

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Innovations Make Successful Festival

With the 2009 attendance up more than 30 per cent on previous years, it seems the innovations at this year’s Australian Heritage Festival hit the right spot with visitors.

An expanded and more diversified Festival program – including new events like the opening GermanFest Day and theatrical performances by the Empire Theatres Group – impressed visitors and kept them coming for the Festival’s nine days.

“All established events need to keep offering something new to maintain interest year after year and the Australian Heritage Festival certainly proved that true in its 33<sup>rd</sup> year,” Toowoomba Regional Council Mayor Peter Taylor said.

“A range of new attractions balanced by old favourites meant the Festival appealed to those who look forward to it every year as well as those who have just discovered it.

“I thank and congratulate the Jondaryan Woolshed team for an outstanding Festival and wish them continued success to keep the Festival as one of the Darling Downs’ most enjoyable events.”

Organisers reported 44 coach tour groups attended last month’s Australian Heritage Festival, along with other groups including car, motorcycle and vintage machinery clubs.

Visitors came from throughout the eastern seaboard as well as some from overseas, many of them reporting it was their first trip to the annual Festival.

Some visitors even stayed on as volunteers for the duration of the Festival, including an English couple with a hospitality background.

Demonstrations by bespoke boot and shoe maker Duncan McHarg of Clunes, Victoria, and 70-year-old blade shearer Stuart Geary were popular additions to the Festival program.

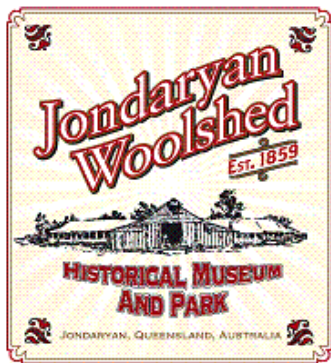
The Festival’s wide range of traditional food and the introduction of a Food Court where visitors could view the Festival while taking a break were popular.

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Improvements to the layout and presentation of the Jondaryan Woolshed Complex - including a viewing platform for the steam engine displays and demonstrations – were also successful innovations.

More effective promotion and marketing ensured the Festival was well publicised and a wider range of sponsors are already signing up to support next year’s event.

A more streamlined organisation structure created a competitive spirit among organisers of various parts of the Festival that resulted in a broader, more enjoyable experience for visitors.

While Festival organisers and volunteers are catching their breath after a busy Festival period, planning is already under way to make the 2010 just as memorable.

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