

Van plan could be money earner

A couple of caravan enthusiasts have come up with an idea to make your mobile home pay for itself. Writes **Patrick Quinn**

WHEN David and Pamela Egan drive past a house and see a caravan hidden under a tarp collecting cobwebs, they see money going to waste.

They look at caravans and recreational vehicles as mobile holiday units. An investment which should be running up and down the highway or sitting in a national park earning money for their owners, not taking up space down the side of the house.

So, with this in mind the Mooloolaba couple started up Private Caravan Hire, a website-based swap-and-hire business that introduces part-time mobile home users to recreational vehicles and caravans.

“We had friends who had caravans and we couldn’t understand why they were just left to lie in the yard,” Mrs Egan said.

“Figures show caravans sit idle for 204 days a year, which is such a waste.”

And with Australia’s fleet of 200,000 caravans and 30,000 self-contained motor homes, the entrepreneurs think the sky’s the limit, both for them and their customers.

“It is a win-win situation for both parties,” Mrs Egan says.

“Caravans and RV owners are only too aware of how often their investment is sitting idle and empty, and with living costs increasing this is a way for owners to receive cash returns.

“There are retirees out there with caravans having trouble paying for their upkeep, so this is an ideal way for them to make extra money and pay the bills.”

And with caravans and RVs costing many tens of thousands of dollars, they are also an expensive investment.

“We were considering buying but we could not justify the expense for the time we would use a caravan, so had held off purchasing. This allows people to try before they buy and see if caravanning for them.” Mrs Egan told *The Sunday Mail*.

The Egans said owners could earn \$2200 for four weeks, leasing of an average 5m pop-top caravan.

And it’s not just grey nomads who are using the service.

“There are a lot of young families on a budget interested. It’s also ideal for people who have relatives or friends visiting from overseas.” Mrs Egans said.

The Private Caravan Hire web-site gives owners their own advertising profile, including description and photos of their caravans and RV, and the ability to edit and stipulate the conditions of hire or swap. Users have a search option to browse hire vehicles Australia wide and swap vehicles, using the map or region search.

Mrs Egans said PCH’s online support included insurance referral, legal documentation for the hire agreement and practical advice. Listing or searching using the website is free.

Premium membership to join the site and connect with owner of hirer is \$99.95 per year.