

# **SUBMISSION**

## **DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **BORG PANELS “TIMBER PROCESSING FACILITY EXPANSION”**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission regarding Borg Panels Timber Processing Facility Expansion.

By way of introduction, we, Robert and Sally Parrington, purchased the lease on the Jenolan Caravan Park in March 2012. The Park cabins were immediately increased from 8 to 10 and numerous other improvements were carried out at the Park. Another two cabins were purchased at the end of 2014 and business has increased very nicely.

The caravan parks northern boundary is approximately 440 metres from the southern boundary of the Borg complex. By our measurement, the Borg complex is approximately 850 metres from the town centre.

We are supportive of the industry in Oberon as Oberon would not be the fantastic town that it is without the mills employing so many Oberon residents and the supporting businesses such as trucking and engineering. However our concerns are:

- Smoke
- Smell/s
- Noise

### **Smoke**

Smoke can be hard to determine from where it is coming. It seems in the main part to come from the area of the other parts of the timber complex, not Borgs. However, we make mention of it here as smoke comes over the caravan park often on a Sunday, and also on other days of the week. It is a 'blue' smoke.

### **Smell**

It is even harder to detect the direction of smells than it is for smoke. An unpleasant smell is not as frequent as the smoke (or the noise) but can be extremely unpleasant and very hard to describe when it does occur. We have considered other businesses in the area e.g. the relatively new bitumen plant but when we situated ourselves outside their business we could not smell any bad smells. Again it is mentioned here because it has been a problem and finding the source seems to be a big problem.

### **Noise**

In 2011, when we had the opportunity to manage the caravan park for the previous owners before purchase, the synonym used by both people operating the Park and guests in the Park when describing the noise was "like waves on the seashore". During February/March 2011, a six week period, the Mill (complex) was quiet and the sound was not an unpleasant background noise. After purchasing the caravan park we believe the noise has steadily grown in volume and this could probably be measured against improved sales in the Borg business.

In May 2013 we started attending the Community Consultative Meetings held generally at a meeting room within the timber complex and with other interested parties such as Oberon Council General Manager, the Council Mayor and the owners of neighbouring properties to the complex. We first started going to these meetings when the noise from the mill/s started increasing in volume. Our main concerns were when there were loud noises through the night and our guests were being woken with a

jolt and then (in some cases) not able to go back to sleep. Our Park is a holiday park and most of our guests are tourists whether they are visiting the local attractions or catching up with family and friends but essentially they are on holiday and not expecting to hear loud bangs/clanging through the night or hearing a chipper start up at 7.00am to disturb their holiday rest. We also have sub-contractors staying whilst working in the area.

Some of the negative reviews received:

**Trip Advisor:**

*“Won't be back!”* Reviewed 25 April 2014 via mobile

We camped here over the Easter break but wouldn't come back here again:

1. For a country caravan park too noisy some factory out the back making noise 24/7.
2. No individual fire places only one big communal one.
3. The owners are noseey and looking out for anyone doing the slightest thing wrong.

Otherwise the park is clean and well maintained.

Stayed April 2014

**JenolanCP, Manager at Jenolan Caravan Park, responded to this review, 17 May 2014**

Hello NoName0102 Thank you for taking the time to review our Park. We have been in touch with the factory regarding the noise and your comment. Unfortunately the company were unable to pinpoint the source of the noise at that time, but will be completing a noise study in the next month and we hope this will bring to light any noise over and above any scheduled limits. The factory does a wonderful job keeping our local people employed and Oberon has one of the lowest unemployment rates in NSW. Your other points have been noted.

*“Relaxing with central location”* Reviewed 18 March 2015

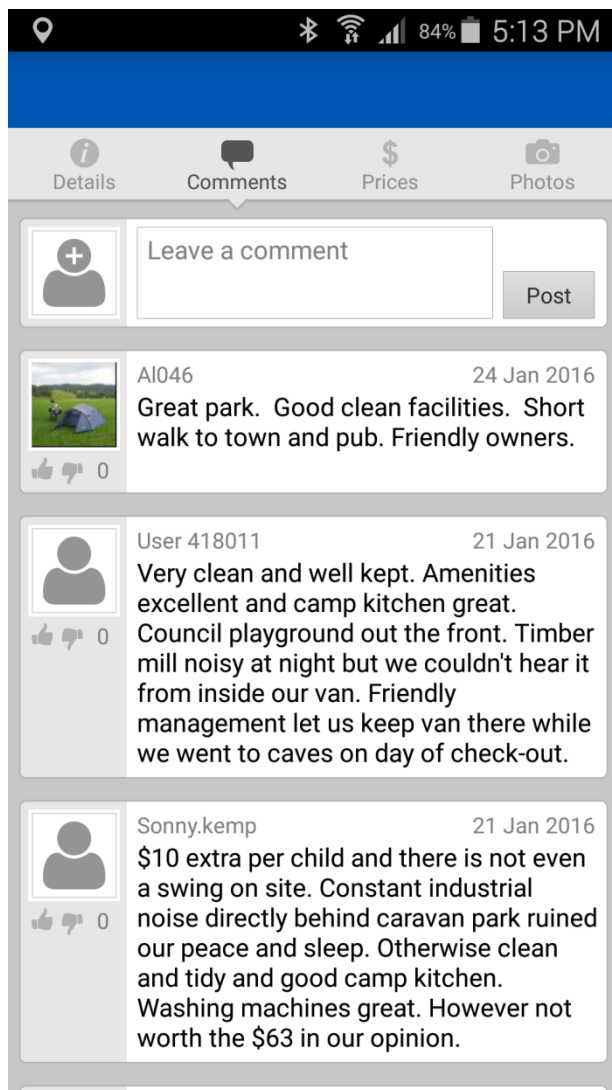
Spent 2 nights at the caravan park (in our 4 man tent). Found the place very neat, well tended with very modern and clean amenities. All guests of the caravan park have access to the communal kitchen which has a microwave, stove, bbq, crockery, cutlery, pots.. and anything else you might find in your own kitchen. The ablutions were neat as a pin and kept clean at all times. No guests at the park need walk more than 1-2 minutes to get to either the kitchen or the ablutions. The only detraction we found was the industrial plant neighbouring the caravan park. During the day one can quite easily forget that it's there. At night there is a slight hum. It's for those who sleep in a tent at night that the sound becomes a bit louder...especially when you are inside your tent. Fortunately it isn't a loud noise so didn't really affect our time there. There was no bad odour or smog coming from the plant either. Overall the visit was great and we'd definitely stay there again.

**Room Tip:** Take warm clothes and blankets along for at night when the temperature drops really low.

[See more room tips](#)

Stayed March 2015, travelled as a couple

### Wikicamps (phone app):



### Facebook:

[Mark Coleman](#) reviewed [Jenolan Caravan Park, Oberon](#) — *1 star*

April 7, 2015 ·

Freezing weather and not allowed Campfire even on communal fire pit.

Spoken to like children for trying to keep dry and warm in communal kitchen, "Right, pack up had complaints bout noise"(No music, 3 people talking at normal levels NOT Loud at all) at the ripe old time of 9:35pm!

Then being SPYED on by rude management for whatever we dont know. Photos, walk bys at night and early in morning.

Toilets were brand new BUT not cleaned over entire long weekend.

Oh did the photos of the park tell you how van park backs onto a 24hr operational MDF board manufacturing plant with constant stinky emmissions?

Could of been a great stay ruined by RUDE staff.

If your a 75 yr old tea totaler that goes to bed @ 7:00 then this is the park for you.

If you enjoy talking andchaving a beer or if your kids wanna play hide and seek DON'T bother comming here



(Picture included on Facebook by Mark Coleman)

*“Not So Quite As We Had Been Led To Believe Thru Others Reviews.”* Reviewed 21 May 2016

Stayed on a Powered Site - The Park was grassy and pleasant enough But the Mill was very noisy all night 7 days a week (we stayed 7) All reviews I had previously read had said it was quiet but this is NOT true, those who had reviewed the park must have had a hearing disability. I found the staff not all that friendly as the young woman that was working there just grunted at us during the time we said hello. Pet Friendly.

**Room Tip:** Bring your ear plugs for a good nights sleep.

[See more room tips](#)

Stayed May 2016, travelled as a couple

**JenolanCP, Manager at Jenolan Caravan Park, responded to this review, 28 May 2016**

Hi Mary-Anne N thank you for taking the time to review our Park and we are sorry that the noise from the Mill disturbed you. Some times it is noisier than at other times and you may have noticed a microphone placed near a black box in the Park - this is provided by the Mill and is measuring the noise we experience in the Park. They are sympathetic to tourists and townspeople alike and are endeavouring to identify individual noises to lessen the impact. It is a work in progress and we hope next time you come to stay you will see an improvement. We were also dismayed to read that you were grunted at - our staff were particularly dismayed and are not sure of the occasion ... however please accept our apologies. We do hope that you enjoyed the beautiful area in which we live during your week stay and we hope to see you again. Cheers Sally

An example of the Reviews we receive most often:

*“Grey nomad stay”* Reviewed 22 October 2014

My wife and I, late 50's and retired, stayed at Jenolan Caravan Park in October 2014. This is our second time here, once in a cabin and this time in our caravan. This is a great park in a very good location. It is comfortable walking distance from the Main Street and an easy drive from all of the attractions that this area has to offer. The park is well laid out with large shady sites, individual water and sullage and very comfortable cabins. The amenities are clean and there is a very well appointed camp kitchen. The owners are very friendly and helpful, both when on site and if contacted by phone. For anyone wanting to visit the caves, gardens or Bathurst region, this is a wonderful place to stay.

Stayed October 2014, travelled as a couple

Running a successful caravan park is enormously satisfying. Having factories close to us and receiving negative comments via social media is very damaging to our business and extremely difficult to measure the damage done e.g. people that read about the noise and just decide not to visit.

We have received courteous response and attendance at our Park from the Borg crew from management to workers but unfortunately we are having the same conversations every time we speak – it's too noisy. We don't doubt efforts are being made to address the noise issues and there is no doubt there has been some improvement in some areas but the problem for us is, we are still getting complaints from our guests whether they be on social media or the guest attending in our office.

Sound monitoring has been carried out at the Park on a number of occasions by both the EPA and Borgs Panels. We have not been privy to the results of these but whenever we have asked we have been advised that the noise is within the allowable limits. It concerns us that the loud bangs (spikes on the noise monitor) that wake up our guests are not monitored individually but they are averaged out over the nightly period. That is no consolation to our guests as they were awakened by the bang and still can't get back to sleep!

Looking forward to the new extension we would ask that there be no loud noises or 'spikes' between the hours of 9.00pm and 8.00am.

If the noise problems can't easily be rectified now for the existing factory, what time frame would the factory complex be allowed to source and fix any future loud noises from the new factory?

We understand that when the portable chippers were in the forest they were required to operate at a distance of not less than 600 metres from a house. We are less than 500 metres from the factory boundary and along with our commercial lease, we also hold a residential lease. It does not seem to be equitable.

We also understand that the NSW Industrial Noise Policy is currently being reviewed. It is our opinion that 45dB for the proximity of the timber complex to town, is too generous. We would ask that consideration be given to reducing this nightly limit.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if any clarification is required. Over the last three years we have been addressing these problems with the following people:

**Borg Panels:**

John Borg (only recently)

Jim Snelson

Greg Muir

Victor Bendeviski

Louis Snelson

Aaron Evans

**Highlands / Structaflor Complex:**

Tom Williams

Peter Hotham (no longer in their employ)

Spiro Kavaleiros

Numerous noise reports to 1800 802 795 (community hotline for the whole complex)

**EPA**

Andrew Helms