Simon Loone
Co-0rdinator Business & Tourism Strategy
Surf Coast Shire

23/05/2015

Good morning Simon,
Thank you for contacting us last week and asking for comments in relation to the proposed establishment of a "Free Camp" site for fully self-contained RV type vehicles.

In relation to directly affecting our business financially, we believe it would have a relatively small detrimental effect as there has been no indication to us that there is a need for such a facility. The occasional vehicle that fits the above criteria that do stay with us, do so because of the promotional information provided by us, local knowledge, safety, and facilities available from our Caravan Park at the relative low cost of approx $20 to $25 per night. We currently inform visitors about such things as the historical significance of Winchelsea's early days as a Barwon river crossing and the development of the town, the establishment and importance of Barwon Park and the Austins, and rural and industrial developments in the area. As well as informing visitors, this interaction provides an opportunity to introduce them to the eating and shopping businesses in Winchelsea self-promoting our town and giving them a reason to stay longer. This in turn will financially help all businesses.

We would also like to clarify what statistics were gathered to highlight a need for such a facility? If it was the same information as provided for the "Dump Site" and its location, I would question its validity and accuracy. What affect has such a facility had on the town of Inverleigh? What statistics are available from Inverleigh's businesses?

If this proposal was to be established in the proposed location, what structures will be in place to provide access twelve months of the year. The area in question floods significantly a number of times a year and the ground is waterlogged after heavy rains making it un-trafficable.

At the moment, apart from the Princess Highway, the small foot-bridge in this immediate area is the only way across the Barwon River, all-be-it underwater in time of high water. To establish a "Camp Site" in this area would restrict future potential tourism to this area.

Once established, who will control what vehicles and for how long visitors stay. Will this be left to the already stretched local Police or another duty for the local Shire or Council? Or do we wait for something to get out of control and then get Police, Shire, and/or Council involved. What control would be in place for camp fires and noise pollution affecting local residences both sides of the river.

Has consideration been given to the real possibility of extra rubbish being generated? Being left on site by indiscriminate visitors or the provision of rubbish bins which will overflow and create a bigger issue.

Has consideration been given to the potential pollution of the Barwon River? Washing and other waste water and refuse entering the river.

What affect will the establishment have on the local residences? Do they want such a facility established in their area?

As a more general comment, why would a committee calling itself "Growing Winchelsea" request the Shire to spend time and money on a project in direct competition with an existing business, without the courtesy of consulting or even informing that business? We do not believe that the scatter-gun approach to developing our area is the right way to grow Winchelsea. With good intention ideas such as the "Dump Site" and now the "Camp Site" placing facilities at random without an overall committed structure to the town's development, it will be difficult for existing business to confidently develop or to encourage new businesses.

In summing up we would be against the establishment of such a facility as we do not believe there is a need for a "RV Free Site" and it would be a waste of everyone's' time, money, and resources. We would be happy to discuss our opinion further with either yourself or representatives from the Growing Winchelsea committee at a mutually appropriate time.

Thank you.

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Winchelsea Caravan Park

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