

Celebrating bright ideas

THE Mid North Coast is taking part for the second time in the Australian Innovation Festival, starting on April 26 and running until May 31.

With more than 500 events in all states and territories scheduled to take place, the national festival was established in 2002 to encourage and support networking and business opportunities for participants in the areas of - research and development and technology commercialisation, across all industry sectors.

The festival's two co-chairs: director AusInnovation Peter Westfield and Senator Kim Carr (minister of innovation, industry, science and research) said this year's festival theme is 'Building Sustainable Businesses'.

"It highlights the importance of innovation during this period of regeneration, from last year's global economic uncertainty."

Locally there will be a series of individual events that are designed to showcase the intellectual capital and innovative creativity on the NSW North Coast.

"Each event will incorporate aspects of innovation, sustainability, research, knowledge and entrepreneurship with the aim of bringing together businesses from all industry sectors to share new ideas and approaches on how to work smarter."

Festival events will include seminars, workshops, exhibitions, tours and seminars throughout the month in various locations from Lismore to Taree, covering

an estimated population of almost 600,000.

Organisers are inviting local businesses to host an event during the festival period and suggest holding workshops, seminars or lectures, site tours of innovative businesses and facilities, performances etc.

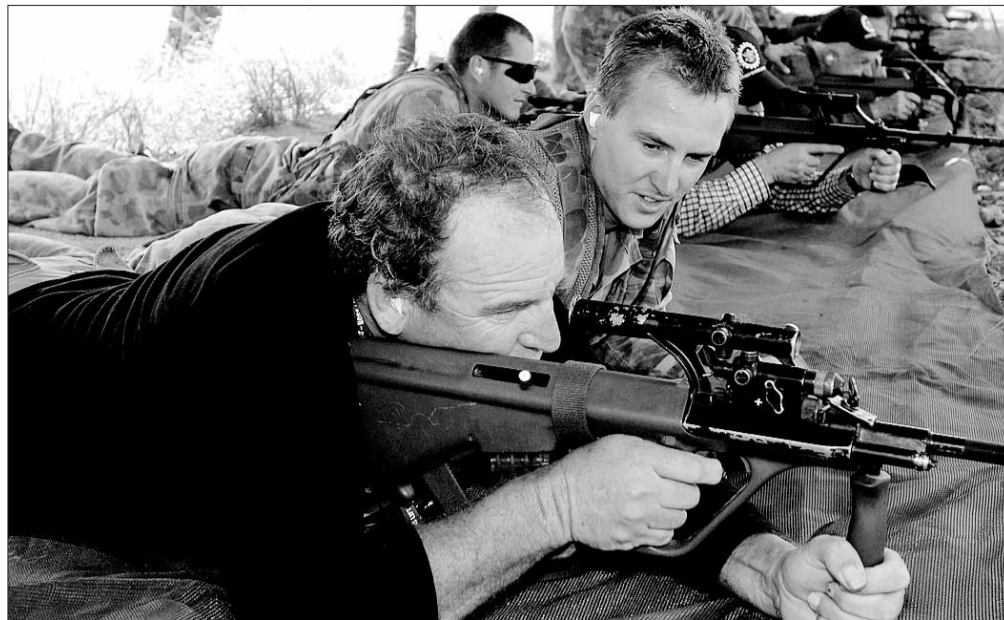
Advertising is another option for local businesses as the NCIF will produce a festival guide with 10,000 copies printed and distributed prior to the commencement of the festival.

In Taree, Edstein Creative Stone have registered an event called: "Retooling For Climate Change".

This will be an all-day seminar held on May 5. It is targeted towards other manufacturers considering water recycling in their workplace. Edstein Creative Stone said they were previously consuming 2.5 million litres of fresh water per month. "Attend the Taree manufacturing site to overview the water recycling and water harvesting plant that has almost eliminated the reliance on mains water supply."

For further information or to discuss a festival concept prior to registering an event, please contact the NCIF festival coordinator, Tiffany Slack-Smith on 0412 8800 85 or tiffanyslacksmith@ncinnovationfestival.com.au

To register for the Edstein seminar being held at the Edstein Creative Stone Factory, 128-130 Manning River Drive contact Donna Ballard on 6551 6266 or email: donnab@edstein.com.au.



Ron Butler takes aim with the advice of Corporal Keelan O'Riley, who in civilian life is an apprentice builder with Mr Butler's Taree company.

'Bosses' embedded in action

FOR Army Reservist, Corporal Keelan O'Riley, the tropical environment of the Solomon Islands is a world away from his civilian occupation as an apprentice builder in Taree.

However, Keelan was pleased that a familiar face that he saw recently while still on deployment was that of his boss, Mr Ron Butler.

Ron, who is the owner of the Garage World franchise in Taree, recently visited the Solomon Islands as part of Exercise Boss Lift.

Conducted by the Department of Defence's Cadet, Reserve and Employer Support Division (CRESD), Exercise Boss Lift allows employers to experience firsthand their civilian employee's Reserve role and duties while deployed overseas.

Ron recently joined with 17 other employers to travel to the Solomon Islands for a four-day visit to the Combined Task Force 635 (CTF 635) - the Australian Defence Force contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

"After four months of living with your mates, it's pretty good to see a familiar face and catch up on all the things that are happening

back home," Keelan said.

"I think it is an eye opener for him to come over here and see what we actually do."

Ron said he had learnt a lot more about his employee's other life as a Reservist through Exercise Boss Lift.

"When we were back in Australia and knew Keelan was over here, we thought he was just having a holiday.

"When you come over here and actually feel the heat and humidity, you get a much better perspective of their role here in the Solomon Islands."

Despite given his support to Keelan for his Reserve work, Ron will be glad to have his employee return to work, saying that Keelan is a key part of the business.

During the four-day visit to the CTF 635, which is made up of soldiers from Australia, New Zealand and Tonga, Ron underwent a range of experiences including school visits, battlefield tours and firing the Steyr F88 on the range under the tutelage of his employee.

"For me, apart from seeing the country, the highlight was learning about the weapons they carry and getting the opportunity to fire them," Ron said.

"There were also the two schools we visited plus getting to learn about the Solomon Islands and its history. It's been great."

As a small business, Ron is accessing the Employer Support Payments that compensate him for Keelan's absence - however this support wasn't a deciding factor in allowing him leave for the deployment.

"We would have let him go anyway but the Employer Support Payments do make it easier for us."

On Boss Lift, Ron gave the experience a strong recommendation.

"It's been a great four days. This is great for the employees and good for our business."

Exercise Boss Lift is primarily about bringing employers of Reservists, that is their civilian employees, to operational or training areas to facilitate an awareness of what the Reservist does in that environment.

This awareness also includes the benefits of that training or experience that the Reservist can take back into their every day jobs.

For further information on Exercise Boss Lift and support for employers - visit www.defence.gov.au/reserves

Events organisers!
Register your event on our web page
www.manningrivertimes.com.au



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- ❖ ENHANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE
- ❖ GROW YOUR BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY
- ❖ BE PART OF EVENTS & ACTIVITIES
- ❖ NETWORK & SHARE

IF YOU MEAN BUSINESS
JOIN YOUR LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
THERE IS ONE NEAR YOU!!!

<p>Manning Valley Chambers of Commerce Meet the 1st Tuesday at 12.30pm each month. President: Jannette Moseley - 6551 2299</p>	<p>Hallidays Point Chamber of Commerce Meet the 1st Monday of the month. President: Gwenda Duncan - 6559 2664</p>
<p>Harrington Chamber of Commerce Meet the 2nd Monday at 7pm each month. President: Adam Nixon - 0412 204 732</p>	<p>Old Bar - Manning Point Chamber Meet the 4th Tuesday of each month. President: Alex Cosway - 0488 646 666</p>
<p>Taree Chamber of Commerce Meet the third Tuesday of each month. President: Craig Webster - 02 6551 0277</p>	<p>Wingham Chamber of Commerce Meet the 4th Wednesday of every month. President: Janece Irving - 0448 916 424</p>

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Put your best foot forward for relay

THOMMO'S Team MOG is issuing a challenge to everyone who prefers to drive or ride: to put their best foot forward so they can participate in the Cancer Council's Manning Valley Relay for Life on May 1 and 2.

When a tally was done it came as quite a shock to Team MOG members to realise how many of their team had either experienced cancer themselves, not necessarily once either, and how many of them who have/had members of their families affected by cancer.

As part of the Relay For Life there is a Survivors and Carers Walk (the first lap of the oval) and afternoon tea will be provided for those participating in that walk.

It is all too easy to sit back, ask why me or whatever; however, being pro-active means no matter how unqualified you are you can assist in improving the future for so many people! Often it only needs an



The members of Thommo's Team MOG is issuing a challenge to drivers and riders to get down to earth...and walk to raise funds for the Cancer Council.

example of your own courage to inspire someone else to face their journey, no matter how difficult, with renewed courage.

YourStars
Now available on our website
www.manningrivertimes.com.au
follow the 'community' link

Don't forget: Copies of Manning River Times photos can be ordered at our Manning Street office.