



Valleys of Adventure

AVOCA • ROYAL GEORGE • ROSSARDEN • FINGAL • MANGANA • MATHINNA • UPPER ESK • CORNWALL • ST MARYS

GREATER ESK TOURISM

President's Report

Greater Esk Tourism Inc. Annual General Meeting

Monday 13th July 2009

Greater Esk Tourism Inc was established in 2006 to promote the Esk region of Tasmania as an exciting and beautiful tourist destination rather than just a place to 'drive through' on the way to the coast. GET is now recognized as the Tourist organization representing the Esk Region in north-east Tasmania, liaising with the Northern Midlands and Break O Day Councils, Northern Tasmanian Development (NTD), the Heritage Highway Association and Tourism Tasmania to support and promote local tourism and related ventures. We are passionate about improving services and infrastructure for our region.

Our first major project planned is to develop a Tourist Interpretation and History Centre at Avoca. The perfect location for this Centre is the Heritage listed, 100 year old State School building in Boucher Park. GET is currently seeking funds to restore this charming building. We were unsuccessful in the recent Round of funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund. However, we intend refining our submission and re-applying in the next Round of funding which opens in July, so hopefully all Planning Permits required by the Northern Midlands Council and the Heritage Council will remain current. The support and encouragement given by both these Councils, NTD, Dick Adams, Heather Butler and the Avoca community is appreciated. There is currently no 'Driver Reviver' stop in this region so the Centre at Avoca could offer visitors the chance to stop and enjoy a break and BBQ, while gaining information which promotes the exceptional holiday experiences for visitors in our 'Valleys of Adventure'.

GET has developed a promotional Flyer encouraging local business and associate membership and thanks must go to Heather Butler for assistance in printing this publication which outlines our goals, objectives and the benefits of membership to members.

I attended the inaugural Northern Midlands Visitor/Tourism Centres Meeting in July 2008 and their second meeting in March 09 and was pleased to learn that Greater Esk Tourism was progressing in the right direction in promoting our 'Mission' and being actively recognized as part of the tourism industry in Tasmania. Specific support from Tourism Tasmania, available to 'Yellow i' Centres but not available to 'White i' Centres, is to be addressed in the future, with GET distributing support details to local 'White i' centres.



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Peter Hazell and I attended the Heritage Highway Association meeting and Tourism Tasmania's presentation in September 08, gaining information regarding local and global trends in visitor movement and numbers. Then in March this year I attended the Heritage Highway and Northern Midlands Community Road Safety Partnership Coffee cup holder launch at Campbell Town. Peter Hazell was the Heritage Highway Board member representative for GET. He has resigned and now I have recently been nominated by the Board and accepted the position to represent GET.

Several GET representatives attended the Tamar Cruise promotion in September and GET celebrated the **launch of the Valleys of Adventure 'logo'** at a successful dinner in October 2008. The logo was professionally developed by Halibut Creative Communications and depicts Ben Lomond, as it is the major 'icon' for the Esk region and dominates the area with its very distinctive shape standing proudly over all our valleys.

On the 16th Nov GET held a BBQ at Avoca to celebrate the Old State School building being 100 years old, with some of us attended in period costume. GET was also involved in the 'Back to Mangana' weekend in Nov 08, selling many of the Rossarden books written by Narelle Blackaby. Since July last year GET has earned \$200 from Narelle's books and thanks must go to Keith Hefford for selling the majority of the copies.

Thanks to the generosity of Carol Grey, Billy Bag ran a very successful Christmas stocking raffle raising almost \$600 for GET. GET has had regular advertising for its events and businesses in the Rossarden Re-Echo, Valley Voice, Fingal Focus and on Star FM.

Our website, www.valleysofadventure.com.au has been developed and is being improved with interactive possibilities and information about places of cultural, historic, recreational and environmental interest significant to the promotion of this region. Thank-you to Louisa for her ongoing work, and to Brian Lasson for hosting our site, and to both for coordinating GET's inaugural photographic competition. Many thanks to Owen Hughes for judging the finalists and winner, to Stallards for sponsoring the winner's prize, Mayor Legge and the Break-O-Day Council for sponsoring the 'Peoples Choice Award' and to Purple Possum for hosting our very successful celebration Cocktail Evening and photographic exhibition. The entries were linked to Google Earth on the Valleys of Adventure website.

An E-newsletter workshop was held at Billy Bag in March and scrap-booking workshops to support Louisa in thanks for her generosity to GET have also been held. GET was able to give direct marketing support to the Fingal Valley Festival



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committee and they are now full members of our group, as is the Northern Vets Cycling Club.

Maryana Altmark and Eve Bassett from NTD outlined Tourism Tasmania's Zone Marketing strategy at the Feb meeting. GET slots into the East Coast Zone; however we can 'sell' ourselves in all 5 zones and in the future GET needs to be involved in the development of the 'Zone' brochures marketing tourism in Tasmania. Unfortunately we were unable to attend the May presentations held at St Helens and Bicheno. However, I did attend the NTD Bundling and Packaging workshop in Launceston in April and gained inspiration for ways that our businesses can work together to create unique experiences for travelers. This is to be explored at a workshop to be held in late August or early September at Millybrook, Upper Esk. We also plan more than email contact with the Tourism East group as they will be invited to this workshop.

Public liability requirements have been investigated and so long as any functions we hold are in places already covered then we should not need to purchase cover. GET is a support group only. If funds are attracted to establish the Tourist Interpretation and History Centre in Avoca then the committee running the Centre will organize their own cover for the public and volunteers involved.

GET is working with Forestry and National Parks to develop and improve walking tracks, and is supporting the Fingal Railway Station restoration group with the aim of re-developing Valley steam train rides in the future. The photographic Souvenir booklet we planned is on hold as funds have not been secured yet. However, Carol submitted a successful application to the Premiers Fund through Heather Butler to purchase a printer and other office items.

The GET walking group have explored Miami Park, Evercreech and Mathinna falls, climbed Bare Rock, visited Meadstone and Hardings Falls, climbed St Patrick's Head and the short climb to Batman's Lookout at Gipps Creek, had an historical tour of Fingal, climbed St Paul's Dome and climbed Ben Lomond a third time - this time past Tranquil Tarn and up the scree to Stacks Bluff and then on out to Lake Youl - a 7 hour walk by the time we returned to the cars. In March this year we climbed up the Tower Hill fire lookout and explored very interesting caves and the West Tower. In May we climbed Mt Saddleback. The stunning views experienced during each of these climbs were dulled somewhat by the frightful deforestation which continues unabated. The wet and cold weather in June saw a small band enjoy an historical walk of Avoca and our next walk is to the 'Dog Kennels' - a line of very interesting cliff formations between Fingal and Avoca. These walks increase our knowledge of this beautiful region and help in our promotion of our Valleys of Adventure,



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particularly to those interested in 4WD driving and exhilarating climbing experiences.

Peter Troode and I attended two Aurecon workshops identifying key attributes and values of the East Coast area to be used to form the basis of a strategic land use plan.

The Valleys of Adventure map with member businesses advertised on the reverse side is almost complete and quotes have been obtained. Thanks to Fiona Dewar, the Tourism Officer at the Northern Midlands Council, for her support in this matter. The pads of maps should be available to all business ventures prior to this year's tourist season.

In order for GET to have a sustainable income and to be able to support the sustainability of the future Tourist Centre at Avoca a Minor Gaming License has been applied for, and when granted a gaming machine will be installed at the Union Hotel, Avoca - thank you to the Union Hotel management for supporting this venture.

GET has achieved a great deal this year and will continue *“to promote tourism as an affordable natural experience of adventure in the greater Esk region of Tasmania, and in return create employment and well-being for our people, and promote sustainable economic development in both industry and our environment.* This is our Mission and we will enthusiastically support this aspiration.

The potential for our towns and their businesses to flourish and become active destinations for tourists depends on the commitment of local people and the support they get to enable this to happen. It is imperative that we keep young people in our communities by providing employment opportunities for them. GET is providing a very real opportunity for the communities in the Greater Esk region to revitalize and strengthen their ability to deal with isolation and disadvantage. This is the very best way to nurture and encourage confidence, promote sustainable economic development and enhance our economy to benefit all the people in the area.

The bush walking, fishing, waterfalls, mountain climbing, eateries, accommodation all deserve promotion as do the heritage sites, old churches, cemeteries, museums, old ruins and beautiful farming land. The world financial crisis will mean that more Australians will 'holiday at home' and a recent Tasmania Visitor Survey confirmed that visitor numbers increased by 7% in the past 12 months, ending in March. Tasmania is the only State with increased visitor numbers. Now is the time to promote the Valleys of Adventure to Tasmanians, the whole of Australia and to the world.



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My sincere thanks go to the outgoing committee, in particular the Secretary and Treasurer as they are both leaving our area. Both Gael Butler and Ursula Roos have completed their roles professionally and helped GET run smoothly in providing support to its members as well as to the general public and travellers. We have had some really enjoyable functions and the organizational skills of both ladies meant a great time was had by all. It will be a great loss for GET to no longer have Gael and Ursula and I am sure I am saying a fond “fare-well” on behalf of everyone on the GET committee.

I wish all the best to the incoming committee.

Mary Knowles