

NEWS from JENOLAN CAVES: PETER AUSTEN RETIRES

Dan Cove

It is with considerable sadness that this report from Jenolan is of the news that Peter Austen announced his retirement in June, and has now left the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust after a decade as first Business Development Manager and, for the past five years, as General Manager.

Peter made a huge contribution to Jenolan Caves, being at the helm at a particularly turbulent period where the future place of the site within the NSW Government structure was being hotly debated and funding was exceptionally difficult to secure. Throughout this period, Peter always retained a vision of Jenolan returning to its 'glory years' and was a strong advocate for capital works programs and product improvement, despite the surrounding climate of uncertainty. He oversaw the return of Jenolan Caves House to the Trust and a great deal of restoration work and improvements to the building.

One of Peter's greatest strengths was his exceptionally deep knowledge of the tourism industry, and the importance of collaborative partnerships. Under his leadership Jenolan engaged strongly with other industry groups, including ACKMA. Internationally, Peter saw the potential offered by engagement with ISCA – a vision that was realised in the selection of Jenolan as the venue for the 2014 ISCA Congress. He also oversaw the reformation of the Jenolan business model that led to increasing industry recognition culminating in Jenolan claiming an unprecedented two Gold Awards at the 2011 QANTAS Tourism Awards.

Peter has clearly made an enormous contribution to Jenolan Caves, and has strongly influenced the thinking and the approach of an emergent generation of



cave managers (including the author). He left with only two regrets; that Jenolan's transition was not complete by the time of his retirement, and that he was never issued with a torch in all his years working at the caves!



In keeping with Peter's modest nature, he declined any offer of a grand farewell, preferring a quiet exit. However, I am certain that the extended ACKMA family would join me in acknowledging his achievements and wishing him all the very best though-out his well-earned retirement.

Top. Dan Cove (left) and Peter Austen outside Jenolan Caves House with the 'ISCA Bell' handed from one ISCA Congress to the next. It is used by the session chairs, Peter.....

Bottom left. Peter showing his usual style conducting the Jenolan staff choir at Carols in the Caves.

Bottom right. With one of his many friends.