

Building Tourism throughout our Nation

Artists can create the most wonderful pieces of workmanship much of which is functional. Most people enjoy visiting galleries with high quality beautiful pieces of art but they cannot always afford to buy something from them. Many high quality works of art require so much time to create and the materials can be very expensive, therefore the price tag needs to be high. I would like to see artists supported by the public who take pleasure in looking through the gallery. Artists need to be able to support their families and find the time to spend with them plus create the things they want to sell.

'I enjoyed visiting - Donation Box' is an idea that I believe is essential, particularly for country galleries where the chances initially of someone with the funds to spare and room in their home to display the quality work, is less likely to drop in.

In Australia we do not tip, we believe staff should be paid a fair wage by their employer, not have to put out their hand for tips for carrying a case that you could easily carry yourself. However nationwide I would like to see a donation box in high quality galleries, so that people can say thank you for looking around for free, which is what happens in almost all Australian Art galleries where work is for sale.

They should not be put in normal stores that sell inexpensive items. People can support the many talented people who made those gifts by buying something either for themselves or for someone else in appreciation of them. If they were in every place that sold gift ware, people would consider not entering the store so they do not feel uncomfortable ignoring the donation box. Some places are so creative and special that even though they do not make their own art but sell genuine antiques in places like the Snake Gully Café at the Gundagai dog on the tucker box site, I think they should also have an 'I enjoyed visiting donation box'. The only other couple in the store which is made from trams agreed with me. But the manager said no he could not do that, he had good partners who travelled everywhere buying the antiques, he believed they would get by and hopefully when their correct signage finally arrives people will walk across from the dog on the tuckerbox to buy food from them. I would have liked to have eaten there, their food looked excellent and was very reasonably priced, but there was nothing for vegans other than the large container of chips we purchased for \$4.80. I suggested he add a vegan item to the menu, he said they had but it did not move fast enough and it had to be thrown out, so that would not work for them. Maybe one day Natalie's favourite; silky lentil soup with fresh bread rolls and Nuttalex original, will make it onto a few more menu's. That way we could have stayed there, as the moment my son and I got back to our car to drive away, my son Adam's partner drove in behind our camper with another friend who had been at Hillsong Conference 15 with us and her father. They had just arrived from a stopover in Canberra and nothing had been planned between us for catching up or where we would stop. We took them into the Snake Gully café to look around and this time Adam tested the old bugle for us all. Earlier I had tried to get the manager to accept the change from \$10 for the chips, he would only accept on the basis that I took something from the trolley of gifts they give away at the door. So I now have a pen holder for my desk from there. I hope visitors looking through quality galleries, will come prepared with change that they would be willing to give away, I had to borrow the \$10 from Adam as I knew the manager would think the change from \$20 was too much of a thank you tip.

I would like councils to purchase empty buildings and make them available to quality artists rent free, so the artists can try to make a living with less risk. Our family has always loved going to show rooms with workshops of skilled artists, even if it meant going to properties outside of a town. The artist would often explained their skills to us and demonstrate them just for our family. We had a family holiday in Tasmania none of us will ever forget, it was so good my children who are now 18 and 20 do not say no to a family holiday unless they have to. I thoroughly researched all the places we could visit before choosing how long we would be away for. We went to a few potteries particularly ones that specialised in crystalline glazes and learnt how difficult they can be to master. So I purchased some vases and gave up the idea of making them myself. My son and I will always appreciate the time a skilled wood craftsman took demonstrating how he built the most incredible marquetry cabinets in his showroom. My daughter loved his wife's miniature porcelain dolls with beaded skirts so much she purchased a kit from her so she could make one herself. One of the best experiences was watching at night; a talented artist work red hot glass direct from his kiln. He was making beautiful glass birds like his penguins my daughter had purchased from a store in Richmond. It was that gallery manager who gave us the artist's card and suggested we call him to see if it would be possibly to watch him work for a while. He was pleased to demonstrate his work to us on the regular evening he used his kiln, we were fortunate to be in the area at the right time.

I would also like to see better adverting along highways starting about 5kms before a town or the exit from a freeway to the town. I had to modify the ideas I had because of all the restrictions relating to these. I will not bore readers with the all the details I learnt from calling my mother to check some facts. She is on the committee for the beautification of Lightning Ridge, they had to wait nearly three years to get the tourist signs at the highway to direct people the 10 km off the highway to their township. She made a number of good points one was that imagine how many signs there would be beside the highway for all the tourist attractions in Lightning Ridge. They had to put together a submission for signage that was 100 pages long because there are so many tourist attractions in Lightning Ridge and they included photos of them. In the end they decided on general signage 5km before the turnoff; Art Galleries, Hot Artesian Bore Baths, Home of the Black Opal, they did not want to exclude anyone. I like that idea too but the problem with it is the words Art Galleries includes all the galleries in Lightning Ridge, but does not specify John Murray's Art Gallery an artist who's quality art is renown for the humour in it. My printer sent me a free calendar one year full of his art and my printer is located in another state of Australia. There are some incredibly special tourist attractions in Lightning Ridge: One that has won many outstanding tourism awards in New South Wales is the 'Black Queen'. That name does not tell you that it involves a theatre performance culminating in the experience of holding an ancient lamp and being able to view lit antique lamps that was, when I toured it once, one of only three lamp collections available for the public to see in the world and the only one that actually lit their lamps. I think that my mother explained the Black Queen was not listed on the official highway signage because it is only open for about eight months of the year. The owner packs up her collection and moves it to secure storage far away for the hotter months of the year which she spends with her family in a cooler location. It would be hard to decide which of the many excellent tourist attractions should be on the signage, I think that should be a decision for the local tourism committee with the local council reviewing their decision. As you may have gathered from my proceeding comments I believe the signs might be more affective if they are more specific, they could list a final one to be inclusive "and other attractions see

www.tourism/lightningridge.com.au". However even this suggestion would make it too long to read as people drive past.

We need a simple standard for that last website which is an all-inclusive list of tourist attractions in the town, then also the surrounding district, with a calendar of special events. I also think it is important to have a category for new tourist attractions so people can look straight away at that section and find listings of places they have not been to before. It would allow new attractions to get the advertising they need as soon as they open rather than having to wait up to a year to get a listing in the local or highway travel brochure. The websites for each town and its surrounding district need to be simple, with hardly any pictures so they do not use up too much data allowance on mobile phones. If they had a standard style of domain name that could not be taken by any other business, people could be looking up the tourist attractions in towns they would travel through and planning their places to stop well before the highway exit signs. I would like travellers to realise what they are missing if they do not exit the freeway, I believe it is also important for them to know which days the attractions are closed so they do not give up in frustration of not being able to visit a place they want to see.

It is still important to have tourist information signs as not all people have passengers who can look up tourist attractions on mobile phones. Government grants are obtainable sometimes to assist with the cost of this signage. Real estate agents often assist with community signage as do Apex, Rotary and the Lions Club as well as a number of other not for profit associations; all have members who want to help build a better community. They often volunteer their time for working bees to help others and sometimes raise funds for worthwhile projects.

The signage I have seen on our trip to Sydney has been unsuccessful. Signs pointing to bays coming up soon which have an information board in them, do nothing to encourage a driver to slow from 110km p/hr especially while towing a camper. We need to be able to read about the special places we could visit if we stopped or detoured early enough to discuss stopping with the other passengers in the car. It could help if children could see a picture of things like an alpaca on a sign advertising an alpaca farm that is open to visitors. My son enjoyed leading an alpaca around with us on a guided tour of one in Tasmania. There are strict rules about where these signs can go and they are unfair rules. Within a certain area of a town that is on the highway which goes through it they can be put up along the roadside. However they cannot be put along the roadside of a highway before the exit that needs to be taken to go through the township, and those are the towns that really need the signs. One alternative is to contact a farmer whose property can be seen from the road and erect a sign on his land for hopefully a small fee. Then people should be allowed to clear within reason scrub and trees that spring up in front of advertising signs. Maybe they can plant smaller native plants in place of what they have cleared. I think the occasional pretty native shrub which survives well in draught areas may even draw attention to the sign.

On our trips to Lightning Ridge we used to take three days to get there seeing the sites in a different town or two each year. Now we take two days to travel the 1150 kms and we still find new art galleries to visit and buy something from. There is one I love which I always visit if we are there at the right time of day. I love it because I like to collect beautiful hand painted china plates and vases. I

do not intend to tell you which one it is, I would like you to visit lots of them yourselves and see the beautiful works of art Australians can make.

I truly believe assisting artists to make a living in country towns will help the towns to draw tourists to them. The Royal Melbourne Show has masses of people who love to view the displays in the art and craft pavilion it is so full of people; they stand two people deep around the big show cases of the most amazing decorated cakes. Imagine if all those people visited an artist's galley and if even halve of them left a donation of a dollar, that artist's family would not go hungry.

I am hoping many people all over our country will see the benefit of these ideas and use them to help increase tourism in our great nation. Then please give God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ all the thanks and praise for the ideas and inspiration he gives.