

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

Ordinary Meeting of Council on 22 July 2025

Please refer to the minutes of the [Council Meeting](#) for outcomes of the agenda items.

Name	Agenda Item	Presentation Provided
Lindsay Boyton	CAR25/009 - Post-exhibition and finalisation report on the proposal for a primitive campground to be established at Moruya Showground	Attached
Corinne East, Managing Director Easts Holiday Parks	CAR25/009 - Post-exhibition and finalisation report on the proposal for a primitive campground to be established at Moruya Showground	Attached
Patricia Hellier	CAR25/009 - Post-exhibition and finalisation report on the proposal for a primitive campground to be established at Moruya Showground	Attached

Good afternoon, thank you for allowing me to speak to you **for** the proposal for a Primitive campground to be established at Moruya Showground.

My name is Lindsay Boyton, and I serve as a director on the board of the Agricultural Societies Council of NSW, the governing body of the Agricultural Shows in NSW.

In NSW alone, we have 192 Ag Shows. Of these, the land they use comprises Crown Land and privately owned land. They are managed under three groups.

Crown Land Boards,

355 Management Committees

Privately owned by a Show Society.

Moruya Showground is managed by a 355 committee, which is a Shire Council Committee.

Of these, about 75% do camping. Some of the reasons they do not do camping are that the Shows are held on sporting fields or recreation grounds, and the 355 Land Managers do not allow it.

All showgrounds that allow camping use the camping fees to pay for improvements to the showgrounds. Like one in a nearby Shire, they started with only a very basic toilet, and now they have a modern shower and toilet block. This toilet block is now used by all the other users who hire the Showground.

One of my other roles is Treasurer of the Eurobodalla District Show Society. Since 1913, Moruya Park (the golf course and showground) has been the official home to the Eurobodalla District Show Society. In 1914, the Show Society moved all its buildings from the old Showground to the present Showground. These buildings are still standing today.

In my role as Treasurer over the past 19 years, on behalf of the Show Society, I have applied for grants to update the Showground with new power boxes, water taps, a new kitchen, and a Showground office. The latest upgrade is that the Society Show

has put in a WiFi network around the Showground. All of these are available to all hires of the Showground. As with the Show Society, other users, such as the Mourya Jockey Club, Moruya Rodeo, Moruya Sharks Football Club, Moruya Poultry Club, Moruya Basketball Association, and the Eurobodalla Canine Club, have all dedicated their time and financial resources to improving and repairing the Showground.

On other days of the week, I serve as Secretary of the Moruya Showground Management Committee, a Shire Council 355 committee. On this committee, we have been planning for Camping since 2019.

During this time, the Management Committee, in partnership with the Shire Council, applied for a grant for a Dump Point in the Showground, and we were successful in receiving the grant in the 2019-2020 financial year. The Dump Point is on track to be completed soon under the grant funding.

Another project we have been working on is the development of new power boxes for the Camping Area. In the Showground storeroom, we have five new power bollards ready for the Camping Area. We have already added five to the Camping Area. These ten new power bollards will not only be used by the Primitive campground users but also by all hirers of the Showground.

The presented report discusses the toilets and showers, which have been on our list to address when funding becomes available. These amenities will be upgraded, regardless of whether the Primitive campground is passed. I believe it would be more beneficial for the Shire Council and ratepayers if the campers in the Primitive campground paid for these upgrades.

As with all the upgrades and improvements in the Showground, we are making them multi-purpose. This way we can cater for all hirers.

A new grant will be available in September this year. If we receive it, we will be using it to support camping, but it will also support other uses of the Showground. The work will include new fences and a Showing Ring, which can also double as a Dog working area.

I have the Show Society phone diverted to my mobile, and people think it is the Showground phone number. During the warmer months, I received about eight phone calls a week and about three during the colder months. All these calls are asking to book into the Showground. All calls are made outside school holidays and during the week.

Upon speaking with the people, I say they cannot camp at the Showground. Most of the callers are divided into three groups. The first group asked where the nearest Showground is. My answer is that if they are going north, it is Milton Showground; if they are going south, it is Cobargo Showground. The second group asked if there are any free camping areas. I tell them about the Waldron Swamp Rest Stop. The last group ask if there are any other caravan parks, and I tell them about the one on the north side of Moruya River and the one at South Head.

All the people I spoke to only wanted to book for one or two nights. Only one person wanted to book in for four days because she was coming down to watch family play in sporting matches in Batemans Bay. Businesses in Moruya are losing these people's business.

With the Primitive campground, we will not be competing with the local caravan parks. The people who use the Showground type camping do not want to use caravan parks. They have several reasons for this, some of which are listed in the 31 supportive submissions out of 34 received.

When the Moruya by-pass goes in, we will lose some of the passing traffic. So, if the Primitive campground at Moruya

Showground is approved, and we set the right price, we could put up the RV-friendly signs. To display an RV-friendly sign, certain conditions must be met. With the signs up, it would put Moruya on the caravan and motorhome circuit. This will help the local shops and clubs, as well as other supplies like fuel and groceries. Currently, the Showground maintains a good working relationship with the Golf and Bowling Clubs, as well as the Waterfront and Adelaide Hotels. All these clubs and hotels will pick up and deliver customers back to the Showground.

It was mentioned in one of the non-supportive replies that these campgrounds suffer from vandalism and misuse, leading to increased costs for maintenance and repairs. Over the last couple of weeks, the Showground has been broken into. The Show Society lost two thousand dollars' worth of drinks and five hundred dollars' worth of food. The Management Committee and the Show Society are always painting over graffiti and repairing things.

I fully support the Primitive campground at Moruya Showground, and I will work with the Shire Council and Moruya Business to make Moruya and the Moruya Showground the jewel of the South Coast.

Thank you.

18 July 2025

General Manager
Eurobodalla Shire Council
via email: council.meetings@esc.nsw.gov.au

Subject: CAR25/009 Objection to Proposed Primitive Campground at Moruya Showground

To the General Manager and Councillors,

Due to a prior commitment, I am unable to attend or speak at the Tuesday 22 July 2025 Ordinary Meeting of Council, however, I wish to clearly express my strong opposition to the proposal to establish a primitive campground at the Moruya Showground.

I do not believe this proposal would withstand public scrutiny, particularly when considering the ethical responsibility Councillors have in ensuring that ratepayer funds – potentially upwards of \$100,000 – are being used appropriately and in the best interests of the broader community. If this were put to a public vote, I am confident that the majority of ratepayers would not support the use of their funds for this purpose. I therefore ask each Councillor: Can you truly and confidently answer the ethical question – “Would this decision withstand public scrutiny?” – in the affirmative?

Moruya already has three caravan parks offering a variety of experiences to suit all types of travellers, as well as an existing primitive campground at North Head. It is difficult to understand how anyone could reasonably argue that additional camping options are needed, particularly when the proposed campground will inevitably divert business from existing providers, some of whom are among our Shire’s largest employers.

While it is acknowledged in the Council report that the establishment of a primitive campground at Moruya Showground may impact existing tourism providers, the proposed mitigation measures – such as limiting campsite numbers, restricting operations during major events, and targeting self-contained caravans – are unlikely to be effective. The reality is that the vast majority of modern caravans and motorhomes are now fully self-contained, meaning these travellers already have ample accommodation options at existing caravan parks. These parks are fully equipped to meet the needs of self-contained visitors while also contributing significantly to the local economy and employment. The idea that this proposal caters to a "niche market" is outdated and does not reflect current industry trends.

Furthermore, a review of the submissions suggests that the majority of supportive comments are from non-residents and transient travellers, not local ratepayers.

Industry data clearly shows that guests staying in caravan parks contribute more to the local economy than those staying in low-cost or primitive campsites. According to the BDO *Spending Patterns of Commercial Campers and Non-Commercial Campers* report (May 2013), commercial campers spend on average **\$576** per visit in the local area (excluding park fees), compared to **\$213** spent by non-commercial campers — **2.7 times more**. When accommodation costs are added, the economic benefit of commercial camping is even greater. This economic impact flows directly into fuel stations, grocery stores, cafés, restaurants, and other small businesses – supporting employment and local investment.

While there are currently no enforceable national guidelines that prohibits the establishment of primitive campgrounds near existing caravan parks, it is common practice across many States and Councils to apply a minimum radius – often around 20 kilometres – between new low-cost camping areas and established commercial providers. This practice helps to avoid unfair competition and to maintain a level playing field for private operators.

It is also important to highlight Council's obligations under the **National Competition Policy** and the principle of **Competitive Neutrality**. Councils or governments that establish low-cost or free camping facilities in competition with existing private providers must be able to demonstrate that the public benefit of doing so outweighs the clear risk of displacing or undermining private enterprise. In this case, where viable commercial businesses already exist, and no market failure has been identified, proceeding with a publicly funded primitive campground is inconsistent with those obligations and exposes Council to scrutiny under the Competition Principles Agreement.

Another issue to consider before developing an additional primitive campground in Moruya is the serious and ongoing problems at the existing primitive campground at North Head. This site has already demonstrated the potential shortcomings of such facilities. While there is a caretaker in place, the campground – like many other primitive campgrounds across Australia – has been the subject of repeated and serious concerns that raise red flags for replicating similar issues at the Moruya Showground. These include major crime, a serious assault requiring police intervention, drug-related activity, and anti-social behaviour. Council has been required to close the site to visitors, and has faced ongoing difficulties managing long-term stays and maintaining basic cleanliness and safety standards. Despite the presence of a caretaker, this does not ensure effective prevention of negative impacting issues.

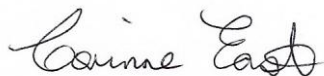
This reinforces the concern that introducing another primitive site – particularly within close proximity to existing, well-regulated tourist accommodation – risks replicating these same problems rather than providing a genuine community benefit. Importantly, this also creates economic consequences for the town. Tourists seeking safe, well-managed, paid accommodation are deterred by such reputational damage, impacting local holiday parks, motels, cafés, service stations, and retail stores that depend on overnight visitors for their livelihoods, and who in turn employ many local residents that spend year round in our local businesses.

Primitive campgrounds that charge little fees and offer minimal supervision directly undermine legitimate tourism businesses that invest heavily in infrastructure, compliance, insurance, and safety. Establishing another such site closer to town – particularly when North Head already exists – risks dividing the visitor market, increasing social issues, and reducing the town's overall tourism income rather than strengthening it.

Commercial caravan parks do more than provide a place to stay. As supported by the BDO *Economic Benefit Report*, they play a vital role in the local tourism economy by employing local people, contributing to environmental stewardship, participating in community and tourism initiatives, and serving as a central point for visitor information – all of which foster stronger, more resilient communities.

For all these reasons, I respectfully urge Council to reconsider this proposal and instead direct resources toward supporting and enhancing existing tourism infrastructure that benefits our Shire year-round.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Corinne East".

Corinne East
Managing Director
East's Holiday Parks t/a
BIG4 Moruya Heads East's Dolphin Beach Holiday Park
BIG4 Batemans Bay at East's Riverside Holiday Park
BIG4 Narooma East's Holiday Parks

Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Staff Gallery and those comfortable zooming from home my name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay.

Today, I am here to address item number CAR25/009 Post- exhibition and finalisation on the proposal for a Primitive Campground to be established at the Moruya Showground.

Councillors, I have been advocating to Councillors for the Moruya Showground to be opened for Camping for **some 12 plus years** , firstly under Mayors Lindsay Brown, then Liz Innes and also our current Mayor during the previous term of Council, and finally we have got it to this stage.

Credit must go to Clr Tubby Harrison for his strong advocacy during the last term of Council. **Tubby, a fellow grey nomad experienced** the benefits of showgrounds as they cater for the larger vehicles. Tubby and his lovely wife Jane are currently out there “living the dream” in their van.

Councillor, this was approved by the Councillors for “investigation” at a Council meeting on the 19th December 2023. It then came back to Council on the 17th December 2024 with a break down of requirements for Primitive Camping for self contained vehicles.

I note there is funding in the Councils “assets replacement reserve” and realistically the upgrade to the facilities would have to be done whether or not the Primitive Camping is approved.

Council is to be congratulated for conducting an extensive consultation, including sending out 3602 December Newsletter, on site posters, notification letters sent to key stake holders, including site users and caravan park industry representatives across the shire. Follow up emails were sent to industry representatives during the last week of the exhibition. The exhibition page was viewed 101 times and 61 email account clicked the viewing exhibition page.

34 submissions were received with 31 in support and 3 against. 2 of the submission against were outside of the Moruya area. **There were NO submissions recorded from industry representatives in Moruya.**

Councillors the benefit for traveller being able to stay at are showground facility **includes the larger sites for the Fifth Wheeler's, the large Motor Homes and large Caravans. It also provides the facility for horse trailers**, as you are probably aware many of these large horse trailers are now decked out with bedding and kitchen facilities. **There is a requirement for animals that are being transported to be taken out of their vehicles to be walked and grazed and showgrounds provide this facility. Showgrounds also allow dogs.**

Showgrounds attract “**Grey Nomads**” as they do not require the “bells and whistles” that most caravan parks provide. **We have found that many caravan parks have reduced the size of their sites to squeeze more caravans into their parks and realistically who wants to listen to what is going on in the caravan next to them.**

The opening of the Moruya Showground for Camping will also help deter **vandalism and anti social behaviour especially with the engagement of an on site Manager.**

Councillors this shire needs to embrace all form of tourism. In our travels and staying at many many showgrounds we have spoken to a number of people who have inquired as to why our area does not open our showground for camping, we have been told that people stay at Bega Showground , drive straight through Eurobodalla and then stop at Milton Showground, Nowra or Berry.

Many smaller towns have opened their showgrounds for camping. **Since 2006 we have witnessed Alstonville showground facilities grow from 2 shower and toilets in both ladies and mens facilites, to a 2nd block with shower, toilets, disabled shower and toilet and a coin operated laundry facility to a 3rd block of shower and toilets.** This has all been achieved from income generated from the opening up of the showground for camping.

Councillors this shire has many attractions from Tilba through to Batemans Bay and for sometime now **I believe we have lost a lot of tourism \$'s from this form of travellers, therefore I ask that you support the opening of the Moruya Showground for Primitive Camping** during the periods when the normal activities are not occurring this will be a WIN WIN situation for travellers, extra tourism \$'s for this shire and I believe this will bring in extra funds for the Moruya Showgrounds operations.

Trish Hellier
22nd July 2025