

# HAPPENINGS at CAPRICORN CAVES 2016

Ann Augusteyn

The year ended on a high note for Capricorn Caves. Starting with the Queensland Gala award ceremony in Brisbane we were delighted to win the silver award for tourist attractions. Our guests included Dr Scott Hocknull and Rochelle Lawrence, who joined us in our enthusiastic applause for the top gong going to Australian Age of Dinosaurs located in Outback Queensland. They outclassed the major Gold Coast theme parks and Australia Zoo.



Back L-R. Scott Hocknull, Robert Augusteyn, Jordan Wheeler  
Front L-R. Marnie Augusteyn, Ann Augusteyn, Amandan Hinton,  
Rochelle Lawrence at the Queensland Tourism Awards.  
Photo: Profile Photographics

We finally organised a presentation of the donation from ACKMA delegates collected at our May AGM for The Caves State School. Eighty school students enjoyed a complimentary day at Capricorn Caves when we presented the School Captain, Alana Tighe, with a cheque for \$500. Alana's mother was one of our very first guides employed in her university vacations twenty odd years ago! The school were delighted with the donation which will contribute to teacher resources next year.



Ann Augusteyn presenting the ACKMA donation to Jake Augusteyn (son of John and Marnie) and Aklana Tighe, School Captain, Caves State School



L-R Liz Jack, Rosemary Nugget and Ann Augusteyn

They asked me to extend their grateful thanks to the Cave managers.

Finally we hosted some very special visitors, Rosemary Nugget from Mimbi Caves in the Kimberleys and Liz Jack, business development officer for West Australian indigenous tourism. Rosemary and Ron Nugget operate cave tours and a campground at Mimbi Caves on Mt. Pierre Station near Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia. Rose and Liz Jack travelled to Capricorn Caves to research new ideas in tourism.

Over four years ago I had the privilege through Savannah Guides Ltd of visiting Mimbi Caves and meeting Rose and her husband Ronnie Nugget. Both our caves have common origins in the Devonian coral reef 390 million years ago and evidence of ancient marine fossils is abundant at Mimbi. But we have evolved into very different but amazing visitor experiences. At Mimbi we learnt so much about the Dreaming stories and their significance to the Gooniyandi people; it was like walking into someone's home, it was so personal. At Capricorn we still aim to create a personal but different visitor experience."

For Rose the visit to Capricorn was the highlight of her 10 day trip to Queensland. "It has been wonderful to meet up with Ann again and experience the friendliness and professionalism of Ann and her team. We both have a responsibility and wonderful opportunity as cave owners to share our caves with our visitors. I'm going home with many ideas for our own cave