

sun spots

AT A DISADVANTAGE

NATIONWIDE

YARRABAH is Australia's most disadvantaged local government area, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The 2011 Census of Population and Housing ranked areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Peppermint Grove in Western Australia was named Australia's most advantaged LGA, followed by Kuring-gai in NSW. Aurukun is Australia's fourth most disadvantaged LGA, while Weipa is Queensland's second most advantaged LGA after Brisbane.

PARK SALE SHELVED

EDMONTON

DOWN Park in Edmonton will no longer be considered for possible sale by Cairns Regional Council. Instead, the community will be consulted on how best to develop the park to meet existing and future needs. Last month, the council voted to consider "disposing of a portion of the land" subject to a review of the park's development plan. Future recommendations will be presented to the council later.

BID FOR BOOMERS CAMP

CAIRNS

CAIRNS Regional Council will work with the Cairns Taipans to try to bring the Australian Boomers basketball training camp to Cairns in July. The council has also supported a proposal to bring the Queensland Bulls Masters cricket program to the region in May.

CYCLIST TOP JUNIOR

NORTH QUEENSLAND

CAIRNS cyclist Tennille Falappi won the North Queensland Junior Sportstar Award and \$1000 when the awards were held recently at the Sheraton Mirage in Port Douglas. The senior winner was Ashley Stebbings, from Mackay, who received \$2000 and will represent North Queensland at the state awards in Brisbane later this year. Joshua Lush received the athlete with a Disability Award and donated his winner's cheque to the Australian Athletes with a Disability organisation.

Campus rejuvenation

MORE student accommodation was one of Stephen Weller's first priorities, when he arrived in Cairns to take up the helm at James Cook University's Smithfield campus three years ago.

He was unable to sign off on a proposed \$25 m, 250-bed college for the McGregor Rd campus, yet it wasn't for lack of trying.

"It's a key outstanding piece of infrastructure," said the former head of JCU Cairns, who flew to Sydney last week to take up a new post as chief operating officer and deputy vice-chancellor (administration) at the Australian Catholic University.

"We were in discussions with a developer in the last quarter of last year which were well advanced, but in the end they weren't able to confirm the capital they needed. We continued to engage in discussions with another developer ... but until somebody signs on the paper and comes up with the money, that's a key missing piece of infrastructure," he said.

"The longer it takes us and the bigger the campus gets the greater the demand, so the ability to make it work gets better.

"It's not stopping us growing, but it holds a new dimension to student experience and it would allow us to increase international student numbers."

Dr Weller said on-site accommodation would transform campus life at JCU Cairns.

"We've got a very vibrant student experience, but by five-o'clock most businesses are



Developing role: Former head of JCU Cairns Stephen Weller has taken up a new role at the Australian Catholic University.

quieter. If students were living on campus, the library, refectory remain active."

He said student numbers had grown from 3000 to 4500 in the past three years, with staff increasing from 300 to 800.

"I won't see the 5000 students I would like to have achieved, but it will get there by March 2014 at the latest, a year before the March 2015 target," he said.

Dr Weller is also confident of the strengthening ties in the community with business, arts, sport-

ing and education sectors.

"There were some who thought the university was very Townsville-centric and wasn't as committed to Cairns," he said.

Dr Weller said the three new courses planned for JCU Cairns – new media journalism, paramedic studies and tropical architecture – will continue to raise its profile. New media journalism was on the horizon for the next year or two; paramedic studies for 2015 and tropical architecture could begin in three years.

"Alongside dentistry, that would be a real jewel in the crown for us. A lot of architects around the world would also be interested in postgraduate tropical architecture. Singapore, Hawaii, you name it," he added.

Dr Weller hopes to be back for the opening of JCU's new boulevard entrance later in 2013.

He will also return, as president of the Association for Tertiary Management, with 800 delegates for a five-day conference at Cairns in 2014.