

## Mildura Tourism Week

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Many regions hold events to network their tourism industry operators and to highlight the importance of the industry to the local community, but few do it as well as Mildura Tourism.

Now in its fourth year, Mildura Tourism Week is an annual program designed to throw the spotlight on the significance of tourism within the region. It attracts strong participation from operators and locals, gains considerable media coverage and it profiles the importance of the tourism industry to a range of corporate and public funding bodies.

During its first three years, Tourism Week concentrated on presenting a range of tailored events, which were designed to provide professional development and networking opportunities to members of Mildura Tourism and to showcase the economic importance of the industry to local people.

Typically, the former program would involve presentations by keynote and other stimulating speakers, small business luncheons, a progressive dinner featuring local chefs and apprentices, and social events such as High Tea at the Grand Hotel.

For 2009, the board of Mildura Tourism decided to rejuvenate the program by bringing it back to grass-roots, through educating residents about the variety of tourism services and attractions in the region. About 30% of Mildura's \$210million tourism industry is derived from the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market. So it makes very good sense to ensure that the locals are well informed about what to see and do in the region.



Mildura Tourism devised a week-long program involving 33 operators, who provided 100 events for local people to enjoy, including admissions, tours, tastings and workshops, either free-of-charge or at low cost.

At any time during the week there was a range of activities that could engage, entertain and inform residents, including free cruises on the P.S. Melbourne, discount canoe tours of Kings Billabong, free olive oil ice cream at Varapodio Estate, and discounted tours of the Mildura Brewery and Mungo National Park.

As in previous years, Mildura Tourism Week was underpinned by key sponsorship from two local radio stations, the Sunraysia Daily, Prime TV and Jamesprint. Live crosses from a roving Tourism Week vehicle sponsored by Davison Ford to the radio stations happened throughout the week.

The full color, 6-page 'Be a Tourist in Your Own Town' event guide was sponsored by Jamesprint and delivered into every Mildura household. Complementing the paid advertising for 2009 Tourism Week was a further \$65,000 worth of print and electronic media space, together with an estimated \$20,000 in free media coverage.

Conservatively more than 4,000 residents participated in the 2009 Tourism Week program, including around 2,500 people who attended the Houseboats and Wines Expo.



PARTICIPATION  
GETTING INVOLVED



TOURISM  
EXCELLENCE

The aim had been to establish a starting point for the “Be a Tourist in Your own Town” theme to be steadily grown over a three-year period.

The huge success of the 2009 event clearly indicated both consumer and industry support for the concept.

Mildura Tourism CEO, Rod Trowbridge said that the overwhelming comment received back was that people were visiting places and experiencing activities that they never realised existed.



*“ There is no stronger influence than word-of-mouth recommendation from proud and knowledgeable local ambassadors. That’s what Tourism Week is all about”,* said Rod.

In addition to its Tourism Week program, Mildura Tourism is also assessing what smaller or interim campaigns could be held throughout the year to maintain the momentum and to boost local understanding of tourism.