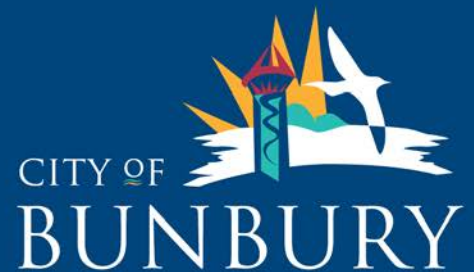


MEDIA STATEMENT



Wednesday, 15 February 2017

Splendid summer buoys Bunbury tourism

Bunbury Wildlife Park has enjoyed a record-breaking January as tourist attractions and many accommodation providers celebrate a positive holiday season.

The Wildlife Park enjoyed its highest revenue ever in January and a 37 per cent increase in turnover on the same period as last year as local, WA, interstate and international visitors enjoyed the native animal experience at the City of Bunbury-operated facility.

The Bunbury Museum and Heritage Centre, another City-run attraction, also marked a milestone on Australia Day with more than 150 people through the doors, the highest one-day attendance since it opened in October.

These stellar numbers follow reports of other good periods by local operators, particularly over the Christmas-New Year period.

Several Bunbury accommodation providers reported occupancy rates of around 95 per cent in this period, with many showing strong increases on the same period the previous year.

The Dolphin Discovery Centre also reported a solid December with a noticeable increase in South East Asian visitors prior to Christmas and stronger European and interstate visitation in January.

A strong sign of increased tourism is highlighted by numbers through the doors at Bunbury Visitor Centre with an increase of 278 people over the Christmas-New Year week compared to the same period the previous year.

Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan said Bunbury and the surrounding region continued to evolve into a desirable tourist destination.

"These figures show that from our beautiful beaches to local attractions and quality restaurants and cafes, Bunbury has plenty to offer visitors," Mr Brennan said.

"And I can only see the number of visitors increasing as blueprints such as the Regional Tourism Strategy gather momentum."

The Regional Tourism Strategy was developed to guide the seven local government authorities of Bunbury, Capel, Harvey, Collie, Donnybrook-Balingup, Dardanup and Boyup Brook towards unified tourism branding, marketing, governance and product development.

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Bunbury City Council last week also resolved to carry out a regional review into caravan and RV friendly applications, as well as free and low cost camping options, following a report compiled by a Camping Grounds Working Group.

Mr Brennan said it was important that new and engaging initiatives were also undertaken to provide a vibrant and diverse range of activities for tourist to enjoy.

“A perfect example is last weekend when a number of high-profile events, including the Bunbury Fringe Festival, Food Truck Fiesta, Bunbury Regional Art Galleries’ 30th Birthday Bash, Circus Royale and Chinese New Year celebrations, drew big crowds into Bunbury and gave locals and visitors alike plenty to enjoy,” he said.

ENDS

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