



The Coast heats up for Indy

Race to roar but bookings slump

BOOKINGS are down for trackside units during Indy just three weeks before the four-day motorsports festival gets away from the starting line.

Surfers International Realty representative Malcolm Catchpole said the situation was 'unheard of'.

"The phone is not ringing and there is far less demand for units this year," he said.

By ANDREW POTTS

"We have been advertising which we normally wouldn't have to do but nobody is calling.

"In the past we fought people off."

Mr Catchpole said several factors contributed to the lower number of renters.

"It is a sign of the times with the struggling economy," he said.

"Also because Indy is no longer a champion-

ship race, I don't think it will bring in as many people as it will have in past years."

Gold Coast Accommodation Service proprietor Faye R Kimber-McMillan said it was not unusual.

"We have received reports things are quieter but there are still many places on the Gold Coast booked out," she said.

"I am sure it will be a rip-roaring race."

Indy annually attracts

more than 300,000 visitors to the glitter strip and generates nearly \$60 million.

Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce president Laura Younger said Indy would give the Gold Coast much-needed attention.

"It always brings a lot of people in and gives the local economy a shot in the arm," she said.

"Indy is advertising you can't pay for." Indy begins on October 23.



Chamber boss to push membership

By ANDREW POTTS

LAURA Younger has seen Surfers Paradise change beyond recognition and will help to define its future as the new president of the area's chamber of commerce.

The 45-year-old Surfers resident has been a member of the chamber for three years and last month took the top job 'to make a mark on the area' after former president Paul Darveniza stood down.

"The Gold Coast is a wonderful place and Surfers is a pivotal part of it," she said.

"One of my priorities is to increase membership of the chamber to make it more effective."

Mrs Younger, the general manager of the Australian Timeshare and Holiday Ownership Council said it was important for tourist numbers to continue growing.

"I think the general feeling in the area is a bit down because of the economic turmoil and there are not as many tourists here as we would like to see," she said.

"We need to get more people to use the precinct and put more money back in to the area's

businesses.

"Surfers Paradise has to be at the front of people's minds when they are looking for a holiday destination, as well as people looking for a place to build a business and we are developing strategies for the future."

Mrs Younger, a self-described 'Gold Coast girl' grew up in the precinct and said she hoped to see it continue to grow.

"I think it is holding its own and will continue to grow and prosper," she said.



IN CHARGE... Laura Younger hopes to increase membership of Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce.