



MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk Island Museum year ends on a high note

2007 has ended on a high note for the Norfolk Island Museum. At last week's Norfolk Island Tourism Awards (and wasn't that a great night!) the Museum was Runner-up in the "Tours and Activities" category. The Minister responsible for the Museum, Mrs Vicky Jack, was very pleased with the award, stating "Norfolk Island Museum offers a wide range of displays, tours and activities which enable our visitors and the local community to gain a greater understanding of our fascinating and unique history and culture. I am thrilled that the very capable team at the Museum has been recognised for their outstanding efforts".

People may not realise it but the Museum offers a number of tours and activities that are greatly appreciated by visitors to the island. Our Tag-A-Long Tours, conducted six days a week by Helen Sampson and Janelle Blucher, give visitors a behind-the-scenes tour and opens up all sorts of stories relating to the Museum's collections and displays.

The Trial of the Fifteen has also been doing good business of late with our box office up by about 40%. Credit must go to the cast and hosts for this achievement. *The Trial* has now been going since 1999 in which time there have been more than 500 performances, and in 2007 the play was attended by its 27,000th visitor – we are hoping to host the 30,000th in 2008!

More and more visitors are now appreciating the museums, and, judging from the Comments Book, they love them. The museum attendants – Jeanine Brown, Rachel McConnell, Helen Sampson, Andrea Greenwood, Janelle Blucher and Mary Cooper – are to be congratulated for their expert knowledge of the island's history and the excellent service they provide for visitors.

Price is one of the key elements of the marketing mix and there is no doubt that \$21.80 for a Museum Pass (three museums plus Tag-A-Long Tours anytime during a holiday) is a fantastic bargain.

To round out their visit to the museums many visitors also do morning tea or lunch at the REO Café. Monica Menzies has done a great job with the café and the menu, and dining at the REO Café is certainly one of the quality activities for which the Museum won its award.

And might I remind readers that the café also sells books and souvenirs relating to Norfolk Island's unique cultural heritage. If you are looking for a last-minute Christmas gift, the café is open on Saturday and Monday till 3pm. We have just received a number of new titles, including the very handsome *Tall Ships* (with a chapter on the *Bounty* replica) as well as *Australia's Most Notorious Convicts* and *From Cook to Convicts*.

Readers will realise that "Tours and Activities" are up-front museum functions that require a lot of behind-the-scenes organising. So I must acknowledge the hard work and application of

Lisa Richards, the Museum's Admin Officer, who does the rosters, bookings, accounts, orders, and a myriad of other things that keep the Museum on track.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone on the island for their generous support of the Norfolk Island Museum throughout 2007, and I wish everyone – locals and visitors alike – a happy and safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

A couple of days ago Rachel McConnell, who is working on the diaries of Julia Farr, a member of staff at the Melanesian Mission, came across the following diary entry for Christmas 1897. (Does it sound a little bit familiar?)

I must write a little today for the benefit of all at home [Julia was from Adelaide] where my thoughts keep wandering. It is not a very favourable day being showery & threatening & we have had such floods of rain, the whole place is spongy and nasty. Has been more or less all week. Still there is "Peace on Earth, Good will towards men" & all the faces are bright & happy & all seem at one & in fellowship & we are all, I think, thankful & happy.

Brian Hubber
Norfolk Island Museum

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