



PRESS RELEASE – 1st July 2010

Cows almost moo-ved on

CowParade has almost moo-ved on from Margaret River but the spectacular big-top finale is still to come. The world's largest public art exhibition officially wound up on Sunday 27th June and the herd is now being rounded up for final touch ups before the Cow Charity Auction.

While you get yourself in the CowParade moo-ood to purchase your favourite cow at auction the team at the Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association (AMRTA) have come up with a few worthy highlights of the event.

After a wacky explosion of colour, entertainment and laughter at Colonial Brewery way back in February, CowParade has been a public art event that encourages interaction and activity.

The Cash Cow Quiz garnered close to 1,000 entries with many entrants answering all of the 85 questions – getting out to all of the 85 bovines around the region is certainly a very impressive achievement! SMS Poll results were also strong with Brahman the Barman officially voted the King of the CowParade herd. More than 3,000 entrants recently toughed it out to win 2 Cow Charity Auction tickets and accommodation in Margaret River through a competition in The West, showing how highly sought after tickets to this event are.

More importantly, the Margaret River Visitor Centre has recorded an average increase of 27% on the benchmark figures. With one of the cows taking an unexpected dip in Gnarabup Bay and mooSES roaming the region on her very own Extraordinary Taxi Ride, CowParade has been full of surprises.

The event has reached the lofty expectations placed by organisers the AMRTA. By hosting CowParade the AMRTA sought to raise the profile of Margaret River by being the first regional area ever to host this international public art event. Through securing media exposure via major sponsorship and publicity, CowParade was highlighted as an effective tool for destination marketing and a way to further increase visitation and revenue injections in the region.

CowParade has certainly derived heightened world-wide brand awareness for Margaret River due to extensive international and national media coverage. Since CowParade began over 300 press articles have been tracked by the AMRTA ranging from radio and television coverage, to print media, social networking sites, online articles and blogs.

AMRTA Events Manager Sharon Batley has no doubt that CowParade Margaret River was a success for the region.

“As an art event CowParade broadly sought to raise the profile of highly talented local, Western Australian and Australian artists while showcasing the Margaret River region as not only a tourism destination, but an arts centre” said Ms Batley.

Executive Director of Eventscorp David van Ooran applauded CowParade Margaret River.

“Events are a great opportunity for locals and visitors to come together to celebrate what their local area can offer, building a sense of community pride.

“CowParade combined with the stunning natural landscapes of the area and numerous quality tourism products makes the South West one of Australia’s most recognised and loved tourist destinations” said Mr van Ooran.

CowParade has created a platform for community pride in Margaret River, with the formation and consolidation of relationships between the AMRTA, tourism operators and other local stakeholders. This can be seen in the sheer number of local businesses that sponsored and supported the event through in-kind and financial contributions - a total of 57!

Throughout the events duration, thousands of locals and visitors got out and around the region discovering the cows and new venues. And everyone got in the CowParade moo’d, from Generation Y’s, through young children, to snap-happy grandparents.

Fitting in with normal visitation statistics, the event predominantly attracted Perth-based visitors, with representation from interstate and international markets (predominantly those in South-East Asia). To direct visitors to the Margaret River region cows were successfully placed at the Perth International and Domestic Terminals, and at the Perth Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Sponsors and hosts of CowParade have received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the substantial benefits gained from being affiliated with the world’s largest public art event. Host venues have seen an increase in visitation and heightened brand awareness due to the extensive marketing of the event.

Colonial Brewing Company's Richard Moroney believes that CowParade Margaret River is creating only positive energy.

"It has turned the region into a public gallery and I love it. People enjoy interacting with the cows and it generates such a buzz. It is a spectacular event that takes art to the people.

"A lot of people come and look at the cows and ask questions about the region and the artists. They are getting out and about which is the main thing. People are genuinely interested to come and have a look at the cows" said Mr Moroney.

CowParade Margaret River has been a moo-vellous success for the Margaret River region and has exceeded all expectations. The AMRTA will continue to look at establishing other iconic events as a means of celebrating the region and encouraging visitation.

And it's not all over just yet - the Cow Charity Auction takes place on Saturday 10th July indoors at Signal Park in Busselton. Tickets are available from the Margaret River Visitor Centre on (08) 9780 5911. Escape today and have one last extraordinary CowParade experience in the Margaret River region!

For more information on the event visit www.margaretriver.com.

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