



## **DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT**

13 October 2009

<b>DSDS2</b>	<b>COUNTRY AND REGIONAL LIVING EXPO 2009</b>
<b>FILE: 233 DBH</b>	<b>{Folio No. *}</b>

### **SUMMARY:**

Reporting on the Country and Regional Living Expo 2009 (formerly known as Country Week).

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### **DESCRIPTION:**

#### **Exhibit**

The former Country Week Expo was renamed Country and Regional Living Expo this year in order to broaden its appeal as an expo about a lifestyle move to the country. Kempsey Shire Council participated in the expo for only the second year, taking a 3m x 3m stand (the same as last year), with the stand being in the middle, on the main thoroughfare of the expo.

The exhibit consisted of four pull-up banners and a location map with a similar layout to the stand as last year (which proved popular at last year's expo). These banners have been used at other trade shows, including the Caravan and Camping Expo in Sydney at the Mid-North Coast stand.

As part of the Kempsey Shire Council exhibit, the EDO negotiated with two hinterland businesses to offer a package of two nights accommodation (Bemurrah Homestead) and dinner for two people (the newly opened Riverrun Cafe at the Bellbrook Hotel). The operators offered this prize at no cost to Council and it provided a great opportunity to promote the hinterland. This prize was available to all visitors to the stand with the prize drawn at the end of the expo and the winners notified the following week. This proved to be a popular drawcard to the stand.



At last year's expo a visitor scanning system was used to register visitors at the expo, with visitors required to hand over their card for scanning at each stand. The organisers of this year's event felt that this system was not successful and decided to change the system of identification. At this year's expo, visitors were allocated a passport at the entry to the expo that was then handed to exhibitors to be stamped as they walked around the show.

The in-house passport registration system required all exhibitors to stamp the passports of visitors to the event. The passports asked a series of demographic questions, in addition to seeking information about employment/business status, expo marketing and how effective the expo was. This system encouraged visitors to participate by offering an opportunity to win one of ten prizes offered by exhibitors, including weekend trips, visits to tourism attractions and free business advice. It is estimated by the organisers that this system will result in 11,000 leads from the event, which represents a 500% increase on last year.

### **Promotional Material**

The Economic Development Office was able to use existing promotional material to distribute to visitors to the stand at the expo. In addition to this, local real estate agents from Kempsey, South West Rocks and Crescent Head provided residential and business investment brochures for the Economic Development Office to hand out to visitors at the stand. All of these promotional materials were produced at minimal cost to council, as the real estate agencies provided the real estate brochures and the EDO used existing promotional material. Over 900 copies of these were handed out over the three days of the expo.

The EDO was able to take to the event a variety of promotional material, including the new visitor guide, the economic brief, and the 'Come and Discover' brochure. Approximately 2500 of these were distributed at the expo.



## Visitor Numbers

There were over 8000 people attending the Country and Regional Living Expo this year, with Friday attendance up by 45% over the previous year. There were 62 local government areas represented at this year's expo, 12 more than attended last year's event. Visitors to the expo can be broken down into the following categories:

### *Business*

- 13% of all respondents identified as self employed
- 5% of respondents were seeking a business relocation or expansion

### *Employment*

- 11% of respondents worked in administration and business
- 10% of respondents worked in health and medical
- 10% of respondents worked in trades and services
- 7% of respondents were retired
- 7% of respondents worked in retail sales/marketing
- 7% of respondents worked in transport and logistics
- 3% of respondents worked in education

### *Demographic*

- 29% of respondents were from the age group 26-40
- 32% of respondents were from the age group 41-55
- 25% of respondents were from the age group 56-65
- 45% of respondents were from a couple
- 19% of respondents were from a family with 4 people

### *Relocation timeframe*

- 13% of respondents planned to relocate within 6 months
- 25% of respondents planned to relocate between 6-12 months
- 25.5% of respondents planned to relocate between 1-2 years
- 13.5% of respondents planned to relocate between 2-3 years
- 12.5% of respondents planned to relocate in 5 years or more

### *Motivation for attendance*

- 38% of respondents were seeking a lifestyle change
- 24% of respondents were attending to look at what was available
- 18% of respondents were attending the expo to learn about employment
- 7% of respondents were attending the Expo to learn more about 'returning to country'
- 3% of respondents were attending to meet with a specific community

Visitors to the Expo were mostly from the Western Suburbs of Sydney, and were concentrated from the following areas:

Baulkham Hills, Ambarvale, Blacktown, Castle Hill, Cranebrook, Epping, Glendenning, Merrylands, North Parramatta, Quakers Hill, Seven Hills, St Clair, Winmalee and Winston Hills.

## **Business and Investment Board**

A Business and Investment Board was established at the expo for the first time. The aim of this Board was to list business and investment opportunities available in their region. Kempsey Shire Council listed business and investment opportunities on this board, in addition to providing this information through the real estate investment brochures (over 900 handed out at the expo).

## **Jobs Board**

In addition to the business and investment board, a jobs board was again also provided for the expo. This Board was available electronically through the Country and Regional Living Expo website in addition to a stand at the expo. Kempsey Shire provided 27 vacant positions for the expo, these included a variety of professional positions from teaching, nursing, accountants, to administration positions, chefs, and a cabinet maker's position.

Local employment providers ETC and the Central West Community College worked with the EDO in developing the Kempsey Board. The EDO has been told that at least 1 position has since been filled from the board.

The EDO will continue to liaise with ETC and the Central West Community College to assist in filling any vacancies from contacts through the Rural and Regional Living Expo.

## **Marketing**

The Country and Regional Living Expo Organisers negotiated with the Daily Telegraph to produce an eight page supplement (at a cost of \$44,000) highlighting the event. Kempsey Shire Council took a one page editorial feature in this section which provided an overview of the Shire and why it is an ideal place to relocate. The supplement was published on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July, with a readership of over 1 million people, in addition to being used as a guide for visitors attending the expo.

Kempsey Shire Council was also involved with the Country and Regional Living Expo organisers in offering the Expo's major prize on Radio 2GB. The prize consisted of two nights' accommodation at the Heritage Guest House in South West Rocks, \$100 meal and drink voucher at the Sea Breeze Hotel and a whale watching tour with Fish Rock Dive Centre. This major prize for the expo provided great exposure for not only the businesses involved, but the shire in general. Again these businesses donated these prizes at no cost to council and were very happy with the exposure they gained through the promotion.

The EDO felt that these avenues of promotion were best suited to advertising the shire, as they covered a broad geographical area and more importantly targeted the Sydney metropolitan region, an important source of new residents and businesses to Kempsey Shire.

## **EXPO Follow-up**

The EDO is currently, and will continue to follow-up on leads generated from the event (this includes leads generated directly at the stand and leads generated through the organisers). The EDO will be delivered follow-up leads from the expo organisers by early October. The following follow-up activities will be undertaken:

1. Develop expo follow-up letter – completed
2. Develop an expo report for council and MDAP – completed
3. Follow-up from leads generated at the stand – ongoing
4. Assist ETC and Central West Community College in leads generated through the Jobs Board - ongoing
5. Follow-up from leads generated by the Country and Regional Living Expo organisers – ongoing
6. Use the data from the expo to develop a targeted marketing campaign to attract potential new residents from those suburbs of Western Sydney that attended the expo. This can be achieved through next year's demand building funding.
7. Develop a database of contacts from the Country and Regional Living Expo – ongoing.

**RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:**

- ***Environmental***

*Nil*

- ***Social***

*Nil*

- ***Economic (Financial)***

*The Country and Regional Living Expo offers the potential to highlight the region to potential new residents and businesses and does so in a forum that is specifically promoting rural and regional New South Wales to the metropolitan Sydney basin. These new residents bring with them new skills (based on the visitor occupation data) and additional investment in the shire.*

- ***Policy or Statutory***

*Nil*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the information be noted.**

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**R B Pitt**  
**DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**