

Good times

Holiday parks are the best place to reunite with friends

The caravan industry is riding the crest of a wave with more and more people choosing caravan and holiday parks as a place to have a family holiday, celebrate a special occasion, or make some new friends.

Parks have reported high rates of occupancy and a strong demand for sites during January and February and there are no signs of the trend abating.

CEO of the Caravan & Camping Industry Association (CCIA) of NSW, Barry Baillie, says that occupancy rates were up as much as 10% for many coastal holiday parks over the summer months and that first-time campers were helping to fuel the surge.

“There has been a noticeable increase in people trying a caravan or camping holiday for the first time and many of them are choosing to stay in larger tents and camper trailers,” he says.

The boom coincides with a trend towards holiday and tourist parks as destinations for reuniting with friends or for celebrating special events. Successful parks have responded to consumer demand for better facilities by incorporating amenities such as swimming pools, licensed restaurants, wedding and function facilities, golf courses and kids’ playgrounds in a bid to lure customers.

The industry appears to be doing something right. Caravan industry consumer research conducted in 2006 showed that 91.67% of participants believe the caravan, motorhome and camping market has improved significantly in recent years, particularly in relation to better products and facilities.

Graeme Solomon, Marketing Manager at NRMA-owned Darlington Beach Holiday Park on the Coffs Coast, says the key to a good holiday park experience



is having people enjoy a sense of camaraderie and community.

He explains that Darlington has areas dedicated to communal experiences. “We have a camp kitchen area where people can cook together. We also have a man-made island on a lake which features a wrought-iron camp fire so that people can come together and enjoy each other’s company,” he says.

He explains that the children’s activities on offer at Darlington allow adults to enjoy their holiday while their children are entertained. “We have two jumping

pillows, two great pools, and a full-time activity officer who takes kids on pony rides and teaches them things like playing the didgeridoo.”

As well as improved facilities, many holiday parks have responded to demand for improved levels of accommodation in an effort to attract large groups such as wedding parties and school reunion groups looking for a comfortable stay at affordable rates. The result, says Baillie, is an incredible breadth of accommodation experiences, from budget cabins through to five-star luxury.

He adds that a stay at a holiday park offers a great value-for-money experience. “With the current state of the Australian dollar and the global economy, it is a perfect time to take advantage of the excellent value offered by a caravan or camping holiday.” ACHR



This summer has been a bumper one for holiday parks all along the NSW coastline.