RV + Camping Strategy

Townsville City Council
May 2020

Townsville

I'm an old grey nomad,
I've travelled much of this great brown land,
A really great place in Australia,
Is at Townsville - on The Strand.

The Strand is such an interesting place,
And can be one that's full of surprises,
Folks jogging, running, perhaps walking the dog,
And they come in all shapes and sizes.

They come, no doubt, from varying occupations,
Some blue collar, some white and many scholars,
To enjoy The Strand, the boardwalk and Kissing Point,
The Council has obviously spent millions of dollars.

And the folk are mostly friendly,
In that good old Australian way,
With a passing smile or a nod of the head,
Or a big grin and a big 'gooday'!!

And what a magnificent view for all,
It sure gave us a thrill,
The panoramic vision for all to see,
From atop of Castle Hill.

We come here each year from Tamworth,
The cold winter at home is quite prolific,
So we pack up and 'escape' to Townsville,
Where the tropical winter is just terrific!!

We settle in for winter,
Enjoy the 'comings and goings' from the aerodrome,
And simply live our lives in Townsville,
Which has become our 'home away from home'.

So, if you want to have a nice winter,
Then take my advice, old mate,
You'd better head for Townsville,
The winter climate there is great!!

Don Pannan, 5 December 2019

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Acknowledgment of Country

Townsville City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Townsville – the Wulgurukaba of Gurambilbarra and Yunbenun; and Bindal people. We pay our respects to their cultures, their ancestors and their Elders – past and present – and all future generations.

Mayoral Foreword

As the largest city in North Australia, Townsville is in prime position as the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, world-heritage listed rainforests and the Australian Outback, cementing itself as a premiere drive tourism destination.

Research shows that the camping and RV market is a growing sector of the Australian tourism market. In a country as unique and diverse as ours it makes sense to travel by means of drive tourism.

Townsville City Council offers a number of campgrounds in the Townsville region which have proved popular with both locals and visitors over the years.

The Townsville City Council RV and Camping Strategy has identified Townsville's key user groups, our current and future market and works to relieve community pressure while increasing visitation numbers and overall spending of RV and camping visitors.

I look forward to working with our community to maximise opportunities for both locals and visitors to the Townsville region, working towards making Townsville the highlight of many traveller's journeys.

Cr Jenny Hill
Mayor of Townsville

The Townsville region has a rich natural diversity, cultural heritage and lifestyle which is greatly valued by the community and visitors. Townsville boasts:

TROPICAL SAVANNAS
THAT MEET THE COAST

A SOUTHERN GATEWAY
TO THE WET TROPICS
WORLD HERITAGE AREA

CONNECTIONS TO THE
GREAT BARRIER REEF
WORLD HERITAGE AREA

ANCIENT GONDWANA
RAINFORESTS

Executive Summary

Recreational Vehicle (RV) and camping travel is one of the fastest-growing tourism sectors in Australia. Local and international tourists in Australia travelling in RVs or camping are estimated to have increased by approximately 78% over the last 10 years, from approximately 6 million tourists in 2009 to over 10.5 million tourists in 2019. During this time, RV and camping tourism visitation numbers in Townsville have doubled[1] and more can be done to encourage greater numbers of visitors to stop in Townsville, stay longer and engage with local experiences to make Townsville the highlight of their trip to North Queensland.

Data has been gathered through a review of relevant Government and industry publications as well as a survey carried out by Council of RV and camping tourists in Townsville from July to September 2019. The findings indicate that these travellers have a range of different purposes, budgets and vehicles which is reflected in the different types of campgrounds they seek. There is a portion of the market that prefers caravan parks for facilities such as power, toilets or showers. However, there is also a growing group looking to get back to nature, go without such facilities and pay a lower cost. The majority of RV and camping tourists stay in a variety of types of campgrounds during each trip.

To reflect the requirements of travellers and remain competitive with surrounding destinations, Townsville needs to offer a range of campground options. The Townsville Camping Options Matrix, introduced in Section 3, categorises Townsville's mix of camping options into three different types:

- Self-contained campground
- Basic campground
- Commercial campground

Currently, a range of facilities are available in Townsville across these three categories, from basic campgrounds offering a bush camping experience to commercial caravan parks with resort-style facilities. Council manages seven campgrounds in the northern part of the region.

Supply and demand analysis of Townsville's RV and camping facilities has been carried out in Section 3 which indicated most accommodation options in the region are at or near to full capacity during the peak months of June to August.

Section 4 outlines various options to provide additional supply.

This strategy recommends actions to maximise sustainable economic benefits from RV and camping tourism in Townsville, with the overall goal of increasing visitation numbers, Length Of Stay, and spend of RV and camping visitors to the Townsville region.

Recommendations to grow the RV and camping tourist market are outlined in Section 7, in line with three themes:

- Encourage private sector growth to diversify camping options
- Maintain sustainability of Council campgrounds
- Enhance RV and camping visitor experiences

1 Tourism Research Australia, 2019

01

Introduction

Townsville's location on the junction of two major tourist drive routes, the Pacific Coast Way (Bruce Highway) and the Overlander's Way (Flinders Highway) attracts thousands of drive tourists every year. However, more can be done to encourage visitors to stop in Townsville, stay longer and engage with more experiences to make Townsville the highlight of their trip to North Queensland.

Camping and recreational vehicle tourism is a fast-growing sector of the tourist market in Australia. The term RV includes caravans, motorhomes, campervans and a variety of similar vehicles used to both travel and provide accommodation for the occupants. Visitors making trips in RVs in Australia are estimated to have increased by approximately 78% over the last 10 years, from approximately 6 million visitors in 2009 to over 10.5 million visitors in 2019[2]. The Queensland Government's tourism planning initiatives, including the Advancing Tourism Plan, recognise drive tourism as an important pillar of Queensland's tourism offering[3].

Accompanying this growth in the market has been technological improvements in RVs enabling many travellers to be self-contained. Modern RVs often have onboard facilities traditionally provided by a caravan park, including toilet and shower facilities, storage of grey and black water and power generators. The popularity of such vehicles has resulted in a growing demand for free and low-cost camping areas as an alternative to caravan parks, with many regions around Australia adapting to these changing preferences.

2 Tourism Research Australia, 2019
3 Advance Queensland 2016, p.7

Council Campgrounds

For over 50 years Council has provided campgrounds in the Townsville region for both locals and visitors. Seven campgrounds, located within day-use parks in the northern part of the region, provide approximately 90 unpowered camping sites with toilets, potable water, rubbish bins and picnic facilities to RV travellers and campers.

These campgrounds are free and have a time limit of 48 hours for stays, with the exception of Lake Paluma where a charge of approximately $22.00 per night is applied and stays are bookable for up to 12 consecutive nights. Townsville's campgrounds are popular with both locals and travellers, particularly over the winter months. Three dump points for disposal of grey and black water from RVs are located at the Bluewater, Rollingstone and Balgal Beach Foreshore campgrounds (a fourth dump point is also located at Ross River Dam Park, however, this is not a designated campground).

LOCATIONS OF COUNCIL CAMPGROUNDS:

1. Saunders Park, Saunders Beach
2. Bluewater Park, Bluewater
3. Toomulla Park, Toomulla Beach
4. Vincent 'Bushy' Parker Park, Rollingstone
5. Balgal Beach Foreshore (Fisherman's Landing, Balgal Beach)
6. Justin Street Park, Balgal Beach
7. Lake Paluma

1.1 Background

Purpose

This strategy has been prepared to establish a future direction for the provision of RV and camping options in Townsville, to enhance the experience of tourists and support the growth of local businesses.

Objectives

The following principles outlined within this document support the growth of the Townsville RV and camping market:

- Provide a range of equitable camping options to appeal to many types of tourists with different budgets
- Support local businesses in tourism and associated industries to grow economic benefits for the region
- Connect tourists staying in Council-managed campgrounds with Townsville's range of affordable and interesting tourist experiences to make Townsville the highlight of their trip
- Promote environmental sustainability in new tourism opportunities so residents and visitors can enjoy and positively contribute to our scenic, diverse and natural environment.

Scope

This document relates to RV and camping tourism in the Townsville Local Government Area. As further clarified in Section 2, this includes a range of self-contained and non-self-contained vehicles, such as caravans, motorhomes, campervans, camper trailers, tents and swags. This report does not relate to other types of tourist accommodation, including, for example:

- Hotels, motels, resorts
- Cabins or permanent housing within caravan parks
- Roadside rest areas within road reserves (see note in Section 3).

4 This document replaced the Townsville North Queensland Destination Tourism Plan 2013 – 2020.

Alignment with Local Policies

This plan has been compiled in alignment with overarching plans for the region. Further overview of Queensland legislation and policies relevant to RV and camping tourism is provided in ***Appendix 1: Regulatory Framework.***

The ***Townsville City Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024*** sets out Council's priorities, commitments and operations. This RV and camping strategy relates to the following:

GOAL 1: A PROSPEROUS CITY

Manage the Townsville Tourism Policy to focus on increasing regional visitations

GOAL 2: A CITY FOR PEOPLE

Ensure sustainable development and access to natural areas for recreational use

GOAL 3: A CLEAN AND GREEN CITY

Create a sustainable future for Townsville through the protection, maintenance and enhancement of our unique, natural and built environment

> **The ongoing management and use of Council campgrounds, as well as future provision of environmentally sensitive tourist accommodation, aligns with these goals.**

The ***Community Plan Townsville 2011 – 2021*** provides a vision for the people of Townsville. Key Guiding Principles relevant to this strategy include:

- Providing active and passive sport and recreation opportunities
- Valuing our natural environment and urban green spaces
- A city that sustains and prospers from its environment

The ***Townsville North Queensland Product and Experience Development Plan 2019-2024,*** compiled by Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL), outlines the key actions for tourism growth within the Townsville North Queensland region (including the Townsville, Charters Towers, Hinchinbrook, Burdekin and Palm Island Local Government areas). This document outlines an analysis of the key marketing messages, target audiences and proposed products and experiences to increase visitation.[4]

1.2 Consultation and Key Stakeholders

During the preparation of this draft strategy, discussions have been ongoing with the owners and management of caravan parks in the Townsville region, local community groups in proximity to Council campgrounds and RV and camping visitors to Townsville.

Key stakeholders include:

- Residents and community groups, particularly in suburbs close to Council campgrounds
- RV and camping visitors to Townsville and North Queensland
- Tourism operators and affiliated businesses
- Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL)
- Commercial caravan park owners and management
- The Caravanning and Motor Home Association of Australian (CMCA)
- Caravanning Queensland
- Tourism Events Queensland
- State Government, including Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)
- North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (NQROC)

Community Engagement

Council undertook a two-staged community engagement process during preparation of this RV and Camping Strategy to learn more about the priorities of travellers visiting Townsville as well as to gauge the sentiment of locals.

STAGE 1 CAMPING SURVEY

In July – September 2019 Council conducted a survey of travellers visiting the region during the peak camping season. Over 480 responses were received which gave insight into the priorities and motivations of these tourists. Please refer to Section 2.1 for an overview of these findings.

STAGE 2 DRAFT REPORT CONSULTATION

Council released the draft RV and Camping Strategy for public feedback from 20 January 2020 through to 09 March 2020. The roll-out strategy for the consultation included utilising a number of different mediums. Council's Have your Say platform was used as the key point of contact where all participants could read and provide feedback on the draft document. Corflute signage, social media posts and media releases were used to target different demographics. Four on-site consultation sessions were held where residents were invited to attend and provide feedback in person, these were located at:

- Bluewater Community Centre: Friday 31 January
- Fisherman's Landing (Balgal Beach): Saturday 1 February
- Toomulla Park (Toomulla Beach): Saturday 1 February
- Saunders Beach Community Centre: Sunday 8 March

This generated engagement of:

255 unique submissions

6,700 social media views*

A FULL CONSULTATION REPORT IS AVAILABLE AT HAVEYOURSAY.TOWNSVILLE.QLD.GOV.AU

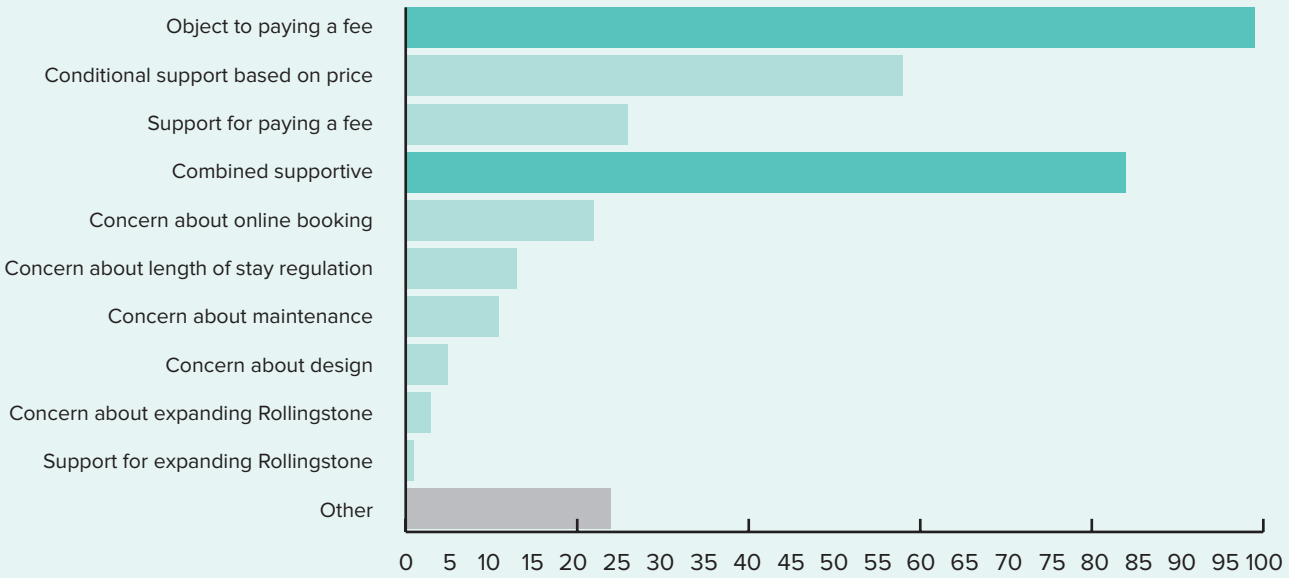
Member-based Organisations

Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia Limited (CMCA) is a membership-based club for travellers in RVs. The CMCA advocates for low-cost accommodation for self-contained vehicles and has developed several policies guiding the behaviour of members, including the Self Contained Vehicle Policy, Leave No Trace Code of Conduct and Bush Camping Code. The CMCA has also established an "RV Friendly Town" scheme to promote locations to members that provide specific services for self-contained RVs. In 2008, the Townsville Local Government Area was endorsed as an "RV Friendly Town."

Caravanning Queensland represents the Caravan Park Association of Queensland, the key organisation representing commercial caravan park owners, and the Caravan Trade and Industries Association of Queensland, comprising retailers, manufacturers and associates of the RV industry. Caravanning Queensland also has an advocacy role in promoting tourism and commercial caravan parks. An associated program is the Community Welcomes Recreational Vehicles initiative, which promotes locations that accommodate recreational vehicles.

Topics raised in submissions

The analysis of submissions identified the following key topics:



Please note: above figure indicates number of identified topics of concern and is not a representation of total number of respondents.
*Approximate Social Media Reach

02

Overview of RV and Camping Market

The RV and camping tourist market is very diverse, with a wide range of trip purposes, budgets, destinations and time spent on the road.

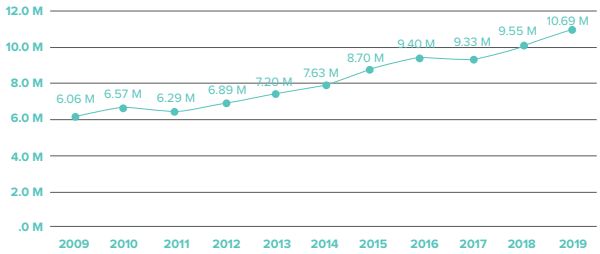
RV and camping travellers range from those with no fixed address who spend all year on the road, to retirees spending over six months enjoying Australia, to international travellers having a once-in-a-lifetime Australian holiday, to a local family camping in the region for a weekend.

Overall, the number of tourists travelling in RVs or camping has steadily grown over the past 10 years to 2019.[5]

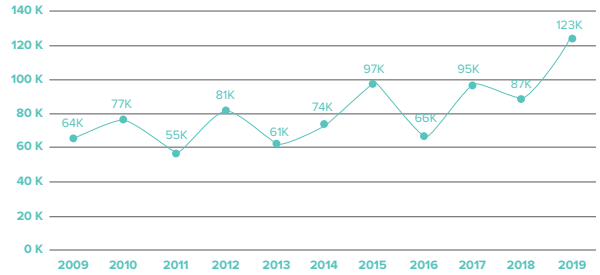
Opportunity

The data to the right indicates there is opportunity to encourage tourists in Queensland to stop in Townsville, particularly those tourists passing through enroute to other locations along the Bruce or Flinders Highways.

Total RV and Camping Travellers, Australia
2009-2019 year end June (figures in millions). Source: TRA

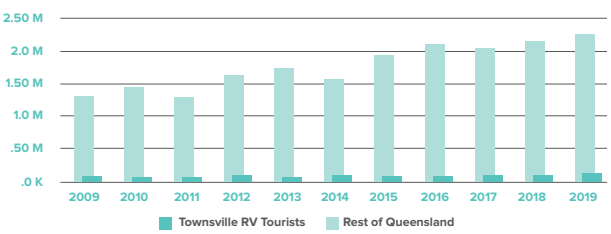


Total RV and Camping Travellers, Townsville LGA
2009-2019 year end June (figures in thousands). Source: TRA



RV visitation numbers in Townsville have doubled over the last 10 years, despite being subject to seasonal fluctuations in line with wider visitation patterns. (Source: TRA)

RV and Camping Tourists in Townsville and QLD
2009-2019 year end June (figures in millions). Source: TRA



This data refers to the number of tourists who spent a night in Queensland compared with tourists who spent a night in Townsville.

5 Tourism Research Australia, 2019

Type of Vehicle

The type of vehicle and accommodation used by travellers influences what facilities they need in a site. The rise in self-contained vehicles has led to increasing numbers of travellers looking for campgrounds with fewer services, as their vehicle can provide facilities traditionally provided by caravan parks.

NON SELF-CONTAINED VEHICLES AND TENTS

Recreational vehicles which generally include sleeping and cooking facilities, but are unlikely to include toilet and shower, including:

- Caravans
- Camper-trailers
- Campervans
- Vans or people movers converted to provide on board sleeping
- Tents (eg. rooftop tents, standalone tents, swags)
- Occupants would generally require daily services including toilets, showers, potable water and access to electricity.

SELF-CONTAINED VEHICLES

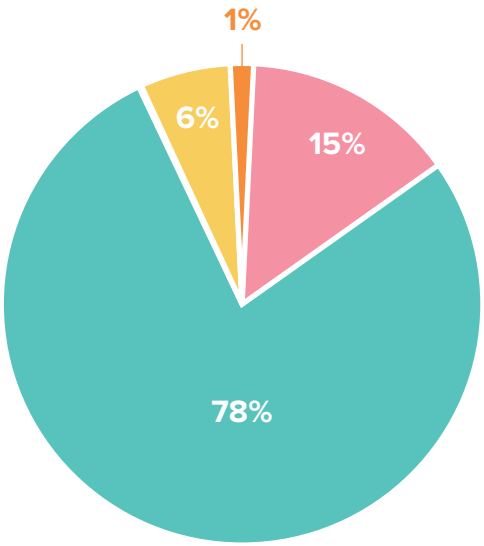
Recreational vehicles with cooking and sleeping facilities and the capacity to contain all waste matter, including grey/black water, within the vehicle.

- Generally, these vehicles have a toilet, shower, kitchen sink, freshwater tank, grey and black water tank and may have means of generating electricity (eg. solar panels)
- Fastest growing sector of the market. Most new caravans on the market are fully self-contained
- Non-self-contained vehicles can be retrofitted to provide self-contained facilities (eg. portable toilet, portable shower etc)

Fully self-contained setups generally only require services every few days eg. rubbish bin, potable water to fill tanks and dump point to empty grey/black water tanks.

2.1 Townsville 2019 Camping Survey Findings

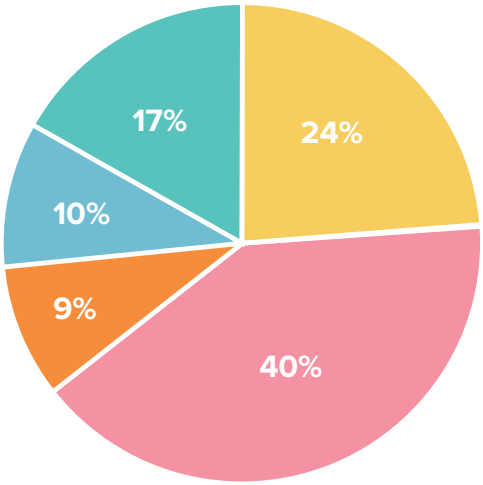
Council conducted a survey of RV and camping travellers in the region over 10 weeks during the 2019 winter high season, from 5 July until 15 September 2019. The survey was marketed to a wide range of travellers through advertising in caravan parks, free and low-cost campgrounds and local caravan and camping businesses. Over 480 responses were received, with 33% of responses received via hard copy and 67% of responses received online.



Type of vehicle used?

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)

- Self-contained vehicle
- Tent/swag
- Recreational vehicle (without amenities)
- Other



Where respondents stayed in Townsville

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)

- Mix
- Commerical
- Free
- Low cost
- Other

"Mix" includes respondents who indicated they stayed in multiple places in Townsville, both free and commercial

"Low cost" refers to campgrounds generally <$20 p/ night, eg. Crystal Creek (Queensland Parks and Wildlife) campgrounds, or Paluma Dam

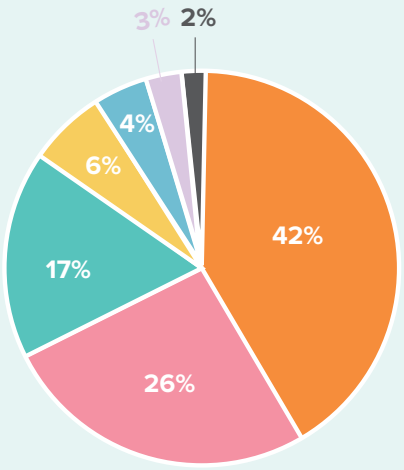
"Other" includes stays with family and friends

Key themes from traveller survey

OVERALL THEMES FROM SURVEY RESPONSES INCLUDED:	Travellers have **varying priorities, budgets and length of time** on the road	Council's **campgrounds are greatly appreciated** by many travellers, who in turn, promote Townsville by word of mouth
Overstays and **overcrowding** in Council campgrounds **causes tension** with residents	Concerns about **contribution of RV and camping tourists to Townsville's economy**	Commercial **caravan parks uncomfortable** with the presence of Council campgrounds
Opportunity for **more promotion** of **Townsville tourist attractions** to RV and camping tourists	A portion of **travellers would not stop in Townsville** if **low-cost or free options weren't available**	The **best location for free sites** is close to businesses and opportunities to spend, out of close proximity to caravan parks

AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE SURVEY FINDINGS AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE QUEENSLAND CAMPING OPTIONS TOOLKIT, THE MAJORITY OF RV AND CAMPING TOURISTS STAY IN A MIX OF COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL (FREE OR LOW-COST) ACCOMMODATION. THERE IS ALSO A PORTION OF THE MARKET WHO ONLY STAY IN NON-COMMERCIAL SITES AND WILL BYPASS A DESTINATION IF THAT OPTION IS NOT AVAILABLE.

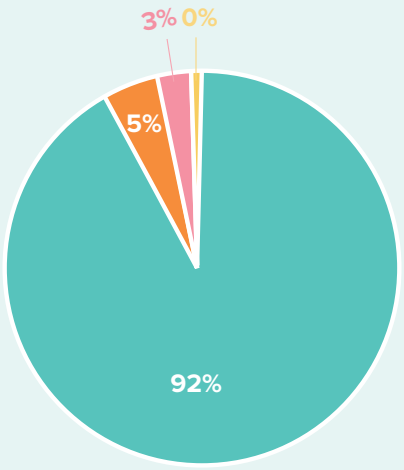
Peak Months: June - August



Origin of RV tourists within Australia

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)

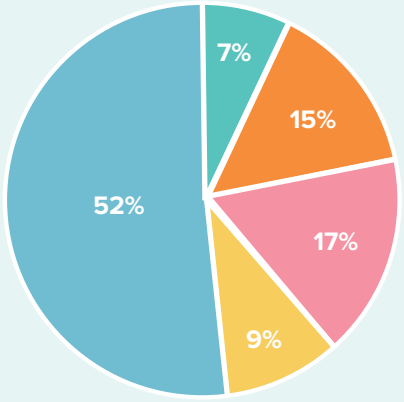
- QLD
- WA
- NSW
- TAS
- VIC
- ACT
- SA



Origin of RV Tourists

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)

- Australian
- European
- New Zealand/Asia/USA
- Not specified



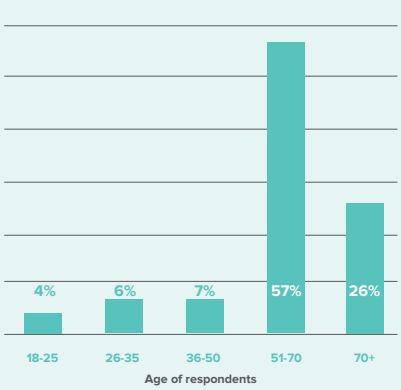
Average length of stay in Townsville

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)

- 1 night
- 2 nights
- 3 nights
- 4 nights
- 5+ nights

AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)



Opportunity:
Townsville is attracting a lower than average number of younger tourists. As such an opportunity exists to encourage other sectors of the RV market to spend time in Townsville, including families with children and international travellers.

APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH RESPONDENTS SPENT

(Source: TCC Camping Survey 2019)

Opportunity:
Increased direct marketing of Townsville's tourist attractions to RV and camping travellers, particularly in Council campgrounds would work towards enhancing visitor experiences in Townsville and increase benefits for local businesses.

2.2 Main Types of RV and Camping Travellers

The *Townsville North Queensland Product and Experience Development Plan 2019-2024* identifies 50+ aged Empty Nester travellers as a major target market for tourism in North Queensland.

Grey Nomads

PROFILE

- Biggest portion of the market
- Predicted to grow further with increasing numbers of retirees in the next ten years
- Range of budgets
- Tech savvy
- Interested in local history, rural areas, nature, which Townsville offers
- Strong 'word of mouth' communication networks

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

- Connection to history, family, friends and local communities
- A relaxing stay

Young Families

PROFILE

- Growing market
- Interested in outdoors, hands-on, interactive activities
- Looking for meaningful experiences for children
- Simultaneously seeking opportunities for downtime for adults while children engaged
- Travel times constrained by school holidays/peak periods
- Often use camper trailers, tents, swags or small caravans

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

- Top up the basics
- A mix of education, relaxation with nature-based experiences
- Safety
- Activities for children

Young Internationals

PROFILE

- Generally, visit Townsville as part of a longer trip around Australia
- Willing to pay for standout hero experiences (eg. reef trip, skydiving)
- Looking for adventure and natural 'uniquely Australia' experiences eg. waterfalls, wildlife
- Not deterred by travel in summer months

WHAT DO THEY WANT?

- Blue skies, beach and rainforest
- Unique experiences they can't have at home
- Potentilally scoping regional work for visa extension

03

Existing Camping Infrastructure

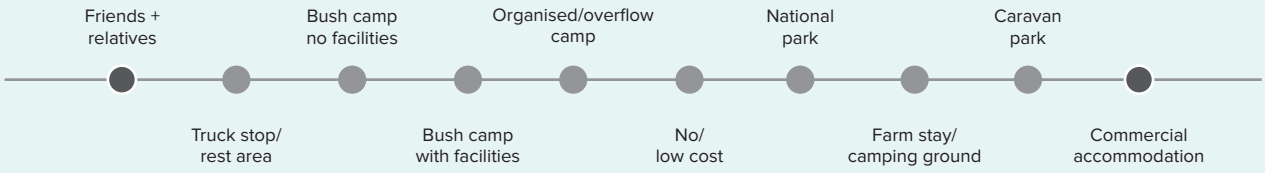
3.1 Camping Options

The Queensland Government's guidance document for Councils and the camping industry, the *Queensland Camping Options Toolkit*[7] recommends regions offer a range of different types of campgrounds. The camping options available in Queensland, ranging from bush camps with no facilities to commercial parks, are identified in the scale below.

RV and camping tourists travel for a range of different purposes, lengths of time and with different budgets. While there is a portion of the market that seeks caravan parks for facilities such as power, toilets or showers, there is another portion of the market looking to get back to nature that does not require such facilities and are willing to pay a lower cost.

FOR TOWNSVILLE TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE WITH THE REST OF QUEENSLAND'S TOURIST OFFERING, IT IS NECESSARY TO CATER FOR A RANGE OF DIFFERENT CUSTOMERS BY PROVIDING A RANGE OF DIFFERENT CAMPING OPTIONS.

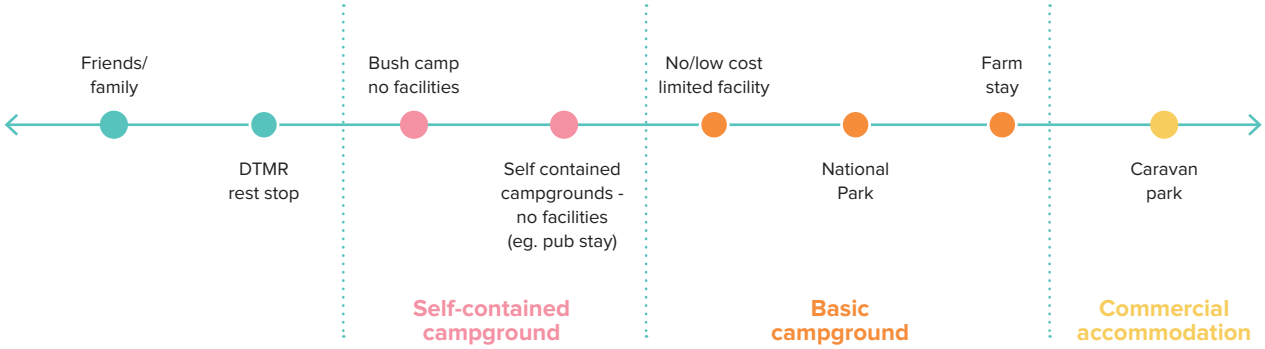
Scope of Camping Options – Queensland Camping Options Toolkit



"It is clear from most available research that many travellers mix and match their accommodation choices. Therefore, to be competitive nationally, Queensland needs to meet the needs of both commercial and non-commercial campers. Ignoring the needs of the non-commercial camping market may encourage that sector to camp in an unmanaged way, creating a range of issues for the communities of Queensland.[8]

7 DTME 2014
8 DTME 2014, p. 14

The camping options available in Townsville are depicted on the following scale:



Roadside Rest Areas

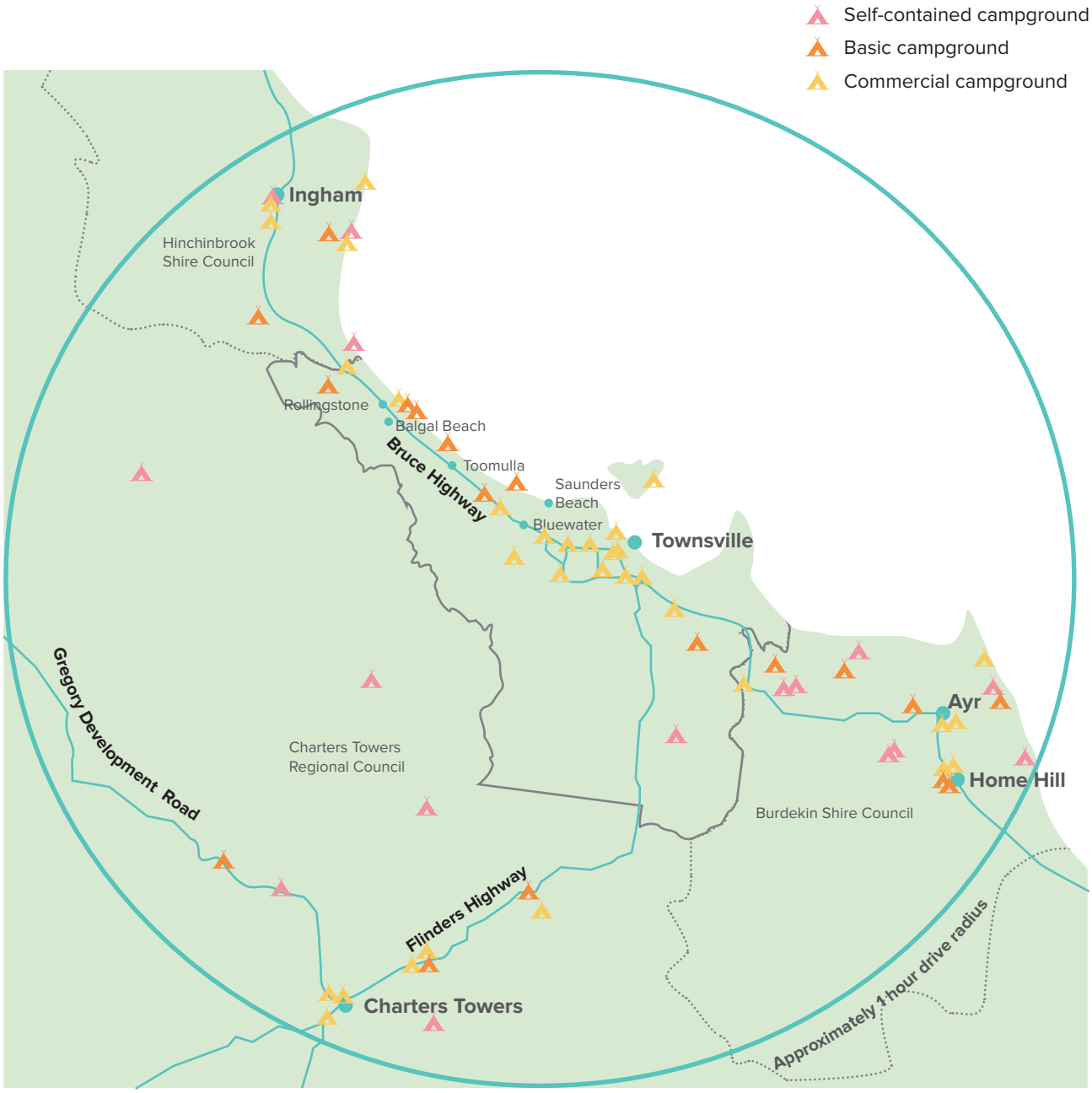
Rest areas on the side of roads are generally provided and maintained by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR). These locations vary in the facilities provided, from a simple place to park and briefly rest, to sites with water, toilets, bins and, in some cases, showers. These facilities are primarily intended for fatigue management rather than tourist accommodation and as such have not been included in this strategy. More information is available in the *Best Practice Guide for Roadside Rest Areas in Queensland.*[9]

9 DTME, 2014a

3.2 Camping Location Map

Camping options in the Townsville region and a one hour radius have been mapped below to illustrate the spread of facilities, grouped into the categories identified in the Townsville camping options matrix: self-contained campground, basic campground and commercial campground. Campgrounds within a one hour radius of Townsville have been included as they are considered to present a viable alternative to travellers if Townsville does not provide their preferred accommodation option.

Campgrounds within a 1 hour drive from Townsville



3.3 Existing Demand Patterns

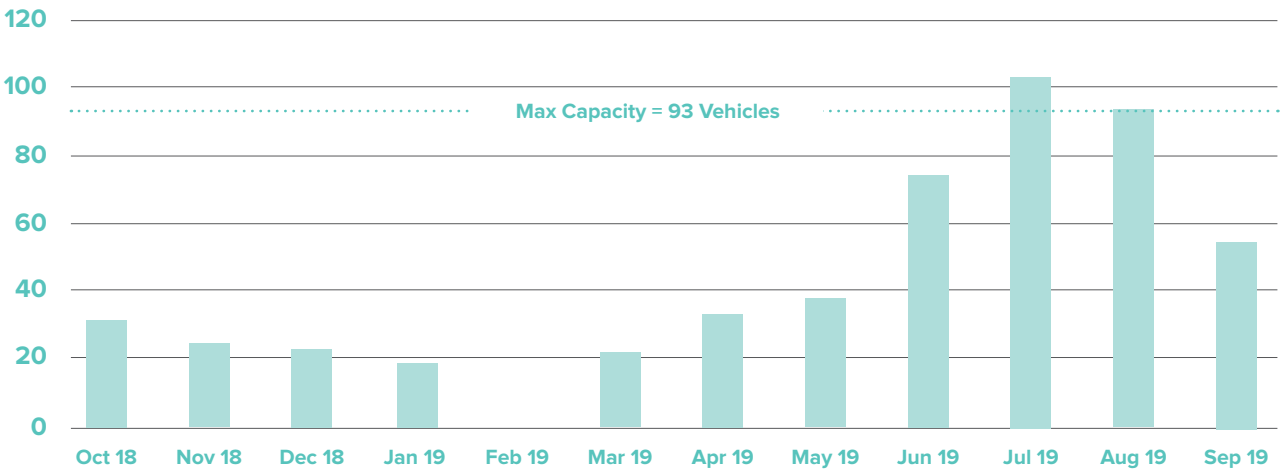
Caravan parks in the region have anecdotally indicated they are generally at or near full occupancy for the peak months of June to August, with the shoulder months of May and September also receiving strong visitor numbers. This is attributed to travellers attracted by Townsville's pleasant winter climate. In particular, sites are busiest during major events in Townsville (such as the Supercars Townsville 400 generally held in July), public holidays and school holidays.

Occupancy drastically drops off during the summer months. These occupancy fluctuations are a general pattern for the North Queensland tourism industry and represent a challenge for commercial operators. However, overall the demand is so strong in peak months that additional accommodation is required for this market to grow.

In recent years, the six Council campgrounds in the Northern Beaches have seen increased visitation, particularly during the high season, placing pressures on surrounding communities. As the occupancy average illustrates, the demand is concentrated in the peak periods between June and August. These occupancy counts do not include the campground at Lake Paluma.

COUNCIL CAMPGROUNDS - NORTHERN BEACHES

Average Daily Occupancy 2018-19 (Source: TCC Staff Records)



Note: No inspections were carried out in February 2019 due to staff re-prioritisation on flood related tasks.

3.4 Existing Supply

A review of the number of RV and Camping sites within the Townsville Local Government area (LGA) has been undertaken. Sites have been categorised in line with the Townsville camping options matrix.

Camping Option	Locations	Powered sites	Non-powered sites	Total	Percentage
Self-contained campground	1	0	20	20	1%
Basic campground	11	0	191	191	12%
Commercial campground	15	1,093	Approximately 300 (some providers have overflow areas)	1,393	87%
Total	**27**	**1,093**	**511**	**1,604**	

These counts were obtained from discussions with operators of commercial parks and interpretation of site plans. The self-contained campground and all commercial campgrounds are privately managed, while all the basic campgrounds in the region are operated by Council or the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS).

Opportunity

Self-contained campgrounds are underrepresented in Townsville, particularly given the growing preference of travellers for self-contained vehicles. The opportunity exists to expand camping facilities specifically available for self-contained vehicles, either in new locations or as extensions to existing caravan parks.

Long Vehicle Day Parking

It has been identified that there is a lack of parking available close to the Townsville CBD for long vehicles or cars towing caravans. Provision of long vehicle parking is important to make it easy for travellers to access shopping, the Visitor Information Centre and tourist attractions in and around Townsville city.

04

Options for Addressing Increased Demand

On certain occasions, particularly during special events in these months, there is a shortage of RV and camping accommodation across the region. The current supply of sites at these times does not allow an opportunity for the market to grow during these peak months.

4.1 Cost-Benefit Review of Council Campgrounds

An analysis has been completed outlining the costs and benefits of operating the existing Northern Beaches campgrounds (excluding Lake Paluma). The current occupancy rate of approximately 20% per year provides more than $1.2 million annual benefit to the Townsville economy, based on spending behaviour indicated in the Council survey. Cost-benefit analysis suggests that for every dollar spent by Council maintaining the campgrounds, the community received approximately $9.00 benefit.

These costings for the campgrounds in the Northern Beaches recognise that public park facilities exist in all locations that are used year-round by day visitors. While some additional services are required during periods of peak camping demand (eg. extra amenities cleaning and rubbish collection services), most maintenance costs are incurred year-round even when the campgrounds are not occupied (eg. gardens, barbeques, water taps etc). Accordingly, the total cost of the parks has been proportioned to the costs attributed directly to camping.

Sustainability of Council Campgrounds – a Fee for Campers

Council-managed campgrounds, other than Lake Paluma, are currently offered free to travellers, with no recovery of operating costs. For the long-term sustainability of these Campgrounds, and to level the playing field with commercial operators.

The facilities offered fit within the category of a 'basic campground' on the camping options matrix, and a fee in the order of $10 - 15 is considered appropriate. Calculation of the appropriate fee would consider market rates for other campgrounds with similar facilities, balanced with the need to provide ratepayers with an acceptable recovery of costs spent on the campgrounds.

Research from similar campgrounds around Australia indicates that the introduction of a small fee is unlikely to significantly impact occupancy of the campgrounds. While a small proportion of travellers prefer to only stay in free sites, the majority of travellers are willing to pay a small fee to contribute to the upkeep of facilities such as toilets, rubbish bins and potable water, which are provided at all Council campgrounds.

A review of campgrounds in surrounding regions also indicated that where free sites are available, they generally do not have toilets, potable water and/or rubbish bins. In particular, the review did not indicate any other beachfront campgrounds with facilities (such as toilets) that are offered for free on the east coast of Queensland[10].

OPTION 4.1.1

Implement a camping fee at Council campgrounds at Saunders Park, Bluewater Park, Toomulla Park, Vincent 'Bushy' Parker Park, Balgal Beach Foreshore (Fisherman's Landing) and Justin Street Park, Balgal Beach. Fee to be in line with the Townsville camping options matrix .

Online Booking System

The six campgrounds in the Northern Beaches have a total capacity of 93 vehicles per night. In recent years demand in peak periods has led to overcrowding and instances of campers overstaying the 48-hour camping time limit.

Implementing a booking system to regulate occupancy and assist enforcement.

OPTION 4.1.2

Implement an online booking system for council owned camping grounds

10 Wikicamps Australia, 2019.

4.2 Maximise Capacity of Council Campgrounds

A review of the seven Council campgrounds was undertaken to inform the maximum safe capacity of each campground. This review considered the safety of campers and ease of vehicle maneuvering and, as a result reduced capacity and types of vehicles in some sites.

A draft concept plan for the site indicates that approximately 20 additional caravans could be accommodated at the southern part of the park.

The expansion area would be limited to self-contained vehicles due to proximity from amenities.

Vincent "Bushy" Park is located in close proximity to a number of local businesses to encourage local spend, the campground is not adjacent to any residential housing and is separated over eight kilometres from the nearest commercial caravan park.

OPTION 4.2.1

Expand the campground capacity at Vincent Bushy Parker Park Rollingstone.

PROPOSED ROLLINGSTONE CAMPGROUND EXPANSION

4.3 Campground Overflow Policies

The Queensland Camping Options Toolkit recommends overflow campgrounds as a short-term option to cater for demand if all existing campgrounds in town are at capacity. Communication between accommodation providers would flag when all locations are full, which would trigger the opening of an overflow facility.

This is often a Council-managed self-contained or basic campground.

OPTION 4.3.1

Development a campground overflow policy.

4.4 Encourage Private Sector to Provide Additional Accommodation

Planning Considerations

A development approval under the Townsville City Plan 2014 is required for proposals involving expansion of existing caravan parks or development of new RV and camping facilities. The Townsville City Plan 2014 does not currently differentiate between the scale or facilities proposed, with requirements generally modelled on large commercial tourist parks. It can be complex to navigate for caravan park owners wishing to diversify their business or for developers of self-contained campgrounds.

The Queensland ***Next Generation Tourism Planning Guideline (2014)*** provides guidance about prioritising tourism uses within planning schemes and would provide direction for an amendment to the Townsville City Plan 2014 regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds.

An amendment would support local businesses providing a range of accommodation options for the RV and camping tourism sector. Changes to the Townsville City Plan 2014 are made in conjunction with a review of applicable fees and charges.

OPTION 4.4.1
Investigate amendments to the Townsville City Plan 2014 regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds in line with the different scales of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix

OPTION 4.4.2
Investigate amendments to the annual Townsville Infrastructure Charges Resolution 2019 regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds in line with the different scales of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix

OPTION 4.4.3
Investigate amendments to planning and development Fees and Charges regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds in line with the different scales of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix

OPTION 4.4.4
Amendment to Local Laws to align with the Townsville camping options matrix and infrastructure requirements

OPTION 4.4.5
Maintain communications with private sector and accommodation providers to review policy amendments and options for suitability with industry

Other Approaches to Campground Regulation

FRASER COAST:

Fraser Coast Regional Council have taken proactive measures to grow the RV and camping tourist sector within their region. The ***Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014*** includes additional administrative definitions to differentiate between campgrounds that cater only to self-contained vehicles.

Self-contained vehicle -
A vehicle that has onboard cooking and sleeping facilities and can:

a. hold freshwater; and
b. store greywater and/or blackwater.

Self-contained recreational vehicle ground -
Land designated and managed for the purpose of short-term lodging in self-contained recreational vehicle (RVs), motorhomes and caravans. The use does not include tent camping, cabins or constructed guest facilities such as sports courts, swimming pools or kiosk[11].

These definitions have allowed the planning scheme to lower the level of assessment and infrastructure requirements for these facilities. In numerous zones, the establishment of a *Self-contained recreational vehicle* ground or expansion of an existing *Tourist Park* is 'Accepted development subject to requirements', meaning a planning approval is not required if the proposal complies with a number of conditions. A detailed planning scheme code outlines the requirements for these developments, and the onus is on the developer to ensure compliance. This would make it easier for the private sector to establish low-impact accommodation options.

MACKAY:

Mackay Regional Council are currently in the process of making a major amendment to the ***Mackay Region Planning Scheme 2017*****,** allowing certain developments for ***Self-contained recreational vehicle grounds*** to proceed without requiring a planning approval.

The amendment proposes the same two new administrative definitions as Fraser Coast, *Self-contained recreational vehicle ground* and *Self-contained vehicle*. The change will allow for certain developments to be 'Accepted development subject to requirements,' for expansions to an existing Tourist Park, or establishment of new *Nature-based tourism* uses for a *Self-contained recreational vehicle ground*. These requirements limit the scale to 10 sites or less and establish benchmarks such as site area, environmental constraints, length of stay, vehicle access and provisions for flooding and emergency evacuation. This amendment is proposed to be adopted in 2020.

11 Fraser Coast Regional Council, 2014, Schedule 1, SC1.4 – Administrative terms and definitions.

Townsville Camping Options Matrix

The following matrix categorises Townsville's mix of camping options into three different types:

- Self-contained campground
- Basic campground
- Commercial campground

This matrix is recommended to be referred to when assessing proposals for additional RV and camping accommodation to support a mix of options.

	Typical Facilities	Type of Vehicle	Length of Stay	Example	Cost	Infrastructure required
Self-contained campground	No infrastructure required to be provided	Self-contained vehicles only *(including vehicles retrofitted eg. portable shower and toilet)*	Short-term eg. 3 nights	Bush camp no facilities, Self-contained Recreational Vehicle grounds	Free or low cost: generally less than $20 per vehicle per night	All infrastructure optional
Basic campground	Rubbish Bin, potable water tap ***plus optional:*** Toilets Showers (generally with additional cost) Unpowered sites (or powered with additional cost) Dump Point	All types	Short-term eg. max 72 hours	Queensland Parks and Wildlife campgrounds eg. Big Crystal Creek, Council campground at Bluewater Park	Free or low cost only: less than $20 per vehicle per night for unpowered sites	Potable water supply; rubbish bins ***plus optional:*** On-site waste disposal or connection to sewage; Power ***(optional)***
Commercial campground	***Facilities above, plus:*** Powered sites Showers Optional: Cooking facilities Laundry Pools/slides Common recreation facilities Ensuite sites	All types	No limit	Big 4 caravan parks, Rowes Bay caravan park	Cost generally greater than $20 per vehicle per night. Often additional cost for powered sites	***Facilities above, plus:*** Full connection to municipal services or on-site provision of power, tele-communications, etc

External Management of Camping Grounds on Public Land

Around Australia, there are various examples of businesses and community organisations operating or assisting in the operation of camping grounds on public land. Management responsibilities vary but may involve site supervision, maintenance and the organisation may fundraise by collecting camping fees.

There is a possibility that existing Council campgrounds in the Northern Beaches could be externally managed. As all locations share facilities with local parks, it would be complex for Council to share maintenance responsibilities with a third party while still ensuring the parks meet public expectations. Enforcement of overstays and overcrowding need to be addressed and responsibilities documented.

Increasing demand may lead Council to consider making public land available to support the development of additional commercial campgrounds. Consideration must be given to how our commercial campground will contribute to Townsville's economy and not threaten the viability of established operations.

OPTION 4.4.6
Consider best use of Council-controlled land that could be made available to the private sector or community groups to manage RV and/or camping accommodation that complements mix of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix.

Community Involvement with Drive Tourism

There are many opportunities for local community groups to benefit from RV and camping tourists in Townsville. Local community groups in proximity to the campgrounds have a new market for fundraising events. Barbeques, for example, are already a regular event in some of the northern communities and scope exists for more events, such as markets, throughout the busy months.

In other regions, sporting or community groups have established camping facilities on their premises operating when the site is not being used for club activities. A planning scheme amendment may make it easier for community groups to develop such facilities. The presence of RV and camping tourists is a positive opportunity for the community.

OPTION 4.4.7
Investigate and planning scheme amendment to allow camping on sporting and community facilities

05

Options for Enhancing RV and Camping Visitor Experiences

5.1 Visitor Experience Option

An objective of this strategy is to connect tourists staying in Council-managed campgrounds with Townsville's range of affordable, interesting tourist experiences to make Townsville the highlight of their trip.

OUTLINED BELOW ARE SEVERAL ACTIONS TO LEVERAGE THE TOURISTS VISITING COUNCIL CAMPGROUNDS.

Townsville Enterprise is the lead organisation for destination marketing in Townsville. Specific strategies targeting increased drive tourist visitation would benefit the drive market.

OPTION 5.1.1

Support drive tourism marketing strategies for the Townsville North Queensland Region

Provision of long vehicle parking suitable for towed RVs would encourage tourist visitation to Townsville city and tourist attractions.

Long vehicle parking that would provide access and connectivity to the city for day trips. Overnight stays in carparking spaces in the city would not be permitted and time limits would be enforced by Council's patrols team.

OPTION 5.1.2

Designate long vehicle parking areas in Townsville city with suitable dimensions to fit cars and towable RVs

OPTION 5.1.3

Improvements to signage from the Bruce highway in regard to long vehicle parking

Tourists staying in the Northern Beaches provide an opportunity for local businesses to diversify and provide services directly to tourists that increase their enjoyment while in Townsville such as local information, tours or activities.

OPTION 5.1.4

Encourage local businesses in proximity to Council campgrounds to tailor services to appeal to tourists

Local businesses willing to act as advocates to tourists may be able to link with other providers throughout the region to promote tourism experiences and services.

OPTION 5.1.5

Investigate options for visitor information collateral and services to be located in local businesses in close proximity to Council campgrounds

The location of visitor information centres is important in relation to tourist attraction.

OPTION 5.1.6

Investigate additional Visitor Information Centre presence in northern part of the Townsville region

OPTION 5.1.7

Investigate possibilities for Visitor Information Centre presence south of Townsville located on western side of highway.

Local community groups in the Northern Beaches have an opportunity to fundraise through activities targeted at the tourists staying in their local area, eg. barbeques, craft markets etc.

OPTION 5.1.8

Explore options for local community groups to maximise benefits from tourists in their communities

Update signage to provide information about things for tourists to do during their stay in the region and where to find further information.

OPTION 5.1.9

Install visitor information signage in Council campgrounds, providing tourist information for visitors during their stay

Tourist signage does not currently have a consistent brand.

OPTION 5.1.10

Revise content and branding of tourist signage in Northern Beaches and Paluma areas.

Local information brochures may increase visitor awareness of local activities and attractions.

OPTION 5.1.11

Revise hard copy visitor information collateral for caravanning and camping in the Townsville region, Northern Beaches and Paluma areas

5.2 Environmental Management and Sustainability

Fostering Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism aims to strengthen local conservation, benefit the host community, and sensitise locals and tourists alike about the protected values of a place. This approach not only protects the local environment, but also gives visitors a memorable, high quality connection to their destination during their travels. RV and camping travel is a low impact form of tourism. Many travellers choose this method of travel to experience nature and gain an increased awareness of the environment.

Demand in the RV and camping market is an opportunity for local accommodation providers to adopt sustainable business models that can positively influence the behaviour of travellers. Council supports operators who are committed to working towards zero or minimal environmental impacts, for example regarding soil erosion, ground compaction, or impacts to native flora and fauna.

OPTION 5.2.1

Encourage local tourist businesses to adopt ecotourism principles, environmental management and sustainability

Driving Ecotourism

Ecotourism is gaining popularity and recognition all over the world as interest in nature-based tourism and education grows. Townsville City Council has held Advanced Ecotourism certification through Ecotourism Australia for over 12 years and is on a journey towards Eco Destination Certification.

Working with local tourism businesses through education, encouragement and community engagement can increase ecotourism principles, environmental management and sustainability.

OPTION 5.2.2

Prepare educational collateral regarding responsible and sustainable RV and camping bahaviour for distribution to travellers

Incentives

A business may benefit from adopting a sustainable business model which achieves a quadruple bottom line encompassing social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes. The diagram below illustrates potential positive outcomes of this concept.

Local tourism businesses can meet sustainability criteria such as energy efficiency, waste management, cultural and social contributions, water efficiency, sustainable building design, or conservation/environmental education and experiences.

OPTION 5.2.3

Investigate options for an ecotourism incentives package to make it easier for new and existing local tourism businesses to incorporate the principles of ecotourism into operations

06

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been prepared to increase visitation numbers, increase visitor spend, and length of stay of RV and camping visitors.

Option	Preferred
Council provides and manages additional campgrounds on Council-controlled land: • Council's core business is not tourist accommodation • An increased number of campgrounds would also increase the operational costs and enforcement responsibilities of Council	✗
Council provides overflow campgrounds in peak periods: • Establishment of an overflow facility may potentially detract from commercial caravan parks • Numerous caravan parks have existing 'overflow' space on-site which has never been at capacity	✗
Encourage the private sector to provide additional accommodation: • Encourage existing businesses to expand and diversify and smooth the process for new facilities to be established • Review Council's regulatory requirements (eg. Townsville City Plan 2014, annual Infrastructure Charges Resolution) for new campgrounds and expansion of existing campgrounds to identify deterrents to development • Discuss and problem solve with caravan park owners and developers to identify any barriers to new projects • Establish camping options matrix to identify preferred mix of camping options in the region • Use camping options matrix to guide private sector proposals that fill gaps in Townsville's accommodation offering	✓

6.1 Recommendations for increased demand

Recommendations	Responsible stakeholder
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.1 POTENTIAL FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF OPTION 4.1.1 Adopt a camping fee at least 12 months after the implementation of the online booking system – a staggered approach to the camping fee will allow further data to be collected and analysed via the online booking system.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.2 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.1.2 Implement an online booking system for Council owned camping grounds.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.3 – DO NOT PROCEED WITH OPTION 4.2.1 The draft Strategy identified additional space exists at Vincent "Bushy" Park, Rollingstone, which could cost effectively be utilised as an additional camping area for self-contained recreational vehicles. A draft concept plan for the site was released for public comment. Feedback on the proposal was not supportive, due to concerns of over development and overcrowding as well as the close proximity to commercial caravan park operators. Rather than a further expansion of camping facilities in the Northern Beaches, other opportunities throughout the region would be more appropriate to be explored.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.4 – DO NOT PROCEED WITH OPTION 4.3.1 Establishment of an overflow facility is not considered necessary in Townsville. Numerous commercial parks, in various locations north and south of Townsville, have indicated that they have unpowered overflow facilities that can accommodate large numbers of vehicles which have never been completely full.	N/A
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.5 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.1 Investigate amendments to the Townsville City Plan 2014 regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds in line with the different scales of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.6 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.2 Investigate amendments to the annual Townsville Infrastructure Charges Resolution 2019 regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds in line with the different scales of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.7 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.3 Investigate amendments to planning and development Fees and Charges regarding extensions to existing caravan parks and development of new campgrounds in line with the different scales of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.8 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.4 Amendment to Local Laws to align with the Townsville camping options matrix and infrastructure requirements.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.9 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.5 Maintain communications with private sector and accommodation providers to review policy amendments and options for suitability with industry.	TCC and private accommodation providers
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.10 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.6 Consider best use of Council-controlled land that could be made available to the private sector or community groups to manage RV and/or camping accommodation that complements mix of camping uses identified in the Townsville camping options matrix.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.1.11 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 4.4.7 Investigate and planning scheme amendment to allow camping on sporting and community facilities.	TCC

6.2 Recommendations for enhancing RV and Camping Visitor Experience demand

Recommendations	Responsible stakeholder
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.1 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.1 Support drive tourism marketing strategies for the Townsville North Queensland Region.	TEL
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.2 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.2 Designate long vehicle parking areas in Townsville city with suitable dimensions to fit cars and towable RVs.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.3 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.3 Improvements to signage from the Bruce highway in regard to long vehicle parking.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.4 - UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.4 Encourage local businesses in close proximity to Council campgrounds to tailor services to appeal to tourists.	Local Businesses
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.5 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.5 Investigate options for visitor information collateral and services to be located in local businesses in close proximity to Council campgrounds.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.6 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.6 Investigates additional Visitor Information Centre presence in northern part of the townsville region.	TEL
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.7 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.7 Investigate possibilities for Visitor Information Centre presence south of Townsville located on western side of highway.	TEL
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.8 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.8 Explore options for local community groups to maximise benefits from tourists in their communities.	Local community groups
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.9 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.9 Install visitor information signage in Council campgrounds, providing tourist information for visitors during their stay.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.10 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.10 Revise content and branding of tourist signage in Northern Beaches and Paluma areas.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.11 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.1.11 Revise hard copy visitor information collateral for caravanning and camping in the Townsville region, Northern Beaches and Paluma areas.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.12 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.2.1 Encourage local tourist businesses to adopt ecotourism principles, environmental management and sustainability.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.13 – UNDERTAKE OPTION 5.2.2 Prepare educational collateral regarding responsible and sustainable RV and camping bahaviour for distribution to travellers.	TCC
RECOMMENDATION 6.2.14 – UNDERTAKE 5.2.3 Investigate options for an ecotourism incentives package to make it easier for new and existing local tourism businesses to incorporate the principles of ecotourism into operations.	TCC

Appendix 1: Regulatory Framework

1.1: State Level Relevant Acts/Policies

The ***Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*** is the legislative basis for planning and management of recreation areas throughout the state, including matters such as camping and commercial activity permits. The Act includes a definition of *camp*, being "*(a) to pitch, place or erect a tent, caravan or another structure that may be used for camping for the purpose of staying overnight by using the tent, caravan or structure; (b) to place other equipment that may be used for camping, or a vehicle or vessel, in position for the purpose of staying overnight by using the equipment, vehicle or vessel...*" (Source: Schedule Dictionary, p. 161).

Queensland Caravan Park Policy 2019 (SLM/2013/490 Version 3.05, formerly PUX/901/102, DNRME) outlines guidelines regarding caravan parks and camping grounds on state-owned land (eg. leasehold or reserve) and the process for developing state land for these purposes. The Policy position is to retain numerous existing caravan parks on state land in order to maintain supply of affordable tourist accommodation and housing. The Policy also outlines how different types of state land can be managed by local government and used for camping activities.

The ***Secondary Use of Trust Land under the Land Act Policy 2017*** (PUX901/209, SLM213/493, Version 6.00, 2/5/2017, DNRME) formalises the State's intention and the process for allowing secondary uses of trust land, including use of State land for camping. The *Land Act 1994* authorises use of State land in various circumstances and this policy gives guidance about secondary uses that are consistent with the community purpose intention of the *Land Act 1994*.

The Queensland Government's overall plan for growing tourism is ***Advancing Tourism 2016-20***. Outcomes for this plan include increases to visitation numbers and expenditure, supporting jobs, resilience and economic growth in the regions, which have informed the objectives of this strategy. Of relevance to the drive tourism market, the plan pledges funding of $20 million for road infrastructure, rest areas and tourism signage (Advance Queensland 2016, p. 7). Supplementary to this, the ***Advancing Tourism in North Queensland*** plan outlines specific actions supporting tourism growth around North Queensland and Townsville.

Providing specific direction on the RV and camping tourism market, the Queensland Government's ***Queensland Camping Options Toolkit (2014)*** includes analysis of camping tourism market trends and commercial and non-commercial camping patterns. In particular, the toolkit emphasises the importance of providing a range of commercial and non-commercial camping choices to meet modern consumer preferences. The toolkit includes a variety of options and strategies for local governments to grow their camping tourism sector.

The ***Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy 2016*** has been developed to give specific consideration to the transport and infrastructure needs of visitors to Queensland. This strategy focuses on visitor information, transport, ticketing, planning and investment. One of the 'megatrends' identified to influence tourism in the next 20 years is an *ageing population with high numbers of baby boomers seeking retirement based travel options* (Advance Queensland 2016b, p. 13). Numbers of RV and camping tourists over the age of 55 are likely to continue to grow and focus should provide options and infrastructure to maximise benefits from this industry.

The ***Northern Queensland – Draft Regional Transport Plan (2018)*** outlines transport and infrastructure projects in the Townsville North Queensland region. Growth in self-drive tourism, including caravans and recreational vehicles, is identified as an opportunity due to Townsville's strategic location in proximity to tourist routes. The plan notes that *safety, network condition, signage and the provision of rest stops are important to growth of the self-drive tourism sector* (DTMR 2018, p.37).

The ***Queensland State Planning Policy (2017)*** outlines the key State interests for local governments to reflect in local planning schemes around the State, to ensure development is prioritised and supported in line with the State's

expectations. Tourism is identified as an economic State interest and the ***State Interest Guidance Material – Tourism (2017)*** clarifies the core concepts supported by the State when growing the tourist industry. Overall, the State Planning Policy and guideline promotes sustainable tourism as an economic driver and supports the development of infrastructure to grow this industry.

The ***Next Generation Tourism Planning Guideline (2017)*** provides planning guidance for a range of tourism development including a best practice example of relevant planning scheme provisions. This is comparable with the current provisions of the *Townsville City Plan 2014* and the prioritisation of tourism in the region. In particular, guidance is provided about how to promote tourism uses through recognition in the strategic framework, zone outcomes and levels of assessment of the planning scheme. Guidance is also included about policies to incentivise tourism development in a region.

The following outlines the legislation and policies relevant to the establishment and operation of RV and camping facilities.

1.2: Relevant Local Council Policies

The ***Townsville City Plan 2014*** is the primary document used by Council to regulate new development such as new campgrounds or expansion of existing campgrounds. Established under the *Planning Act 2016*, the Townsville City Plan 2014 outlines Council's strategic direction for land use in the region and outlines requirements for new developments. Campgrounds would generally be defined as a *'Tourist Park'* or *'Nature-based Tourism.'* A town planning approval would be required prior to establishing a new campground or extending any existing campgrounds or commercial caravan parks.

Townsville Council's Annual Infrastructure Charges Resolution 2019 outlines charges payable by new developments for the impacts of the proposal on Council's municipal systems, including roads, water, sewage and parks. These charges are based on the land use definitions specified in the City Plan. Accordingly, these charges also do not differentiate for the infrastructure requirements of varied types of campground, and would not reflect cases where self-contained vehicles are accommodated, where they would not place additional loads on municipal networks (eg. if no dump point or toilets are proposed and vans are removing waste elsewhere).

Appendix 2: Reference List

Advance Queensland, 2016, *Advancing Tourism 2016-20*, Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, Brisbane.

Advance Queensland, 2016a, *Advancing Tourism in North Queensland*, State of Queensland, Brisbane.

Advance Queensland, 2016b, *Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy*, State of Queensland, Brisbane.

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, 2017, *State Planning Policy*, State of Queensland, Brisbane.

Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, 2017a, *State Planning Policy – state interest guidance material: Tourism*, State of Queensland, Brisbane.

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