
AMRTA TAKES NATIONAL TITLE

The Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association has won the inaugural and highly prestigious Australian Tourism Awards national title for Visitor Information Services.

AMRTA Chairman Clif Edwards and Chief Executive Officer Francine Burton attended the Awards Ceremony in Canberra on Friday night, along with over 1000 guests from the tourism industry across Australia. Federal Tourism Minister, Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP was present at the event, as were the tourism ministers for each of the states, including Hon Sheila McHale MLA from Western Australia.

The AMRTA was one of only two WA recipients of these National Awards.

Mr Edwards said it was a great honour to receive this award as it gave recognition and paid tribute to the tireless efforts of the Association, its staff and management in providing the best tourist information services in Australia.

The AMRTA represented WA after winning the state awards in November 2007 and had strong competition at the National level from State and Territory winners including: The Central Australian Tourism Industry (NT), Clarence River Tourism Visitor Information Services (NSW), Forest and Heritage Centre (TAS) Geelong Visitor Information Centre (VIC), Gold Coast Information and Booking Centre – Coolangatta (QLD), Goolwa Visitor Information Centre (SA) and Tumut Region Visitor Centre (ACT)

On the night Mr Ferguson said the awards were the pinnacle of achievement in Tourism.

“This is an amazing achievement for the AMRTA and to win this in our 50th Anniversary year, is even better,” Mr Edwards said.

Ms Burton said providing tourism services was one of the major objectives of the Association, and to be bestowed with this award was recognition that not only were they doing a great job, but they were the best in Australia and with a model which others were already seeking to follow.

“The AMRTA is one of the few non-government funded not for profit visitor servicing organisations in Australia and has built its organisation on independent income streams, and is proud to be able to invest this back into its attraction and visitor information services.”

“Making money in a non for profit organisation is healthy and permissible. The benefits for the AMRTA and the Margaret River Region are huge as any surplus we make goes back into destination marketing for the region, back into our Jewel Cave savings fund, back into our Cap Ex budget and back into our staff. The Margaret River Region should be proud of what this achievement means not just for this Association but also for the region as a whole.”

“Our model is unique, effective and admired by the tourism industry and we can only thank our founding members, and the efforts of previous committees, management and staff in putting the building blocks in place for what we have today.”

Mr Edwards said the Committee of Management had embraced a culture of change, resulting in improved services and promotion of the region and was committed to working with its members and

community to become far more pro active in this ever changing, challenging and competitive world of tourism.

Both Ms Burton and Mr Edwards attended a two day Cultural and Heritage Conference in Canberra, with speakers including Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Federal Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts and leading Government and Australian tourism figures.

“The conference reminded us that we do not live in isolation with our tourism issues here in Margaret River and that tourism is an incredibly lucrative and competitive world,” Ms Burton said.

“The winners of the 25 Australian Tourism Awards reminds us of the quality of product, service and choice Australia has to offer international, Eastern States and local tourism markets, and that Margaret River needs always to remain in the forefront of this competitive environment. A repetitive theme at the conference was for the need to change, develop and reinvent ourselves, our products and our region in order to survive the market place.”

The AMRTA has recently been selected by the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) to be part of a national study benchmarking the effectiveness of regional tourism associations.

Andrew Sivijs from STCRC at Queensland University will be in Margaret River implementing a new program to allow the AMRTA to measure its effectiveness and will assess its performance against other similar organisations on a national basis. Mr Sivijs will be conducting workshops and seminars on 17 March with free entry for AMRTA members and \$50 per session for non members. Please enquire with Peter Hill at the AMRTA for more information or to make a booking on 9780 5911.

For further information please contact

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