Rosewood. With a combination of assistance from Council and the securing of an appropriate site, we are close to having this operator lodge a development application through Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Suitable site identification, infrastructure development, ongoing park maintenance and marketing would all benefit by closer collaboration of local, state and federal governments, the CMCA and the private tourism sector. Improved communication, including sharing of research data between all parties would deliver a more cost effective product while attracting the Grey Nomad market and increasing the economic benefits to the Western Corridor region.