



- Welcome
- AVIC/Industry News
- Your AVIC Brand
- Volunteers
- OH&S
- AVIC Connect
- What's On / Events
- AVIC Network Profiles
- Special Feature - Our Backyard
- Deadline

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Welcome

Welcome to the fortnightly Edition of the AVIC E News

Issue 127 - 9 December, 2008



To all AVIC Management, Staff, Volunteers and their families, we wish you a safe and very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year

This is the last issue of the AVIC E Newsletter for 2008 - ENJOY!

From Lyn, Lesley, John, Gordon & Maryanne

[Back to top](#)

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AVIC/Industry News

2008 Tourism NSW Award Winner

Jenny Massie, Manager, Clarence River Tourism said, "I am absolutely thrilled that Clarence River Tourism won the Gold Award for the Best Visitor Information Centre and Services for the second year in a row at the recent NSW Tourism Awards".

Clarence River Tourism is now a Finalist in the Australian Tourism Awards. "Some of our key achievements which I am sure contributed to us winning the Award include:

- the Destination Management Framework in partnership with Clarence Valley Council
- the Grafton Heritage Trail project, which won a National Trust Heritage Award
- winning the Rod Murdoch Memorial Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Tourism in Northern Rivers and NSW in March
- 17.5% increase in visitor numbers through the Visitor Centres
- massive growth in website use - 2 million hits per year - over 200% increase with an average of 317 on-line customers every day
- the very high level of customer satisfaction with the depth and detail of information provided on <http://www.clarencetourism.com/> and through the Information Centres
- very successful destination marketing / PR campaign which generated \$2.5 million of TV exposure and \$347,400 in print exposure for the Clarence Valley
- 64.8% increase in retail sales, in particular, sales of local arts and craft by Clocktower Gallery members

Our achievements have contributed to a 5% increase in domestic visitors and a 10.3% increase in domestic visitor nights for the Clarence Valley compared to an 18.4% decrease in domestic visitor nights for the Northern Rivers region and a 3.5% decrease for the state of NSW.

Our challenge is now to win the NSW Tourism Award next year, which would mean that Clarence River Tourism will go into the NSW Hall of Fame. I don't think inclusion in the Hall of Fame has ever been achieved by a Visitor Information Centre, especially by a non-profit industry organisation operating Visitor Information Centres, conducting marketing and industry support services."



Pictured above from L-R: Mel Symons, Sally Obermeder, Jenny Massie, Mike Whitney

Congratulations to Jenny and her AVIC staff for such an outstanding achievement.

Canberra AVIC Wins!

Australian Capital Tourism won two awards at the Canberra and Capital Region Tourism Awards, held recently at Parliament House. The Canberra and Region Visitors Centre won the top prize for the Visitor Information Services Category, and Floriade 2007 Aussie Icons, Myths & Legends was commended in the Major

Festivals and Events Category.



Pictured above interior of Canberra & Region Visitor Information Centre.

Congratulations to Michael and all his AVIC staff.

[Back to top](#)

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Your AVIC Brand

Ho Ho Ho ... Late Christmas Presents

Good news! We have pens on order.
Bad news! They won't be here before Christmas.

We are currently waiting to receive a shipment of pens with the 'I Will Take You There' logo printed on the barrel of the pen. We will package these pens, together with Stikki notes and Pocket Guides and post them to AVICs early in the New Year so you'll have to wait for your presents - sorry!



Keeping the Kids Occupied

We know that the Christmas School Holiday period is the busiest time for you with weary parents and kids coming in, so we thought we'd make it a bit easier for you to be prepared with some suggestions to create a kids activity handout. These are suggestions only, but they're fun. See what you can do with them. (We started playing "Who Am I" when we were queued up waiting to get into a Museum and, pretty soon, the whole queue was playing it with whoever they were standing near)!

Driving with kids in the car isn't always easy. They quickly get bored when they are just sitting and doing nothing. Help parents be one step ahead by providing them with a handout sheet with games and fun things to do when on the road. (Of course, you can even create a 'find our icon' in a localised "Things to See and Do in your Area" Kids Kit)!

Get together a Fun Bag - include books to read, coloring books, crayons, word puzzles and hand held games. Providing a variety of toys to occupy kids while driving will ensure that they have plenty of ways to entertain themselves.

Get musical! Some AVIC s sell CDs, otherwise you can suggest old favourite song titles that kids can sing in the car and parents can join in. There's lots of fun things to do when you involve music. Another activity is to listen to the radio and play 'Name That Tune' or sing along with the artist.

"What do you see?" is a fun game for kids on the road. It also encourages them to pay attention to their surroundings. Take turns describing something that you noticed as you were driving. This can be something inside your car, the scenery, other cars or anything else that you notice. Take turns guessing what the object is. The winner gets to pick the next object to describe.

Play the Alphabet Game. The Alphabet Game is a great way for kids to pass the time while travelling. Start with the letter 'A' and find something on the road that has that letter in it. This can be on license plates, billboards, road signs or businesses that you pass along the way. When the letter is found, move to the next one in the alphabet. Once 'Z' is reached, start over at 'A' but with a different theme. This time, find objects such as cars, colours or animals along the roadside that start with that letter.

What are you taking on holiday? This is another fun memory game that will occupy kids while you're driving, hold their attention and help them exercise their brainpower. Each person will take turns listing things in alphabetical order that they would take on holiday. For more fun, start each turn by saying, "I am going on holidays and I am taking....." For advanced players, recite all the things that were said beforehand. See how long the game will last before someone forgets an item that has been named. Try a few questions as below or create some of your own.

- * If you could have three wishes what would they be?
- * If you could have one superpower, what would it be and why?
- * Who is your hero?
- * If you could be a colour/an animal/ a car, what would you be?

Reward the kids for their efforts. As a reward for winning a game that is played, treat the kids to a roadside adventure. Stop at an area attraction along the way and explore it together. It doesn't matter if it's an ice cream shop, a little museum or a park, kids will love the chance to get out and stretch their legs and burn off a little energy before heading on down the road.

The possibilities are endless when you're travelling with children. Before you know it, you'll be at your destination and your kids will be begging you to drive around the block a few more times so that they can keep playing all the fun games!

If you need more things like car games to add, visit <http://www.kidspot.com.au/>. This link will take you right to the page.

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/article+605+80+Car-games.htm>

We hope that the above will make your trips a lot easier for everyone!

Back to top

 **...will take you there!**

Volunteers

Code of Practice for Involving Volunteers

To ensure volunteer involvement is supported to the best possible standard, organisations should adhere to Volunteering Australia's Code of Practice.

- Develop and maintain a "Policy for the Involvement of Volunteer Staff" which covers all aspects of volunteer involvement within the organisation
- Differentiate between paid and unpaid roles
- Define volunteer roles and provide clear job descriptions for volunteer staff
- Ensure that the work of volunteer staff compliments but does not undermine

the work of paid staff

- Provide volunteer staff with orientation to their work and the organisation
- Provide adequate training to enable volunteer staff to perform their work effectively
- Offer volunteer staff opportunities for professional development
- Provide volunteer staff with appropriate levels of support and management through the employment of a qualified/experienced manager/supervisor
- Provide volunteer staff with information on the grievance and disciplinary policy and procedures for the organisation
- Provide volunteer staff with a copy of the "Policy for the Involvement of Volunteer Staff"

Source: *Volunteering Australia*

Back to top

!...will take you there!

OH&S

Safe Lifting

Carrying and lifting the wrong way may result in sprains, strains or other injuries. These basic steps will reduce the risk of manual handling accidents or injuries.

- Examine the object. Check to ensure you can easily handle the weight. Check for sharp edges and that the load is stable and balanced.
- Plan the job. Check that the route is free from trip or slip hazards. Know where the object must be 'unloaded' and plan rest stops if necessary.
- Get help. If possible, use mechanical aids (trolleys) or ask a co-worker to give assistance if you have any doubt about moving the object by yourself.
- Get a good grip. Plan how to hold the object and protect your hands (if necessary). Ensure you can grasp the load correctly.
- Lift with your legs. Assume a comfortable stance, bend your legs not your back, lift smoothly keeping the load close to the body, move your feet, do not twist your body.
- Unloading. Be as careful setting down the load as you were when lifting. Bend with your legs to lower the load. Check that you have allowed enough room for your fingers and toes when the load is set down.
- Ensure the load is secure. Wherever you place it, check that the load will not fall, tip over or block access.

Know your limits, know how to lift and carry loads correctly, know when to get help. Notify your supervisor if a lift is beyond your ability or is potentially hazardous.

Source: *USQSafe*

Back to top

!...will take you there!

AVIC Connect

A Different Type of Christmas Gift

Cute, cuddly and iconic - koalas may be one of the top Aussie Christmas gifts this year.

A NSW Animal Hospital which cares for injured koalas is encouraging people to adopt one of its recuperating marsupials as a Christmas gift for family and friends. The Koala Hospital in Port Macquarie on NSW's mid north coast, offers an Adoption Certificate with a photo, the name of the adopted koala and a short story about its life.

Adoption costs \$40 for each koala, while the process for adopting one of the gum leaf loving animals for someone living overseas costs \$50. For further information, visit <http://www.koalahospital.org.au/>, email info@koalahospital.org.au or telephone (02) 6584 1522.

Door Chime Themes

Aurora visits lots of AVICs and it's a pleasant surprise to walk in the door and be greeted by different sounds instead of the usual 'ding dong'!

Canowindra has birds chirping Balranald has frogs croaking what sound can you think of that will differentiate your AVIC and give the visitor an experience to remember? (Tell us, we love to hear what you are doing!)

Narrabri AVIC has recently had a refurbishment and it looks great! If you're in the area this summer holiday period, make it a point to go and have a look! It is something to remember, and an easy talking point to start engaging in conversation with visitors.

Becoming a Carbon Neutral Business

Consumers are starting to think harder about environmental practices of the companies they do business with. In fact, becoming a carbon neutral business is now a financially astute way of doing business but, what is carbon neutral and how do you achieve it?

The first thing you need to do is 'carbon audit' your business and find out what your carbon footprint is. Vehicle and air travel, office air conditioning, lighting, even leaving your computer on overnight, all contribute to your carbon footprint. It is simply the sum of all the carbon a business produces, either directly or indirectly.

There is a calculator at www.climatepositive.org/measure which can help you work out exactly how much carbon your business is producing.

You may find the results surprising but conversely, you may be pleasantly surprised about how little it costs to offset. The most popular way to offset your carbon usage is to plant trees, which can cost as little as \$5 - \$15 per tonne of carbon produced. Alternatively, simply switch to using 'green electricity'.

Possibly the biggest surprise of all is just how much your business stands to save by adopting more efficient business practices, so you win and the planet wins too.

Source: Business Matters

Tips on Delegating

In the workplace there is often a lack of understanding on how to delegate. Delegating a task or project can be a very scary thought and there can be a feeling of losing control, but delegation really is in the best interest for both managers and team members.

It is a critical skill for managers to develop as, not only does it help to advance and develop them, it helps the team members under them to grow and develop. Delegating is really about teamwork and the development of individuals. Effectively it should be a two-way discussion between managers and team members. It is important to ensure that team members have the opportunity to ask questions.

To help develop team members it is crucial to delegate an entire project or, at least, a whole section of one, instead of small tasks. It is important to remember there are some things that cannot be delegated - performance reviews, discipline and terminating staff are a few examples. Managers also need to remember they are ultimately responsible for the results, even though the task has been delegated.

Below are some points to keep in mind when delegating a job.

- Consider the skills needed to successfully complete the job and select the right

team member

- Clearly specify the desired result and quality
- Inform the team member of their limit of authority and their discretion for making decisions
- Hold the team member responsible for the results
- Provide regular feedback on how the project is going
- Set deadlines for completion or reporting on progress
- Make sure to evaluate the project at its completion and reward the results, if necessary

Source: www.womensforum.com.au

Back to top



What's On / Events

13 Nov. - 28 Dec. - Pokolbin - Christmas Lights Spectacular

This year, Hunter Valley Gardens will provide a breathtaking Christmas experience for people of all ages during the Christmas Lights Spectacular, which will feature a snow dome, nativity scene, motorised miniature train set and a fabulous ginger bread house. With the display being enormous (three times larger than last year) incorporating more than 20 kms. of lights and over 400,000 globes, it's bound to capture the spirit of Christmas and create lasting memories for all. For further information, phone Newcastle AVIC on 0800 654 558.

2 - 5 Jan. 2009 - Evans Head - "The Great Eastern Fly-In"

A unique Australian aviation event - pilots, their families and friends 'Fly-In' from all over Australia, to enjoy a great summer holiday with a difference! Locals, young and old, come to marvel at the latest in aircraft, air displays, and have the ride of their lives.

Aircraft Displays - 3rd and 4th January, 2009. For further information, phone (02) 6621 5592.

15 Jan. 2009 - Bulli - Illawarra Folk Festival

Wollongong is fast becoming recognised for its commitment to live and original music, and the Illawarra Folk Festival is a big part of this burgeoning reputation. The Festival, held at Slacky Flat in Bulli, includes four wonderful days of folk, roots, acoustic and Celtic music as well as workshops for instruments and dance with over 500 performers making up 120 international, national and local acts. For further information, visit <http://www.illawarrafolkfestival.com.au/>

Back to top



AVIC Network Profiles

AVIC Network Staff Profile

This Issue we feature Gloria Heap, Manager, Mudgee Visitor Information Centre.

1. My current position is: Visitor Centre Manager and that involves running the AVIC and all the elements involved with that as well as:

- * developing and updating our website to keep it relevant
- * designing and implementing surveys to collect visitor and member statistics
- * encouraging increased membership and;
- * We have recently installed a large plasma TV, so our latest challenge has been to create interesting material to display, that will encourage visitors to explore the Mudgee region further.

2. The best thing about my position is: I really enjoy interacting with people and in this job there is no shortage of people. The staff are always good for a laugh and visitors are generally out for a good time and, having lots of visitors around, gives your workplace a positive buzz. Tourism is very important to our community and being involved in this vital role is very gratifying.

3. I have been working here since: 2007

4. My previous position was: I owned Eltons Brasserie in Mudgee which our son now owns and operates.

5. My favourite sport / leisure activity is: What's leisure? We also run a sheep and goat dairy so, with that and the AVIC, there isn't time for much else, although I love RPM classes at our local Gym.

6. My favourite holiday destination is: As the Mudgee Region has so much to offer, I would have to say right here.

7. People tell me I'm good at: coping with stressful situations.

8. My favourite colour is: anything bright.

9. If I could live my life over again: I would learn to love green vegetables earlier in life!



Many thanks Gloria for sharing your life with us - a very busy girl with a farm plus a full time position in Tourism!

[Back to top](#)

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Special Feature - Our Backyard

Our Backyard

- from Kelly Hendry, Manager, Parkes AVIC

It's more than 30 years since 'Elvis left the building', yet more than 8,000 Elvis fans gather in the Central NSW town of Parkes (population 11,000) to celebrate Elvis Presley's birthday each January.

Features of the five day program include: Elvis sound-a-like, look-a-like and move-a-like contests, the Elvis Street Parade, an Elvis Gospel Church Service, free outdoor entertainment, barefoot Elvis Lawn Bowls and more than 120 individual Elvis themed events and activities over the five days.

Parkes becomes an oversized Graceland, as you see hundreds of Elvis 'wannabes' roaming the streets, the clubs, pubs, restaurants and even Church!

How it all began

Why an Elvis Festival in Parkes? Parkes has a bunch of passionate Elvis fans - one local Elvis fan has even changed his name to Elvis by deed poll and another local couple operated 'Gracelands Restaurant' for many years. The Festival concept was conceived by these and other passionate community members, who saw potential for a fun event. January was identified as the perfect time to stage the event, being a slow time in local tourism and also coinciding with Elvis Presley's Birthday (8th January). The first Festival was held in Parkes in January 1993.

The Festival has sparked a boom in awareness of Parkes as a tourist destination. Since the Australian movie, "The Dish", hit the big screen, Parkes had been best known as the home of the Radio Telescope, but now the town has become widely recognised as the 'Elvis Capital of Australia'!

The Event

The Festival's events are held over five days (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and each year, the program extends, now with more than 120 individual events. The Festival program features the Elvis Concerts in the club venues, an Elvis Gospel Church Service, a Street Parade, free Elvis in the Park entertainment and various other new novelty events such as the 'Back to the Altar with Elvis - Renewal of Wedding Vows', 'Hunka Hunka Pancake Breakfast' and the 'TransTank Miss Priscilla Dinner & Big Hair Competition'. The CountryLink Elvis Express train from Sydney to Parkes return, is an annual highlight for Festival visitors and a valuable partnership marketing activity. The Festival experience begins even before visitors arrive in town, as they are serenaded by Elvis all the way from Sydney.

Elvis Wins Again! NSW Tourism Award Triumph

Elvis really is alive in Parkes after bringing home yet another award for the CountryLink Parkes Elvis Festival. At a stunning awards ceremony and gala dinner at Star City, Sydney, the 2008 NSW Tourism Award winners were announced - with the CountryLink Parkes Elvis Festival taking out the Gold Award title in the Festivals and Events category.



Two 'Elvii' (the plural of Elvis) at Parkes Radio Telescope!

[Back to top](#)**Deadline**

Some Christmas Trivia

- The Canadian province of Nova Scotia leads the world in exporting lobster, wild blueberries, and Christmas Trees.
- The origin of the Christmas Tree began in Germany in the sixteenth century. Previously some people had decorated fir trees that were outside their houses but, up until then, had not been brought inside the house and decorated.
- Queen Victoria's husband, Albert, who came from Germany, saw the trees and brought the tradition home to England.
- The first American Christmas Tree was introduced by a German family who emigrated and settled in Pennsylvania.
- The first printed reference to Christmas Trees appeared in Germany in 1531.
- The first decorations were mostly apples and nuts.
- Christmas Trees take an average of 7 - 10 years to mature.
- For every real Christmas Tree harvested, 2 to 3 seedlings are planted in their place. Each hectare provides the daily oxygen requirements of 45 people.

Deadline

Please email lesley@auroraresearch.com.au with any articles you wish to be included in the upcoming AVIC News, prior to 21 January 2009

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

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[Back to top](#)

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