

Around the show caves

Jordan Wheeler reports from Capricorn Caves:

“A fitting tribute to the legacy of Ann Augusteyn”

30 November 2018 was one of the most bittersweet nights of Capricorn Caves' history. Just four weeks after the passing of Ann Augusteyn, ten staff and family attended the Queensland Tourism Awards at the Gold Coast. Capricorn Caves had been nominated in the Tourist Attraction category. The submission was the last written by Ann, meaning for the staff the stakes were heightened as we all wanted to “bring it home for Ann”. Being the second last award of the night, the nerves of all at our table had gone through the roof. However, when we heard our name announced, we were overwhelmed. It was such a bittersweet moment that we dearly would have loved to share with Ann. We were very proud though to stand on the stage in her place and accept the award — recognition of 30 years of hard work with perhaps the most innovative and exciting period being the last 12 months of those years.

Something we weren't thinking about that night, though, was a trip to Launceston in Tasmania to attend the final of the National Tourism Awards where Capricorn Caves had the chance to be named the Number 1 tourist attraction in Australia. On Friday 1 March, we were there though, in Cataract Gorge, slightly nervous and ready for a great night rubbing shoulders with the best of the best in Australian Tourism.

We were in great company – with the following tourist attractions representing their states in our category:

- Curringa Farm - Accommodation and Farm Tours - TAS
- Horizontal Falls Seaplane Adventures - WA (1st place)
- Katherine Outback Experience - NT (3rd place)
- Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park - VIC
- Questacon – The National Science and Technology Centre - ACT

- Sealy Lookout, Orara East State Forest - Forestry Corporation of NSW - NSW
- The d'Arenberg Cube - SA

Together, these attractions were described as an “Australian bucket list”. For Capricorn Caves to be announced as the Silver Winner was such a proud moment not only for all of us there but also for the staff back home. They were live streaming the event, proudly (and nervously) waiting to see what would be the result of our hard work to create a very highly regarded product.

I won't deny that I was a little disappointed when our name was read out in 2nd place (as I am a competitive person). Nonetheless, it was truly one of the proudest moments of my life. I am sure it was the same for everyone at our tables to come back to Queensland, knowing we have achieved something for Ann – recognition she richly deserved.

Of course, it never stops. As I am writing, I am travelling with ten of our staff on a road trip through the Southern Great Barrier Reef down to Brisbane for five days as part of our “Tourism Excellence Development Program”. We are taking tour guides, cleaners, the receptionist and the groundsman from Capricorn Caves on the road to inspect other attractions. We are going to see the good (and the bad) that is being delivered around our state. We all seek ideas to improve our product and the Capricorn Caves' experience (and, we all hope, to go one better on a future national awards night!).



**Amanda Hinton,
Trent Hinton,
Jordan Wheeler,
Helen
Harmsworth and
Jeremy
Harmsworth with
the award
certificate**

April is Voice Awareness Month

Cathie Plowman

World Voice Day has been celebrated annually, on 16 April, since 1999. It originally focussed on the science of voice, but soon became a celebration of its beauty, prompting us to wonder at its magic and to recognise the need for vocal care. There is so much to learn, say, marvel and celebrate about the beauty of the human voice that, in Australia, Voice Awareness Month is celebrated throughout the entire month of April. Voices are integral to cave guiding. The quality of a guide's voice greatly influences the delivery of the message to cave visitors. We have all heard voices that entice us to listen to them, while other voices can be irritating and off-putting.

World Voice Day and Voice Awareness Month are about celebrating the gift of our voices. It is also a reminder to take care of your voice – literally to “Love your Larynx”. Please don't shout out your cave interpretation in an effort to be heard. If you have something to say, learn how to develop and project your voice skilfully.

There is a package on voice care and training at: <http://www.ackma.org/Guiding/VoiceWorkFINAL.pdf>

While this has been developed especially for cave guides, the exercises are useful to anyone who wants to care for their voice and use it more effectively.

For more details on Voice Awareness Month see: <https://worldvoicedayaustralia.com>