

MEDIA RELEASE

Money Motors Past St George

A recent trial of Low-Costing Camping in St George proved the town is missing out on capturing a lucrative tourism market because it is not an RV Friendly Town.

Balonne Shire Mayor, Richard Marsh, said the trial revealed the majority of RV travellers are bypassing St George because the town doesn't offer the type of camping they are looking for.

"The self-contained RVs are a market that do not usually stay in traditional caravan parks as they don't need the amenities and want a camp site that offers a more back to nature experience."

"We've seen Julia Creek create an RV friendly free camping site which injects around half a million dollars into their local economy annually, without impacting on their commercial caravan parks."

Cr Marsh said Council initially discussed trialling a low-cost RV camping site on the outskirts of St George but local caravan park operators raised concerns the competition could undermine their occupancy rates.

In the spirit of partnership, Council then offered to run the trial through the towns' four commercial caravan parks by way of a voucher system administered by the Visitor Information Centre (VIC).

Cr Marsh said travellers who specifically asked VIC staff for free camping were offered Council subsidised camping vouchers to be used at the local caravan parks.

From July to November this year, 209 travellers asked for free camping, 151 accepted a low-cost camping voucher, however only 59 of these were redeemed at the commercial caravan parks.

"This means 150 RV travellers, or 72% of enquires, were not converted into customers and left St George," Cr Marsh said.

"Feedback from the 58 travellers who refused vouchers included reports that there are now online reviews telling travellers not to stop in St George because there isn't any free camping."

Cr Marsh said the trial showed that low-cost camping didn't hurt the commercial caravan parks because the self-contained RVs are a separate market segment.

He said figures released by the Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) last year, show there are 620,000 RV's in Australia spending around \$770 a week in the towns they visit.

"RVs are a huge market and we have to give them a reason to stop, stay and spend in our town."

For more information:

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