



ClubsNSW Parkes Elvis Festival

Background Information

The Parkes Elvis Festival is a Festival held every January in Parkes, New South Wales. The event is held on the second weekend in January, coinciding with Elvis Presley's birthday. In 2007 the dates will be 10th to 14th January, with most events falling on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Parkes is a town with a population of 10,500, located 365 kilometres west of Sydney.

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 known as the home of Radio Telescope, but now all of a sudden the town had become widely recognised as the 'Elvis Capital of Australia'!

The event...

Most of the Festival's events are held over 3 days (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), however each year the Program is extending and now more than 60 individual events are held across 5 days. 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', 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.

The Festival's incredible growth...

In January 2006 there were 5,000 attending the Festival, which was an incredible 40% increase on the 3,500 visitors in January 2005! As many as 6,000 visitors are expected to attend the 2007 event.

The Festival started out in January 1993 as a very small event held on one night only and with a few hundred people attending. In the first 10 years of the Festival there were a few more events added and it became a 2 day event, but there were still only a few hundred people attending. In 2004 and 2005 the Festival began to explode in popularity and word quickly spread across Australia about this fun and quirky event in a country town in NSW.



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Elvis Lennox... Parkes' Local King!

Parkes is home to many unique characters and one in particular is 'Elvis Lennox' - who has even changed his name to Elvis by deed poll!

Neville Steven Lennox (as he was christened) became fascinated with 'The King' in 1959 at age 5 after viewing 'Love Me Tender' (in which Elvis starred) at the Bourke Picture Theatre. Steve started collecting all things Elvis at this early age, but it wasn't until he was 16 that he really started to beef his collection up.

Now Steve and his wife Debbie have a room as large as a garage in their home packed full with Elvis memorabilia.

In 1997 the Lennox's made the pilgrimage to 'Graceland' the famous home of Elvis in Tennessee, USA. The couple left from Parkes with 2 suitcases and returned with 8!

1997 also marked the year where 'Steve' changed his name by deed poll to 'Elvis'. "I'd never really used my given name of Neville, and asked Mum if she'd mind me changing it. She said it was my name, and I could do what I liked with it! That was when I decided that I would share a name with the great King."

The Lennox Private Elvis Collection is fascinating and well worth a look and is open to the public during the Elvis Festival.

Festival Visitor Profile

Elvis fans come in all ages, shapes and sizes, but here's what we know about our Festival visitors...

Gender - 68% of attendees at 2006 Festival were female.

Age - 61% of visitors fall within the 45 to 64 years age bracket. There is also an increasing number of young Elvis fans and young families attending.

Geographic - The largest percentage of visitors are from the Sydney Metropolitan region (45%). A further 22% are from the Central West NSW region. 12% Coastal NSW, 11% Other NSW, 5% Canberra region and 5% from other States.

Occupation - The largest number of attendees are Professionals (24%), followed by retirees (18%).

Festival Visitor Enquiries:

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