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i *...will take you there!*

Welcome

Welcome to the fortnightly Edition of the AVIC E News

Issue 135 - 28 April, 2009

Now School is back we hope you all get a chance to have a coffee break and wind down a little.

*This week as promised we are ready to receive your input and suggestions for the new **AVIC Network Blog** (www.nswavicnetwork.blogspot.com).*

Please visit the blog site and see what this form of communication can do for your AVIC. We encourage all to use this medium as frequently as required. We are at our keyboards ready to answer your enquiries!

*We have also included, as a Special Feature, an article on the value of **Social Networking** to the Tourism Industry. We hope you find this piece insightful.*

Please keep providing us with your suggestions on communication within the AVIC Network on all levels.

Enjoy the Newsletter

From Lyn, Lesley, John, Gordon & Maryanne

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[AVIC/Industry News](#)

Test - AVIC Network Blog

As mentioned in the Introduction, the NSW AVIC Network now has a blog site. Please see below some quick links for you to hop right into it.

NSW AVIC Network Blog

<http://www.nswavicnetwork.blogspot.com/>



Information on the Importance of your AVIC

In over 175 locations across New South Wales, Accredited Visitor Information Centres (AVICs) are working to bring the tourism dollar into communities by ensuring that information about local and state-wide tourist attractions is current and readily available.

Visitors have to eat, sleep, shop, buy the paper, clothes, gifts, groceries, petrol, go to movies, etc. etc. Visitors frequently spend their dollars at the advice of the 'local' expert. AVICs are a trusted source of this local expertise and advice and a key to the prosperity of your town/region.

Do not underestimate the importance of your AVIC. It's an important source of sustainable economic development that can reap rewards which benefit your entire community.

Perhaps you can include the above in your next Media Release or Management Report ...

Source: Aurora

Australian Regional Tourism Convention

The above Convention will be held in Alice Springs, Northern Territory, from 31 August -4 September. The theme of this year's convention will be "Protecting Our Past With Future Plans".

Substantial discounts are available for ARTN members. For further information, contact Vivienne Palmer on 6620 3785 or log onto www.regionaltourism.com.au/artn

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[Your AVIC Brand](#)

AVIC Flags

24/06/2009

We still have stocks of AVIC Flags on hand. To order, simply email lesley@auroraresearch.com.au and we will package and post them with the Tax Invoice enclosed on the day of receipt of your order.



The Door Mount Flags are designed to attach to a bracket (supplied) on the door frame or similar upright of your building. The flags are printed on both sides, made of a durable and heavyweight vinyl material and have a long life expectancy. These flags measure 43 x 43 cm with a 75 cm pole and cost \$30.00 inc GST and postage.

The Flag Pole Flags are made from strong, lightweight fabric that lifts to fly readily. These flags are 1800 x 900 mm and are available from Aurora for \$80.00 each including GST and postage.



Writing a Media Release

Media releases need to be to the point - try and keep them to one A4 page, double spaced.

- ⌘ Your release should include the Who, Where, What, When, Why, and How of your story.
- ⌘ The first paragraph introduces the story and should attract the editor's attention, ie. it contains your main message or "news".
- ⌘ The following paragraphs need to provide further detail to support your "news". They should include details, in descending order of importance, because editors are likely to shorten stories from the bottom up.

Be sure to:

- ⌘ Be specific, don't overuse superlatives, eg. the "most magnificent", the "biggest and best", etc.
- ⌘ Make sure names are spelled correctly.
- ⌘ Keep the language simple and do not use jargon.

- ✍ Include quotes from relevant people - this gives the story credibility.
- ✍ Always include the date and contact phone number for further information.
- ✍ If your story is more than one page, include page numbers.

Please also send your release to Aurora so we can add it as an article in the AVIC News!

Remember, there are many State and National magazines and journals in circulation and their editors are always on the 'look out' for interesting stories.

Source: Tourism WA

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Volunteers

Why I Might Involve a Volunteer in My Organisation

Involving a volunteer provides an opportunity to:

- ✍ Involve the community in promoting the local area
- ✍ Tap into the energy and time of people who want to contribute
- ✍ Tap into unique local knowledge of community members to promote the region
- ✍ To build local pride and a sense of 'ownership' in the community
- ✍ For democratic involvement
- ✍ To assist people to develop their skills
- ✍ To enhance, humanise and extend services
- ✍ To initiate and develop services
- ✍ To bring about change
- ✍ To encourage mutual help and self help
- ✍ To break new ground with committed and spontaneous people

Source: School of Volunteer Management

Celebrate Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week 2009 - 11 - 17 May

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in our communities and to say thank you to the more than 5 million Australians who volunteer.

What is your AVIC doing to celebrate Volunteer Week?

We'd love to hear from you after the celebrations with some images to include in the AVIC Newsletter.

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OH&S

Happy Workplaces

24/06/2009

If you believe the reports, the workplace is becoming sad. Fear of redundancy is pressuring staff to perform harder, leading to more stress and less sleep, resulting in fatigue and low concentration, which cannot be alleviated by the cheaper coffee in the staff kitchen, which no one will drink because the cups are dirty and no one can afford detergent!

**STOP! Does this sound familiar?
Four easy and cheap ways to make a difference.**

Praise staff: Praise and recognition go beyond any monetary incentive. In one study of what employees hate most about their jobs, not receiving recognition for work came in at No.2.

Provide development opportunities: Anything that makes employees feel like they are growing will stimulate them at work. The biggest component of development is not expensive training courses but one-on-one coaching and mentoring.

Create informal leadership roles: One of the biggest motivators is influence. People like to feel important and have responsibilities and have a say in what happens. It could be anything from leading a short-term project or running a training session.

Communication: Studies show that those businesses that communicate well were 400 per cent more likely to have high employee engagement. Communication is not about sending emails or talking to everyone, it is 'an exchange of understanding'. It means managers and employees know what the other is thinking, feeling and wanting.

Ultimately, it's the little things that make the biggest difference to staff. It's the things that you say and do to your employees each day that make a difference as to whether they can go home and say they have had a good day or not.

Source: The Big Chair

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AVIC Connect

Congratulation to Wagga Wagga AVIC Staff

Sally Nolan, Laurene King and Sarah Myers, full time staff at the Wagga Wagga Visitor Information Centre, recently completed Certificate III in Tourism Operations and Certificate III in Visitor Information Services.

Although this course was designed to recognise prior learning and experience, staff did have to complete many assignments and spend hours outside of their core business hours studying and completing their assignments.

Graduation was held on Tuesday, 7 April where they received their Certificates of Achievement with distinctions.

Matthew Holt commenced his Certificate 111 - Tourism (International Retail Travel Sales) course in 2007 and, as part of this course, undertook work experience at the Wagga Wagga Visitor Information Centre in May 2008. When the position of Tourism Assistant was advertised, Matthew applied and successfully became a full time staff member in July 2008. Matthew received his Certificate of Achievement with distinction as well as a special award for securing a full time position while still studying.



From L-R: Sarah Myers, Sally Nolan, Matthew Holt

Congratulations to all!

AVIC After Hours Information Signage

Aurora is frequently asked what information should be included in the "After Hours Information Signage" and therefore we have detailed the below information which we hope will help.

Each AVIC should display comprehensive after hours information including:

- ⌘ Locality maps detailing the area within a two hour radius plus a local street map
- ⌘ Emergency contact details including Police, Ambulance, Hospital, Chemist, Rescue Squad, Poisons Information Line, etc.
- ⌘ 24 hour contact numbers for RTA and/or NRMA official road reports
- ⌘ Contact details for weather conditions/warning
- ⌘ List of accommodation, food/dining providers with contact details
- ⌘ After hours shopping (if available) and services
- ⌘ AVIC opening hours
- ⌘ The AVIC's telephone answering machine should also provide the AVIC's opening hours and important after hours information as appropriate to each AVIC.

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What's On / Events

16 - 22 May - Broken Hill - "ARB Warn Outback 4x4 Challenge"

This event has been reshaped and this year is new and exciting with each stage being longer, tougher and more demanding than ever with less downtime for crews and more competition time. For further information, log onto www.outback4x4challenge.com.

24 May - Bathurst - "Bathurst Bridal Fair"

With such a wide variety of exhibits, this Expo can also be helpful for planning other functions such as birthday or special events. You will find everything you need for your special day all under one roof. For further details phone 0407 489 634.

27 - 31 May - Canberra - "The Australian Science Festival"

Discover the amazing world of science at more than 100 different science events. This Festival celebrates the International Year of Astronomy with big bangs, shooting stars and soaring rockets. For further details, phone 6205 0588.

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[AVIC Network Profiles](#)

AVIC Network Staff Profiles

In this issue we profile [Greg McCarthy](#), the Manager of the Visitor Information Kiosks for City of Sydney.

1. My current position is: Manager, Customer Service and that involves managing the day to day relationship between the City of Sydney and its residents, visitors and businesses. This is facilitated through operation of the City's Call Centre, counter services at 5 Council offices, place management at the City's 3 Neighbourhood Service Centres, operation of 2 Tourism Information Kiosks, and promoting improved customer service across the City.

2. The best thing about my position is: Being thanked by our customers when we do a great job.

3. I have been working here since: 1997.

4. My previous position was: Manager of the City Rangers group.

5. My favourite sport / leisure activity is: Golf and Weight Training.

6. My favourite holiday destination is: Port Douglas.

7. People tell me I'm good at: Team building and getting the best out of people.

8. My favourite colour is: Blue.

9. My favourite music is: Trance/Techno and 80's, particularly New Order.

10. If I could live my life over again: I would not play football - my knees are shot!



Many thanks Greg for participating in this section of the Newsletter. You certainly are a busy man with such a broad range of responsibilities.

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Special Feature - AVIC Showcase

Online Social Networking & the Tourism Industry

The myriad of social networking sites available to the public on the Internet is astounding.

Throughout the world, millions of people of all ages are connecting with one another and communicating via these networks every single day. Communication, the key to successful growth of a company, is right at your fingertips and the best part about it is that it's free!

The provision of such a vast and easily accessible ability to communicate with a diverse range of individuals, groups and demographics, effectively renders it inevitable that private, commercial and not-for-profit organisations have already "jumped on the social network bandwagon".

A social networking service is essentially an online community that allows users to build their own network of friends and people who share similar interests and explore those of others. Members of these website networks are able to create their own individual profile where they can upload information about themselves such as photos, messages and blogs to friends, family members and the public.

Currently, one in two Australians use social networking sites and hold an average of 2-3 memberships with different sites. The average Australian spends an hour and a half of their leisure time online every day (source TNS Global, March 2009) but don't think it's only the younger generations who access these services. Baby Boomers are actually the fastest growing users of social networking sites of any age group (audioconexus.com, March 2009).

What other medium can you target all specific demographics in every country of the world and display your service, product or destination at no cost?

Another aspect of social networking sites is the ability to increase your business' search engine visibility through the social networking site's public listing.

The preeminent social networking sites and online communities, MySpace and Facebook, have over 170 million active users worldwide between them. They encourage the formation of genre-based "groups" and interactive blogs which entice users who are interested in a specific subject, place or thing to join and therefore interact and communicate with other like-minded users.

What a perfect atmosphere to access your target demographic!

For the tourism industry this means that specific destinations, attractions and travel services can be marketed, promoted and advertised in a specific environment to a direct audience.

Social networking sites are vital in the travel and tourism industry because travellers operate in a pattern. A traveller begins dreaming about a destination or activity which they then plan and research, and finally book and pay for. When the traveller returns home from the holiday, they want to share their experiences with friends and family. They usually do this via a travel blog or social networking site where they are able to easily display their travel photos, videos and travel stories to as many people as they like.

Many travel industry and tourism bodies have already experienced huge success through their strategic online social networking marketing plans. For example, Tourism Australia created accounts with several social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, which were used to market and promote Australian Working Holiday Visas to young Americans and attract pilgrims to Australia for World Youth Day.

Sites such as Trip Wolf, Virtual Tourist, Lonely Planet Thorn Tree and Trip Advisor are examples of highly successful travel related social networking sites that have been developed due to public demand and their ever-growing usage. These sites, not only advertise destinations, accommodation, tours and activities, but also provide forums where travellers can discuss their experiences and knowledge. This, in turn, produces a "word of mouth" effect amongst the forum readers and establishes an emotional engagement with the destination or travel-related service that could only otherwise be created via film or television.

Social media practices such as opinions, experiences and perspectives play an increasingly important role in a traveller's destination and service selection. Creating a life-like connection to the destination is a major factor in a visitor's tendency to travel to a specific place and is imperative when successfully marketing a product or location.

Social networking sites, blogs and online communities are the largest growing marketing trends in the tourism industry. It seems that in this day and age, in order to be successful and competitive in the travel industry, you must have access to a portion of the online market in order to reach all demographics.

What better choice than a social networking site?

(c) Aurora Research 2009

AVIC Showcase

Mark Lees, Manager of Tumut Region AVIC, gives us a description of the new Aboriginal Display of Wiradjuri Art and Artefacts - a new display in the Tumut AVIC.

"The Tumut Region Visitor Centre (TRVC) has recently created a new display focusing on local Aboriginal artefacts, cultural items and art from the Tumut Region. The display was installed and completed in consultation with the local Wiradjuri people to promote awareness of Aboriginal culture and heritage to the local community and visiting public. The local Aboriginal people of Tumut and Brungle are Wiradjuri and have strong links to country in our region. The displays are helping to build a stronger rapport with and better educate the non indigenous people of our community and surrounding towns. The benefits to the local Aboriginal community have included visitors to the region gaining a greater appreciation and awareness of the history of Aboriginal people in the Tumut Region.

The TRVC is committed to equitable employment opportunities and, through its joint venture operation between the Tumut Shire Council and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, employs a number of Aboriginal people in positions including Information Retail Officer, Customer Service Officers and Aboriginal Discovery Ranger who conducts cultural walks, talks and tours. Working with our local Aboriginal community has

ensured the TRVC is, not only a place to find tourism and visitor information, but also a place that helps to educate people about the history and culture of the region. The added benefit is that our visitors receive a more entertaining and educational experience which delivers positive messages about what makes our region very special and worth the visit."



Thanks Mark for sharing your new AVIC display with us.

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Deadline

Deadline

Please email lesley@auroraresearch.com.au with any articles you wish to be included in the upcoming AVIC News, prior to 8 May, 2009.

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.

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