



*... will take you there!*

[Visit our Website](#) | [link to Facebook](#)

## AVIC News

Issue 156 3 March 2010

### Welcome Lyn

Autumn's here already, where did summer go?

Congratulations to all the AVICs we have visited whilst conducting Audits. It's great for us to get out and see first-hand the excellent service AVICs provide for the travelling public.

An example we witnessed was Bermagui AVIC where a staff member was attending to a couple from overseas who wanted assistance to confirm their return trip. The staff member spent upwards of thirty minutes with these customers identifying their needs, making the required telephone calls, etc.

We know this is what happens in all AVICs on a daily basis but, from our point of view, it was great to see assistance given above and beyond, all with a cheery smile.

Well done to you all for the excellence in which you portray the very high standard of the AVIC Network.

Aurora's John & Lyn will be attending the LGSA tourism conference, so we will see you soon in Cowra.

*Enjoy your Newsletter - Lesley, Lyn, John, Maryanne and Gordon*

### Industry News

#### Easter Public Holidays

The gazetted NSW Public Holidays for Easter are:

- 2 April 2010 - Good Friday
- 3 April 2010 - Easter Saturday
- 5 April 2010 - Easter Monday

Source: Department Industrial Relations - [www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au](http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au)

Are you wondering when Daylight Saving ends? It's 4 April, still a while to go yet!

---

#### BookEasy Connection to TXA Completed

Another major step forward in the development of Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA) was marked today with BookEasy announcing that its well established software solution for Visitor Information Centres (VICs) is now connected to TXA. The connection will provide VICs using BookEasy with direct access to TXA to supplement their range of Australian tourism product and inventory.

"Clients of BookEasy will now have immediate access to the live inventory of the many tourism providers

within TXA, enhancing the quick and easy search for Australian rooms, seats and tickets within the BookEasy system", said BookEasy's CEO, David Oliver.

"Our partnership with TXA as a distribution point for Australian tourism product is an example of our commitment to providing Visitor Information Centres (VICs) across Australia with the most extensive range of product for them to sell."

Liz Ward, Chief Executive of the ATDW said, "We are extremely pleased to welcome BookEasy as a connected technology to the TXA family and we are very confident that the VICs using their technology will provide another valuable distribution option for all Australian tourism products. It reinforces the open nature of TXA and the important role VICs play in our industry".

Importantly, this development highlights the opportunity for VICs to take an active role in the TXA initiative and capitalise on their relationship with their clients and customers visiting their region. TXA reinforces the role of the VICs as an important partner in selling Australian travel product.

V3 Executive Director and CEO, Shane Crockett, explained "By utilizing the Open Booking Exchange TM technology, TXA has been able to lead the way in providing a neutral exchange to enhance the on line marketing capability of Australian tourism product."

BookEasy will now be working with VICs that use the BookEasy technology to ensure they will reap maximum benefits from this new connection.

*Source: Tourism New South Wales*

## Marketing / PR

### Selling Your Destination

No matter what Visitor Information Centres do or don't do, there is no escaping the fact that more and more potential visitors (tourists) these days use multiple tools to access information and research potential travel destinations.

No longer is the Visitor Information Centre website offering something to be reviewed annually. It is a live tool that is up against global competition. It is essential for Visitor Information Centres to make the visitor web experience easy, have it packed with offers, have a "close the sale" immediacy to capture and keep its local market, plus interest its overseas visitors.

So let's look at how we can attract visitors to the website .....

With the advent of TV travel shows such as Sydney Weekender, Getaway and Great Outdoors, Australians are informed and enticed by special offers to go visit 'XYZ' and do it now - a call to action to access the discounted travel or accommodation - (marketing in a manner that enforces an immediate decision by the consumer to take up the offer).

There is so much value in organising media famils and showcasing your area in the best way possible, to a wide demographic through various print media too.

There is also value in adding images, commentary and video to Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and MySpace, SMS, MMS (and there's bound to be more), but basically, offers are out there in every conceivable communication channel, which target consumers to visit specific destinations.

**One thing remains constant, you need to sell your destination at every opportunity, and that includes serving the visitor that walks in your door.**

**Are you doing all you can do to keep the visitor in your town longer?**

*Source: Aurora Research*

## Volunteers / OH&S

### Steps to Retain Volunteers

Having gone through the recruitment procedures to recruit volunteers, it is important to develop protocols and have the skills to retain these valuable staff members.

These steps will help to keep your volunteers committed to your business.

#### A Sense of Belonging

- Sharing the news
- Sense of equality
- Part of a team
- Placement in organisation
- Opportunities for self-development
- Confidence and belief in what they are doing

- Social interaction/group
- Involvement in decisions
- Personal invitations to events
- Response to concerns
- Outcome of training
- Knowing organisations and job
- Visible identity
- Mention in Annual Report

### Keeping down the Negatives

- Providing good tools for the job
- Providing ongoing training
- Develop career paths
- Providing flexibility
- Providing support and de-briefing
- Reimbursement of costs
- Involvement in committees
- Direct communication about news
- Organisational contact person
- Follow up those who have left
- Grievance procedures
- Good work conditions
- Two-way communication

Source: *Volunteer Management Australia*

## AVIC Connect

### AVIC Annual Reports 2010

Last week, Aurora emailed all AVICs advising that AVIC Annual Reports were due.

As part of your Accreditation obligation, all AVICs are required to submit a brief Report each year.

We would appreciate you completing your Report as soon as possible and returning it to Aurora via email, fax or mail. If you need a copy of the Report Form, just send us a reply email to [lesley@auroraresearch](mailto:lesley@auroraresearch) and we will send you a copy of the Annual Report Form. We look forward to receiving your Reports.

If you have any further queries regarding the above, please don't hesitate to contact us on 02.6885 5558.

### Complaints Handling for AVICs

Successful AVICs work hard to provide excellent, professional service to their customers.

Prevention is better than cure! It is almost inevitable that, at some stage, you will receive a customer complaint. Don't presume a customer complaint is a negative experience because, if handled well, it can be a valuable learning tool.

It is essential that all AVICs have an effective complaints handling system which is fully explained to all staff and volunteers at their Staff Induction/Orientation or at specific staff training, conducted in the early stages of their employment.

#### An effective complaints handling system can benefit your business in several ways:

- Improved product quality and service delivery
- Fewer mistakes and less time taken to fix them
- Better understanding of customers' needs
- Improved business reputation

#### Who should handle the complaint?

Your customer will become more upset if they have to repeat the complaint to several people. The person attending to the customer must quickly ascertain whether they can handle the complaint themselves, if not or if you are unsure, offer to refer the customer to the appropriate person in your Centre, before the customer provides the full story. Explain to the customer that this person can take responsibility for resolving the complaint.

#### How to handle the complaint

- **Listen:** Have the customer shown away from the public area if possible. (This may assist them to calm down and also demonstrates to them that you are taking them seriously). Ascertain specific details of the complaint – take notes. Use attentive listening skills – using eye contact with the customer, using appropriate body movements (lean forward toward the customer to demonstrate that you are listening). Ask frequent questions, as silence demonstrates that you may not be fully attentive. Do not at this stage make comments about the complaint. You must get the whole story.
- **Show empathy:** Apologise to the customer for the specific complaint, e.g. "I am really sorry that there was a problem with the booking for your accommodation". Use terms like, "I see", "that must have been awful for you", "I understand how you feel". These comments demonstrate to the customer that you are on his/her side. Use a quiet tone when speaking to the customer and don't make additional negative comments such as, "Oh, they aren't very nice people" or "We have had complaints about these people before". Comments like these will just inflame the situation.
- **Confirm the details of the complaint:** Summarise the nature of the complaint to the customer to demonstrate that you have all the correct facts. You can say, "So you are saying that....." Do not try to make excuses or defend anyone mentioned in the complaint.

- **Respond and find a mutually acceptable solution:** If the customer is demanding a solution that is unreasonable or not achievable, suggest alternatives. Agree on a solution and check if that is satisfactory to the customer. Advise the customer on the steps that you will take to resolve the situation. If you can solve the problem immediately, do so.
- **Follow up:** If you can't resolve the complaint straight away, explain to the customer the course of action you are going to take. Advise the customer that you will phone personally within a reasonable time frame to advise the outcome and ensure the customer is happy with the outcome you have brokered. It is imperative that the timeframe you gave is adhered to.
- **Report:** Refer and discuss the complaint to your supervisor/manager. Provide a brief written report to be kept on file.

Source: Aurora Research

## Visitor Satisfaction Survey

During our travels in conducting AVIC Audits, several Centres have not been aware of the Visitor Satisfaction Survey template provided by Aurora previously.

The survey template is designed so that each AVIC can personalise the questions to suit their own AVIC operation and service delivery areas. The information gained from the customer will supplement your survey resources. Later in the week, we will send this survey out to the Network, so keep a look out for it in your Inbox.

## What's On

**23 March - Jerilderie Lake Opera** - For a truly memorable experience, don't miss this wonderful, relaxed performance of Puccini's sublime Opera, "La Boheme" in Luke Park. BYO food and drinks and bring a table/chairs and/or rug. For tickets and bookings, phone Jerilderie Shire Council Offices - 03 5886 1200.

**26 – 28 March - Thirroul Seaside Festival** - The festival weekend provides a fabulous program of activities and entertainment for everyone. A genuine community celebration of visual and performing arts, Thirroul township comes alive with art-in-the-shops, stage entertainment, quality market stalls, talent quest, art exhibitions and displays, as well as great food and shopping as always. For further information, log onto [www.thirroulfestival.com](http://www.thirroulfestival.com)

**31 March - Westin (Sydney) - Slim Dusty Country Ball** - A fantastic event with the Slim Dusty Family, Ray Hadley as the Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer, and special guest Dick Smith (Patron of the Foundation). With entertainment on the night such as Troy Cassar-Daley, the Sunny Cowgirls, Adam Harvey and the Bushwackers, it stands to be a night not to be missed! For further information and reservations log onto [www.slimdustycentre.com.au](http://www.slimdustycentre.com.au)

**2-5 April - Jindabyne - Lake Light Sculpture** - A free outdoor sculpture exhibition and competition held over the four days of Easter. The exhibition runs along the foreshore of Lake Jindabyne where viewers can experience artworks in the beautiful setting of mountains reflected in, and as the backdrop to the lake. Illumination is a unique feature of the festival with the artworks dramatically lit at night, both electronically and by the Easter moon. For further information log onto [www.lakelightsculpture.com.au](http://www.lakelightsculpture.com.au)

## AVIC Staff Profile

### AVIC Staff Profile

In this issue we profile **Linda Tillman** from the newly opened and accredited **June Visitor Information Centre**.

**My current position is:** Tourism Development Officer for June Shire Council and that involves: In a nutshell my role is to further develop June as a visitor destination and create increased collaboration between operators, council and other community groups. This is an extremely rewarding position which has recently seen the formation of a 'Tourism June' networking group that meets on a regular basis to discuss tourism issues and ideas, the establishment of the June Visitor Information Centre and the registration of June Shire Council as an Aussie Host Provider. There is plenty more in the pipeline but, at the moment, I am heading off for a couple of months maternity leave.

**The best thing about my position is:** working with the community, both on a local level and regional level.

**I have been working here since:** June 2009

**My previous position was:** I am a self employed tourism and marketing consultant so I have a number of roles, including a great VFR publicity program with Riverina Regional Tourism and other smaller marketing jobs with various organisations in the region.

**My favourite sport / leisure activity is:** horse riding and polo crosse – some people call me mad but I love it!

**My favourite holiday destination is:** Anywhere that allows me to relax with a good book and great coffee ... and preferably near the ocean!

**People tell me I'm good at:** being organised ... everything is organised!

**My favourite colour is:** green and purple

**My favourite singer/music is:** This varies greatly depending on the mood I am in ... I enjoy everything from Black Eyed Peas to Guy Sebastian and Keith Urban.

**If I could live my life over again I would:** listen to my mum more as a child. As a mum of a 2 ½ yr old (and number 2 on the way), I often notice myself saying, 'This is payback for not listening to my mum!'



**Thank you Linda for sharing your profile with us and good luck with the new AVIC in Junee.**

## AVIC Showcase

### News Flash

The 2010 AITO Professional Development Course will be held in Kiama on the beautiful South Coast of NSW.

Kiama Visitor Information Centre Management and Staff are very much looking forward to helping to showcase their city to all the attendees at the AITO Professional Development Conference to be held on Wednesday, 28th – Friday, 30th July. The venue will be The Sebel Harbourside, Kiama.

AITO is back with a vengeance and, if last year is anything to go by, this is a Conference not to be missed to develop one's self, if you are in the business of tourism. This Conference will be about delivering you the skills required to better your performance and outcomes, both personally and professionally, and it's a great way to catch up with all the other Tourism Managers in regional Australia.

Read the 2009 Testimonials .....

"The AITO Conference was fun, educational and provided great networking opportunities with other tourism colleagues".

"AITO is back – informative, thought provoking, idea creating and good networking".

"Very informative, I can take some ideas away. Enjoyed meeting others from the regions".

To be kept up to speed on the latest information, register your interest by emailing the Conference Convenor, Lorick Management, on [info@lorickmanagement.com.au](mailto:info@lorickmanagement.com.au) or bookings can be made through [glynn@lorickmanagement.com.au](mailto:glynn@lorickmanagement.com.au)

Take the opportunity to stay a while longer and experience the beautiful Kiama region. Go to [www.kiama.com.au](http://www.kiama.com.au) to see what Kiama has to offer.



Kiama Visitor Information Centre

*Our thanks to Kathy Campbell - Kiama AVIC and Lori Modde - Conference Convenor for the above information.*

## 61 Weekend

In 2009, the inaugural "61 Weekend" was held in Dubbo and Narromine in aid of the McGrath Foundation. If you drive from Dubbo to Narromine via Minore Road, Rawsonville Bridge, Burroway Road and Gilgandra Road, you will travel 61km. This just happens to be Glenn McGrath's highest score in Test Cricket, made against New Zealand in 2004.

Glenn McGrath was born at the Dubbo Base Hospital and raised in Narromine. As a result of this bond he has with the two communities, it was decided to run a sporting weekend with "61" as the theme. In 2009, there were five sports that participated - a 61km cycle between Dubbo and Narromine, a barefoot bowls evening, tennis afternoon, 2-day paddle from Dubbo to Narromine and a 7-a-side cricket day held in Narromine.

Over \$12,000 was raised for the McGrath Foundation in 2009 and, as a result, it has been decided to run it again in 2010.

This year the weekend has been extended by a couple of days so that additional sports can be accommodated. From Thursday, 18th to Sunday, 21st March, ten sports will be held in and around the Dubbo and Narromine areas - all with "61" as the theme.

There will be swimming, golf, tennis, cycling, canoeing, cricket, soccer, lawn bowls, snooker and indoor bowls - with participation being the key theme.

For further information, visit [www.61weekend.com](http://www.61weekend.com)



**AVIC Deadline for Contributions**




Please email [lesley@auroraresearch.com.au](mailto:lesley@auroraresearch.com.au) with any articles you wish to be included in the upcoming AVIC News, prior to 12 March 2010.

We appreciate your contributions and input into the AVIC Network Program.

*While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this Newsletter, the Editor assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions or any consequences of reliance on this Newsletter. Information reprinted here is done in good faith for accuracy and currency. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the Publisher, Editor or the Newsletter.*



Published by  
**Aurora Research**  
37 Erskine St / PO Box 1000 Dubbo NSW 2830  
p: 02 6885 5558 f: 02 6885 5556 e: [vic@auroraresearch.com.au](mailto:vic@auroraresearch.com.au)  
[www.auroraresearch.com.au](http://www.auroraresearch.com.au)

To send to a Friend, use this link  [Send to a Friend](#)

To subscribe use this link [Confirm Subscription](#)

If you wish to opt out from future messages please click the Unsubscribe link below.

[Unsubscribe](#)

If your name has not displayed correctly on this e newsletter please update your details via this link [Update your profile](#)

This email was sent by Lesley Johnson, Aurora Research, 37 Erskine St DUBBO NSW 2830 Australia, p: 02 6885 5558, e: [vic@auroraresearch.com.au](mailto:vic@auroraresearch.com.au); [lesley@auroraresearch.com.au](mailto:lesley@auroraresearch.com.au) to [lyn@auroraresearch.com.au](mailto:lyn@auroraresearch.com.au)

[Unsubscribe](#)

powered by  
duckmail

