

NEWS FROM CAPRICORN CAVES

– Ann Augusteyn

Ann Augusteyn (left) and Amanda Jennings with the Steve Irwin Eco Tourism award



Capricorn Caves has been on a winning streak in 2008. After taking the dual awards for Eco Tourism and Tourist Attraction at the regional level, Capricorn Caves went on to win the Steve Irwin Eco Tourism award at the Queensland Tourism Awards in November.



Amanda Jennings with her Young Achiever's Award

State Minister for Tourism, Deslihy Boyle, said: 'The Augusteyn's vision has seen The Caves grow into one of Central Queensland's premier attractions and it's terrific to see this commitment to sustainable tourism and cultural understanding recognized with such an important award. Are they competing against any other fellow cave nominees at the Australian Tourism Awards to be held in Melbourne on 26th February?'

Our senior staff member, Amanda Jennings has also enjoyed considerable success. Having been nominated secretly, she was overwhelmed to be the recipient of the individual *Achievers Award* at the Central Queensland Tourism Awards. This was followed by the *Simon Warner Memorial Award for Young Achiever* presented at the State Caravan Association Conference in November as recognition of her successful career path and contribution to the Caravan industry.

In other news, Underground Opera was staged in the Cathedral Cave at Capricorn Caves also in November with plans to return next year in May and November. The company commented: 'The wonderful acoustics of the high amphitheatre of the caves warmly lit with gentle candle light created an intimate and theatrical atmosphere. This exceptional event and concept were a wonderful addition to the Queensland arts scene. The Underground Opera Company's vision is to make opera and classical music accessible to regional Australia in an environment as breath taking as the performance.'



The Underground Opera Company in Cathedral Cave at Capricorn Caves

The Great news continues. The fern *tectaria devexa* thrives under our staff member, Bianca's, care. Scott Hocknull, of the Queensland Museum, has successfully secured more funding to continue the paleontology dig sites and Joshua Moulds, a PhD student, has been appointed to continue the research in the Colosseum Cave. This will be a significant product in the 'Dig the Tropic' geotourism trail in Central Queensland.