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## AVIC News

Issue 163 9 June 2010

### Welcome Lyn

**We have included details from an article on local festivals in this issue which we thought you might find informative.**

**If you have a festival or a major event coming up, please email the details and we will feature it in upcoming issues of the AVIC News.**

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

### Industry News

#### A Fantasia of Festivals

Social calendars are filling up across NSW as the number and variety of country festivals increases in a bid to attract tourism dollars and visitors. Across the State, festivals are being held to celebrate everything from cherries to Elvis, bush poetry to falling leaves and everything in between. Some festivals have a long history while others are new to the scene, but all are attracting visitors and tourism dollars to their towns.

Towns like Tamworth in the north and Deniliquin in the south have also used iconic events to give themselves a national profile. The Tamworth Country Music Festival, which started in 1973, now attracts tens of thousands of visitors, and the Deniliquin Ute Muster was started to boost tourism nearly eleven years ago, and now attracts motoring and music enthusiasts from across the country.

The Parkes Elvis Festival is another success story. Started in 1973 for a bit of fun and to overcome a sleepy summer tourism season, Parkes now finds itself inundated with Elvis enthusiasts and look-alikes every January, doubling its population and adding more than \$5 million to the local economy.

Food and wine festivals are among the most popular, with events like Narrabri's, "Nosh on the Namoi", a hit with both locals and visitors. This event started in 2002 to promote local produce, initially attracting 4000 people, now having crowds double that.

Across the State, dozens of smaller festivals are also celebrating local stories and successes.

A report by the University of Wollongong last year which examined festivals in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales and their role in invigorating community and stimulating economic development, stated that although these festivals were small and diverse, cumulatively they made up a substantial industry. The report, '*Reinventing Rural Places: the Extent and Impact of Festivals in Rural and Regional Australia*', estimated the turnover across the three States to be \$550 million annually, although most did not aim to make large profits. The festivals instead tried to stimulate the local economy through spending and job creation.

Source: From an article by Katana Smith of *The Land*

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**Get Connected Reminder – Mandatory Business Rules**

As you are aware, the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), in agreement with all State and Territory organisations, has implemented a number of business rules to improve the quality of product listings held in the database.

The business rules are:

At least one image per record

Product descriptions to have a minimum of 50 and a maximum of 150 words

Service descriptions to have a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 125 words (accommodation, hire and tour listings)

Over the past nine months, Tourism NSW has seen a significant improvement in NSW product listings and would like to thank all Get Connected users for their hard work in implementing the business rules.

From 1 July 2010, products that do not comply with the business rules will not be promoted via the ATDW, which distributes content to over 45 providers.

If you would like an updated list of records that do not meet the business rules, please email the Get Connected team. Tourism NSW encourages all AVICs to update their records to ensure their products remain in the ATDW. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Get Connected team on 1300 655 077 or [getconnected@tourism.nsw.gov.au](mailto:getconnected@tourism.nsw.gov.au).

Tourism NSW thanks you for your continual support in promoting tourism in NSW.

*Get Connected team, Tourism NSW*

## e-Kit now on Video

Many of the Tourism Online Marketing e-Kit tutorials are now available on video. The free e-Kit, first released at the end of 2008, was produced to assist tourism businesses to harness the power of online marketing and booking.

The e-Kit was jointly developed by the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and the Australian State and Territory Tourism Offices including Tourism NSW. Topics available on video include -Internet: Planning my Success; The Internet, Web 2.0 and the Tourism Industry; Images 101; Critical Components of Optimising a Website; .... and more. People are being urged to watch the videos while reading the related tutorials. To see the e-Kit and videos go to: [http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Tourism\\_e-kit\\_p3313.aspx](http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Tourism_e-kit_p3313.aspx)

*Source: Tourism NSW Insights Newsletter*

## Marketing

### "We LOVE THE GONG" - The Success So Far

Last month, the team at Tourism Wollongong embarked on a fun, light-hearted (and cheeky!) campaign for Wollongong, using its nickname, 'the Gong'. The success of the 'We Love the Gong' campaign has been incredible given it's only been running for 39 days. The reaction from community, local businesses, local and state government and media has been extraordinary, with everyone keen to 'share the love' and their passion for the Gong.

It's testimony to the honesty and the simplicity of the message that it has been embraced so emphatically. The campaign has had priceless exposure from WIN TV and the Illawarra Mercury. There has been significant successes through social media, with Facebook fans doubling, strong response to [www.welovethegong.com.au](http://www.welovethegong.com.au) which houses 'the Gong blog' and increased activity through the accounts in Flickr, YouTube and Twitter that Tourism Wollongong manage. The biggest success though is arguably the 'I love the Gong' t-shirts which have become a much demanded commodity and will go on sale next month at the Southern Gateway Centre AVIC (much to the relief of those still yet to score a shirt)!



*Source: Kate Dombkins, Sales & Marketing Tourism Wollongong*

**Well done to Tourism Wollongong and good luck for the rest of the campaign.**

## Volunteers / OH&S

### Leeton Volunteer Program

The Leeton Visitor Information Centre Volunteer Program commenced on 1 December 2009. Since the Program started, we have successfully inducted and engaged the assistance of four people.

After a review of the volunteer sign on/sign off register, we have totalled that our Visitor Information Centre has received just over 370 voluntary hours from our Volunteer Program since its commencement. This is an outstanding result and a great credit to the volunteers who are contributing significantly to servicing visitors to our town.

The volunteers have assisted with a number of crucial tasks since they commenced duties with us. Some of the key tasks they have undertaken include:

- Inputting of hard copy visitor statistical data into new Excel Statistical Analysis Form. We now have 15 years worth of visitor statistical data that we can now use in comparing current visitor trends (i.e.- through graphs, pie charts, etc.) against trends of the past.
- Compiling numerous visitor information packs for visiting groups to Leeton Shire
- Attending to visitors to our Centre and relieving the added distraction of paid staff being interrupted from key project work
- Chasing up advertising money from local business houses for the 2010 Leeton SunRice Festival Program
- Assisting with guiding visiting tours groups (educational, domestic, special interest, etc.)
- Updating Leeton's event, accommodation and attraction information on the State Tourism Data Warehouse website

In further developing and increasing the overall magnitude of this Program, it is our aim, over the next two months, to introduce three new volunteers to the Program. These three individuals have just completed their induction and a roster will now be designed to cater for them.

Our Volunteer Program is only in its early stages of evolution however, with positive signs and response to this Program by the local community thus far, we can see this Program becoming a major success for years to come.



Lynne Brink (left) and Una Williams (right) (front row) Alan Brink (l) and Lyn Brown (r) (2nd row) Greg Brown (r) (3rd row) and Tourism Coordinator Brent Lawrence (l) and Tourism Officer Michelle Driscoll (r) (back row)

Source: Brent Lawrence, Tourism Coordinator, Leeton AVIC

## OH&S

### Safe Diverse and Productive - A Workplace with People with a Disability

The nature of the workforce in Australia is changing, and the key challenges we face are an ageing population and a skills shortage. Employing people with a disability can be a positive experience for both employers and employees, yet there is unfounded concern about Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

risks for business when employing people with a disability. Research undertaken by the Australian Safety and Compensation Council reveals the following facts about employing people with a disability, highlighting the overall benefits for business.

There is no conclusive evidence to support the suggestion that workers with a disability are more likely to be injured at work than other employees.

**Many people with a disability have the qualifications and skills to match the skill demands of the workforce.**

- People with a disability are employed in a wide variety of jobs, including trades and manufacturing.
- 43% of unemployed people with a disability have higher educational qualifications and the most common fields of qualifications are:  
 ? Management and Commerce : 27%  
 ? Engineering and related technologies: 24%  
 ? Food and Hospitality: 11%

**Minimal cost, Maximum benefit**

- If the workplace needs to be modified for people with a disability, the cost required to make workplace accommodations is minimal, with employers reporting that the benefits of employing workers with a disability outweigh any costs.
- These workplace accommodations may range from adjustments to work methods or workstations and offering flexible working hours, with less than 10% of people with a disability requiring special equipment or extra support at work.
- Research indicates that the productivity of people with a disability is similar to that of employees with no disability.
- Workers with a disability have lower absenteeism and higher retention rates than employees without a disability, which leads to reduced costs in terms of recruitment and training of new staff.
- The inclusion of people with a disability in the labour force leads to economic and social benefits for people with a disability, employers and the community as a whole.

People with a disability are a diverse group and a large percentage have a hidden disability. Over 2 million working age Australians (almost 1 in 6) have a disability.

*Source: Safework Australia*

## AVIC Connect

### New Membership Program

Following months of planning and a thorough review of the existing structure that has been in place for 15 years, Central Coast Tourism launched a long awaited new Membership Program for the Central Coast tourism industry on 31 March 2010.

The previous current structure, where the fee is based on the size of the tourism operator's business, has been overhauled. The new structure allows tourism operators to select the extent of marketing they wish to participate in, based on their own business strategy in attracting the local, regional, national or international tourist.

If the tourism operator business is suited to the local day tripper market, then they will gain value from the Local Membership Package. If their product is of an international standard and receives consistent international visitation, then the International Membership Package will be appropriate. As you can see, the structure is very intuitive, which should translate into better awareness, engagement and understanding of the services that Central Coast Tourism offers."

For more information:  
 Jacqui Greaves, Business Development Manager  
 Central Coast Tourism  
 Tel: (02) 4343 4401 Email: [jgreaves@centralcoasttourism.com.au](mailto:jgreaves@centralcoasttourism.com.au)

For details log onto <http://www.visitcentralcoast.com.au/dyncontent.cfm?MenuID=392>

*Thanks Jacqui for sharing this with the Network.*

## Goodbye to Joy Groves - The Entrance AVIC

I began work with Gosford Tourist Association in September, 1993 as Sales Consultant, and later became Manager of the Gosford Visitor Centre when the previous Gosford Manager moved into the new Terrigal Visitor Centre. Following amalgamation of the Gosford Tourist Association and Tuggerah Lakes Tourist Association in 1994, I worked with Central Coast Tourism at the Terrigal Information Centre in marketing. In 1995, Central Coast Tourism offered me the position as Manager Information Services at The Entrance Visitor Centre, supervising staff and volunteers and, following the opening of the Kariong Visitor Information Centre, I also worked on a roster basis with the sales staff in that office (just in case I needed more training)!!

To promote the icon of the Central Coast, The Norah Head Lighthouse, I was invited to become a Trustee and have been on the Norah Head Lighthouse Trust for 5 years and have worked with Central Coast Tourism to promote the Lighthouse.

In January 2010 The Entrance Town Centre Management took over management of the Entrance Visitor Centre - I agreed to continue my employment with them for six months to train their new staff.

Over the period of my employment with Central Coast Tourism, I have been supported by wonderful staff and volunteers and I have made lifetime friends. I have enjoyed all of my conversations with visitors who have come from everywhere in Australia and all parts of the world, telling them about the wonderful scenery and attractions of the beautiful Central Coast. Heaven knows how many I have directed to the toilet!

Thank you to Lesley, Lyn and staff at AVIC for all of your help and great advice over the years.

Au Revoir!



**Good luck Joy with whatever you do in the future and thank you for your work in promoting the Central Coast region and the AVIC Network. We, at Aurora, will miss you.**

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### **New Executive Manager for Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism**

Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism staff, business and board members would like to welcome their newly appointed Executive Manager – Dean Gorrard to the team. Dean comes into the role with over 20 years tourism experience spanning the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Dean has a strong background in retail travel and tour operations that was developed during his early career in the UK and has spent the last 15 years working in destination marketing representing Bath, NSW and Canterbury.



Source: Hunter Valley Wine Country Tourism

## What's On

### 19 June - Katoomba- The Winter Magic Festival 2010

The Festival Season also includes a program of satellite events that will run throughout the month of June. Winter Magic is the Blue Mountains' biggest annual event - a time when musicians and magicians, jugglers and gymnasts, dancers, drummers, divas, clowns, choirs and community take over one of Australia's most famous towns. For enquiries phone 1300 653 408 or log onto [www.wintermagic.com.au](http://www.wintermagic.com.au)

### 26 June - Lismore - Lismore Lantern Parade 2010

The theme for 2010 is 'Seeds' which follows on from the optimism theme of last year. In 2010 we sow the seeds of our future, seeds of new beginnings and the gardens of our dreams ... The Lismore Lantern Parade has always focused on the positive and the beautiful, whilst at the same time acknowledging the shadow and the pain that is also a part of all our lives in some way. Features of the parade include arts, crafts, workshop, regional cuisine, spectacular parade, lanterns, parade bands, street theatre, carnival dancers, illuminated puppets, fire art and pyrotechnics and much, much more. For details log onto [www.lanternparade.com](http://www.lanternparade.com)

## AVIC Staff Profile

### AVIC Staff Profile

In this issue we profile **Toby McEvoy**, Tourism Manager at **Yass Valley AVIC**

**My current position is:** Tourism Manager for the Yass Valley Region which involves the management of the Visitors Information Centre whilst also trying to maximise the value of tourism for local businesses and the local community. Also to encourage and facilitate effective participation within the local community when planning and developing tourism initiatives.

**The best thing about my position is:** The staff I work with and the locals who are passionate about promoting local businesses and events and are leading initiatives in order to drive tourism growth into the future.

**I have been working here since:** May 11, 2010.

**My previous position was:** Operations Manager for Mantra Hotel Group, Canberra.

**My favourite sport / leisure activity is:** AFL, Fishing and Golf

**My favourite holiday destination is:** Anywhere, as long as my beautiful girlfriend Emma is with me!

**People tell me I'm good at:** Looking at the positives in life.

**My favourite colour is:** Grey

**My favourite singer/music is:** I'll listen to just about anything.

**If I could live my life over again,** I would: do it all again!



**Welcome to the AVIC Network Toby and our thanks for participating in this section of the Newsletter!**

## AVIC Showcase

### 'Discovering Country' in Jindabyne

The Snowy Region Visitor Centre will this week host a stunning exhibition of landscape photos which came about as a direct result of a collaboration between the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Discovery Ranger Program at Tumut and a group of Australia's top landscape photographers.

NPWS Manager Andrew Harrigan, said that it all began with a chance meeting.

"In October last year Murray van der Veer, one of the country's top professional photographers, entered the Tumut Visitors Centre with his family to enquire about the NPWS Aboriginal Discovery Ranger Program in Kosciuszko National Park," Mr Harrigan said.

"Here he met Shane Herrington, the Aboriginal Interpretations Trainee at the time, who has since won numerous awards and become Tumut's first permanent Aboriginal Discovery Ranger. Shane took Murray and his family on a tour into a section of Kosciuszko National Park and this meeting spawned an idea to bring 16 known landscape photographers together for a weekend, based at Currango Homestead, to develop a body of work that could be used to raise further funds to support the Aboriginal Discovery Ranger Program.

Under this Program, the NPWS trains and mentors local Aboriginal people to become tour guides. It has been very helpful for a number of local Aboriginal people and Shane is probably the greatest example of that success. To date, 23 Tumut and Brungle Wiradjuri/Wolgalu people have completed, both on and off the job training, with many going on to secure ongoing employment in the tourism industry.

Murray's weekend workshop has since grown and now he offers weekend landscape photography workshops in the park for members of the public, working in cooperation with the NPWS.

The 'Discovering Country' exhibition has just been on show in The Rocks in Sydney, and has been so successful, it is now going on the road with the next stop being the Snowy Region Visitor Centre in Jindabyne. 'Discovering Country' pays tribute to the wisdom of traditional interpretations of land, and the skill and storytelling craft of 16 of Australia's best landscape photographers. It was a life changing weekend for the photographers who focused on incorporating local indigenous people's understanding of the land in their own photographic storytelling.

We will hang 40 stunning images and, in addition to a range of Aboriginal artefacts such as nulla nullas and Coolaman, there will also be a traditional bark canoe which will all be on sale during the exhibition.

Proceeds from the exhibition will contribute towards providing further training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people to learn tour guiding and tourism related skills," Mr Harrigan said.

The exhibition features stunning images by artists including Jenny Blau, Mark Lang and Kent Miklenda. The exhibition was officially opened at the Snowy Region Visitor Centre on June 4.

**This exhibition could be available if any other location is interested in hosting it.  
For further enquiries phone Mark Lees on 02 6947 7025.**



Photo courtesy Michael Simmons

Source: Mark Lees, Visitor Services Manager, Tumut AVIC

### 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 17 June, 2010

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

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Published by  
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