

Events galore as funding hits mark

It's a busy time on Mackay's calendar as investment in attracting events and conferences pays dividends

INTERNATIONAL cricket at Harrup Park is just one of the great spectacles on a jam-packed Mackay events calendar.

Funding from council's Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program helped secure the Quadrangular Winter Series, featuring Australia A, South Africa A, India A and Cricket Australia's National Performance Squad.

The series hit off with two four-day matches in Brisbane and Townsville in recent weeks, with Mackay to host

six one-day games and two one-day finals between August 24 and September 4.

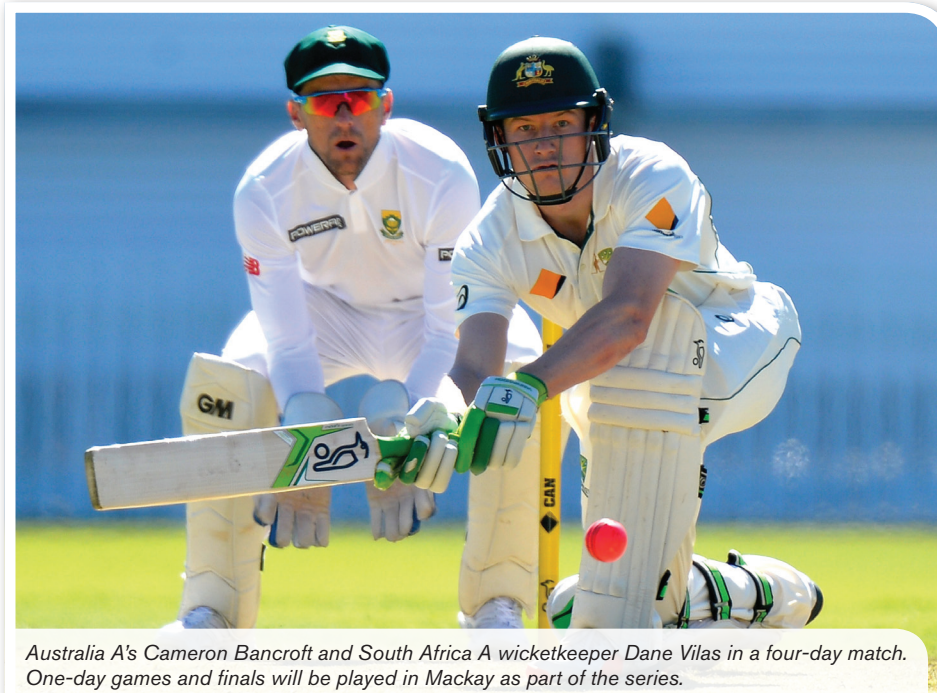
Mayor Greg Williamson said the international series was a perfect fit for the Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program, one of council's key economic stimulus measures.

"These one-day games will provide international exposure for our region and attract visitors, which will in turn boost our economy," he said. "They will cement our growing reputation as

a regional cricket capital of Australia.

"But the benefits will extend beyond sport. For example, Indian High Commissioner in Australia Navdeep Suri will be represented by Deputy High Commissioner Ajay Kumar Amban at the Australia A v India A game and business lunch on August 30, which will be a great networking opportunity for Mackay businesses."

Council provided \$1.8 million for its inaugural Invest Mackay Events



Australia A's Cameron Bancroft and South Africa A wicketkeeper Dane Vilas in a four-day match. One-day games and finals will be played in Mackay as part of the series.

and Conference Attraction programs in 2015-16.

The success of the economic stimulus measure and its return on investment for the community prompted the new

council to allocate another \$1 million in the current budget.

Expressions of interest for this funding are open.

"August to October is a

particularly busy few months, with a range of events and conferences which have received funding support through this program," said Cr Williamson.

>> More details on the Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program at mackay.qld.gov.au under the "business" and "economic development" tabs

Mackay a conference destination

MACKAY is set to play host to some exciting conferences, including the high-profile DestinationQ forum in October.

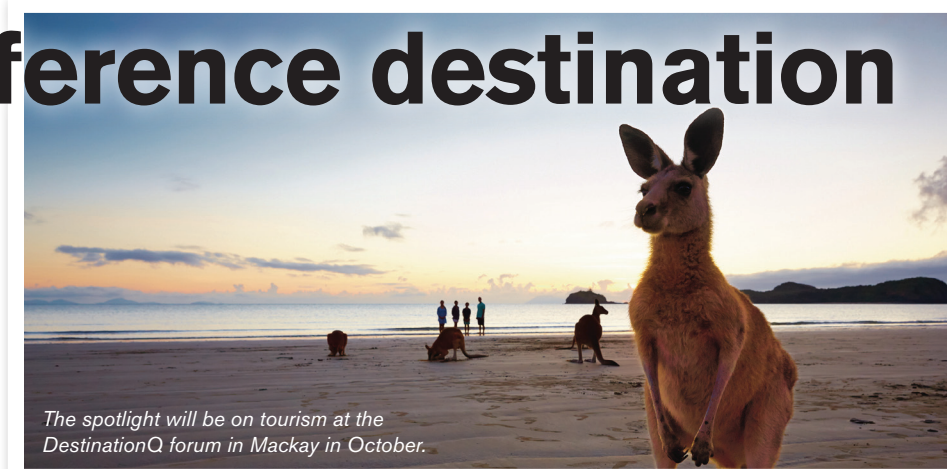
Support from council's Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program helped secure the annual DestinationQ forum, to be held at the MECC on October 25.

DestinationQ is a partnership between the Queensland Government and the tourism industry. The annual forum discusses key issues facing the industry and agrees on

priorities to achieve success.

Mackay will also host a combined national conference and international symposium on rural education in September.

The three-day event will be held at CQUniversity's Ooralea campus from September 28 to 30, and includes the 32nd National Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia (SPERA) Conference. That will be combined with the International Symposium for Innovation in Rural Education (ISFIRE).



The spotlight will be on tourism at the DestinationQ forum in Mackay in October.

Economic Development and Planning Committee chair Cr Amanda Camm said the conference and symposium was an ideal event for council's Invest Mackay program to support as it would provide a direct benefit to the economy

through visitors, as well as international and national exposure.

"The conference will attract delegates from not only Australia, but from other countries as well," Cr Camm said.

"Organisers expect to attract around 200 delegates for the conference but this number could be higher as it is scheduled during school holidays, enabling teachers and principals in rural schools throughout Australia to attend."

>> More details on DestinationQ online at destq.com.au; Details on the SPERA Conference can be found at spera.asn.au



What's on at a glance

> SUGAR CITY CON, Mackay Showgrounds, August 13

> MECHANOS WINGS AND WHEELS MACKAY, Mackay Aero Club, August 14

> TWILIGHT CITY SPOOKTACULAR, PRESENTED BY MELCO ENGINEERING, City Centre, August 20

> QUADRANGULAR ONE-DAY CRICKET, Harrup Park, August 24 to September 4

> MACKAY AIRPORT BEACH RACES, Harbour Beach, August 27

> GRASSTREE BEACH MOTORCYCLE RACES, Grasstree Beach, August 28

> SARINA BEACH COCONUT FESTIVAL, Sarina Beach, September 3



> BLUEWATER FLING, Bluewater Quay, September 10

> #MACKAYPRIDE WNBL SPECTACULAR, McDonald's Mackay Stadium, September 17

> SOCIETY FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE, CQUniversity Mackay, September 28 to 30

> DESTINATIONQ FORUM, MECC, October 25

WNBL teams set to turn up the heat

A CLASH between two WNBL sides next month will be a first for Mackay.

The #MackayPride WNBL Spectacular will see two-time champions JCU Townsville Fire take on the Brydens Sydney Uni Flames at McDonald's Mackay Stadium on September 17.

It will be the first time a fully-fledged WNBL pre-season game has been played in Mackay.

Supported by council's Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program, both teams have put together special fan packages to encourage supporters from Sydney and Townsville to come to Mackay for the weekend.

There will be school visits and a civic reception on the Friday, as well as free junior coaching clinics on the Saturday.

Mackay Basketball business development manager Wade Rebetzke said the two-day visit by two of the nation's elite women's basketball teams was a great coup for the region.



Townsville's Mia Murray (right) takes on Sydney's Hayley Moffatt in a WNBL game.

He said basketballers, especially juniors, would be thrilled to meet and watch women from the national competition in action as they fine-tuned preparations for the upcoming season.

Mr Rebetzke said it was also great to be able to showcase such a game for Mackay sports fans.

"We've priced admission tickets to encourage a large

turn-out of spectators for the game.

"The game will be an exciting and affordable night out for families."

Adult tickets are \$18, with children aged four to 14 priced at \$12. A family ticket for two adults and two children is just \$55.

Tickets for the game are now on sale.

>> To purchase tickets visit the MECC box office or online at mackay.tix.com.au

Kites to soar at beach festival

INTERNATIONAL kite flyers will ensure next month's inaugural Sarina Beach Coconut Festival can soar.

A striking range of kites will create a spectacle in the sky at the festival, to be held on September 3 from 2pm until 6pm.

International kite flyers will be visiting for the event.

Other attractions at the festival will include palm weaving, tropical market stalls, sand arts and camel rides, as well as "old fart blo-karts".

Coconuts line our foreshores, so it made sense the iconic North Queensland palm tree inspired the new festival.

Council is supporting the festival, which promises to be a cracker, through its Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program.

All funds raised at the festival will be donated to Sarina Beach Progress Association to be used for future community projects.

More details can be found online at sarinabeachcoconutfest.com.au

Pipe Band to party with fling

PERFORMANCES by Graeme Connors and groovy celtic rock band Celtic Fyre will be a feature of next month's Mackay Bluewater Fling.

This new event, to be held on Saturday, September 10, is being held to celebrate 90 years of the Mackay and District Pipe Band.

There will be a spectacular street parade down Victoria and Sydney streets to Bluewater Quay, with entertainment and activities from 4pm to 8.30pm.

Enjoy the state's finest pipe bands and highland dancers. There will be medieval re-enactments, market and food stalls, fireworks and kids' activities.

Hector the mascot from Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal will also be a special guest at the event.

The Mackay Bluewater Fling is sponsored by Mackay and District Pipe Band, Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal, council's Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program and Mackay City Centre.



Harbour Beach provides a stunning backdrop for the Mackay Airport Beach Horse Races, an "Event Like No Other". Photo: Tourism Queensland

Race on down to Grasstree

BEACH racing horsepower will turn from four-legged to the two-wheeled at Grasstree Beach.

The day after the Beach Horse Races at Harbour Beach, the Grasstree Beach Races will be held on Sunday, August 28.

Sarina councillor Karen May said the Grasstree Beach Races were a popular event on the region's social and sports calendar.

She said the day would include King of the Beach, dirt bikes and road bikes races, as well as quad bikes.

"The sand is sure to be flying as the motorcycles race and create a spectacle for all of those attending."

>> Go to the Grasstree Beach Races Facebook page for more details



An aerobatics plane is put through its paces above Mackay.

Reach new heights

THE Mechanos Wings and Wheels Event this weekend will bring an aerobatics stunt plane display to Mackay for the first time in 15 years.

Mechanos Wings and Wheels Mackay will feature Paul Bennet Airshows, wowing the crowd with aerobatics and stunts.

The event will be held at Mackay Aero Club this Sunday, August 14.

But it won't be just about planes. There will also be custom cars and bikes, skydive displays, rides for the

children and a variety of food stalls.

Council is a supporter of the Mechanos Wings and Wheels event through its Invest Mackay Events Attraction Program.

Australian Formula 3 driver Roland Legge, who won Round 4 of the 2016 series at Queensland Raceway earlier this month, will also attend.

His car sports #MackayPride branding as council partnered with his team to help promote the Mechanos Wings and Wheels in Mackay.

>> More details online at mechanos.com.au

Gallop to Beach Races

THE annual Mackay Airport Beach Horse Races really is an "Event Like No Other"

And this year's edition, to be held later this month, promises to take that tagline to a new level.

The 2016 Mackay Airport Beach Horse Races at Harbour Beach on August 27 will double as a tribute to the event's founder Mick Pope, who died suddenly earlier this year.

His partner Chrissy Evangelou took over the organising reins.

"This year's event promises to be a huge one, with plenty in Mackay keen to turn out to pay homage to Mick," she said.

"It has been a big job planning and organising the event but we're in the home straight now," she said.

"It has also been great to work in with other events also on around this time. For example, with the Australia A cricket team in town for an international series, we have classic catches on the beach and autograph signings."

Council is also sponsoring two races on the day. One will be the "Follow Me to the Mackay City Centre" race and the other, the final race of the day, the "#MackayPride Mick Pope Cup".

Beach-goers will also be able to "have a punt", with the new "Mick Pick Race Draw" to be run half-an-hour before each race, with proceeds going to Run For MI Life.

The Beach Race Day is part of the Mackay Airport Beach Horse Racing Festival, held from August 25 to 27.

>> Go to mackaybeachhorseracing.com.au for a range of ticketing packages