

Journey back to ancient times

ABORIGINAL elder Des Sandy brought a new perspective to Ivory's Rock Conference Centre during a morning tea visit recently when he toured the facilities and gave a pointer to some of the ancient history of the region.

Mr Sandy was deeply familiar with much of the flora and fauna and pointed out evidence of Aboriginal habitation over thousands of years.

"His perspective was amazing," joint chief executive officer Cath Carroll said. It felt like a journey back in time.

"Such is his deep instinctive knowledge and serenity that it seemed thousands of years were no time at all to him.

"Now we are keen to find out more of the ancient history of the region."

Mr Sandy spoke of the law which has governed life for thousands of years.

"It is not like the white man's law," he said. "It never changes."

Mr Sandy said of his morning visit: "I had a great time."

And he promised to return to be a guest speaker at the Conference Centre's Sunday in the Country on July 9.



TIMELESS landscape ... Aboriginal elder Des Sandy points out a feature at a rock pool. He said the area had once been a campsite for Aborigines.

Strategy of co-operation enhances fire control and land management

FIRE control and land management are top priorities for Ivory's Rock Conference Centre, and it is making significant progress in co-operation with regional authorities and neighbours to put in place long-term strategies.

"We are forming a joint management plan rather than going our separate ways," newly appointed facilities manager Terry Martin said of the fire control strategy.

"This is something that has never been done before in the region."

He said the regional plan was being put together by Griffith University's Cuong Tran and those involved included South East Queensland Catchments, Flinders Peak Rural Fire Brigade, Ipswich City Council, the Conference Centre and about 30 other landowners throughout the region.

"We have begun to piece together fire trails that will form a buffer against fire from the north and east of the Conference Centre," Mr Martin said. "The experts say this is where any wildfires would come from."

"In this strategy, co-operation with a network of neighbours is the key thing.

"For the first time, fire management will be approached from the perspective of everybody working together. For example, signage throughout the area will be standardised and locks on all gates will be compatible.

"This means if the Fire Brigade needed at any time to access the Conference Centre, or other properties in the management plan, it would be able to do so immediately, and be familiar with



TEAM effort ... facilities manager Terry Martin.

the layout.

"We see this as a very big breakthrough in making the whole community safer against the threat of fire."

The Conference Centre is also working with authorities on its land management strategy and is soon to appoint a fulltime ground maintenance manager.

The South East Queensland Catchments recently approved grant money under its Healthy Land – Healthy Water program to assist the Conference Centre to stabilise creekbank erosion and to undertake an environmental management plan.

"The 772ha centre is faced with significant challenges with erosion and weed management, particularly in creekbeds that have been the site of earlier sandmining," Mr Martin said.

"We are delighted to be a recipient of these grant funds to help us establish an environmental management plan and to assist in curtailing erosion in Sandy Creek, the main creek through the property."

He said Greening Australia had been engaged to formulate the environmental management plan – which would be a template for long-term environmental protection.

Work also was continuing on regenerating the property, which had long ago been milled for its timber and had a history of cattle and pig farming.

Key areas are protected by conservation agreement and the rocky ridgeline is home to the endangered rock wallaby, with three other species of wallaby common on the property.

"Protecting and enhancing the environment remains a key to the Conference Centre's success," Mr Martin said.

He said the centre was a member of Land for Wildlife.

"Conference Centre staff and volunteers also play an important role, helping out with tree planting and weed clearing."

Mr Martin added: "The centre recognises the need to work in consultation with its neighbours, particularly on fire safety, and welcomes communication from neighbouring landholders."

For more information on natural resource management in the region log on to www.seqcatchments.com.au

Introducing the sweet sound of Sunday in the Country

UNLESS you are a diehard country fan, chances are you have not heard her music, nor can you yet download her songs from the popular iTunes music site. But make no mistake, Shandell Tosoni is a name we are going to hear a lot more about.

Ivory's Rock Conference Centre is fortunate to have booked the singer and songwriter for its Sunday in the Country open day on July 9, just as she has moved to Brisbane from her north Queensland home to seriously launch her career.

Although only 19, Shandell has already achieved much in the country music world, with a host of awards and high-profile gigs to her name.

She describes leaving her home on a Dimbulah mango farm last month as "one of my biggest moves".

Shandell's ambition is nothing less than to become a well-known singer and songwriter in Australia and worldwide.

She already has a long list of credits and a wealth of experience, from seven years of performing and taking out awards at some of the biggest music festivals in the country.

This year at the Tamworth Music Festival she was named Aristocrat Entertainer of the year.

And, as a testament to her songwriting ability, Shandell won the Under 18 category of the Nashville Song Search Competition in 2004, the only Australian to have won the award.

That took her to the home of country music, Nashville, for a couple of weeks where she got to sing her award-winning co-written composition Here with Me at the famous Bluebird Café, on the same bill as Don Schiltz, writer of The Gambler.

"That was my top moment," Shandell said. "I thought it was very cool."

"In Nashville they were very supportive of Aussies. I want to go back over to do a lot of songwriting and co-writing. That is the challenge of being a singer and songwriter. You know how the song feels and can perform it the way you felt when you wrote it."

Performing live is a challenge Shandell relishes.

She's equally at home on television, singing Australia Fair at a North Queensland Cowboys National Rugby League game or performing before thousands of fans at the

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Strong bookings for international conference

IVORY'S Rock Conference Centre is proud to announce a five-day international conference, starting from September 25 – with strong bookings already received from within Australia and overseas.

Joint chief executive officer George Laver said work was well under way preparing for the conference, the first since an international event last September drew nearly 3000 delegates.

"This promises to be one of our biggest conferences in the 14 years since we have been established," he

said. "We are very excited by the strong response since bookings opened nearly two months ago."

Mr Laver said, like last September, Elan Vital would host the conference, with international guest speaker Prem Rawat (also known as Maharaji) again accepting an invitation to speak.

Mr Laver said much of the work for the conference would be outsourced, largely to companies in the region and the Conference Centre would be looking for several hundred outside staff to help make the event a success.

"In catering alone, we expect to employ several hundred people, which we hope to hire locally," he said.

"And with several thousand delegates expected to camp on site, there will be people employed to help erect tents and handle the cleaning and other duties.

New facilities manager Terry Martin said his first major task was to put a team of about 14 people together to co-ordinate operations.

"We will be hiring the vast majority of cleaners, carpenters, electricians,

plumbers and other personnel," he said.

"Many temporary buildings will be brought in, including marquees and cold rooms."

Mr Laver said interest in the conference had come from people in more than 50 countries worldwide.

"We are expecting about 2000 to stay on site in tents, motorhomes and caravans, with the remainder booking out accommodation from Boonah to Brisbane," he said.

Plenty to see and do at Sunday in the Country

Following is a schedule of events and some of the activities and stalls at Sunday in the Country:

- 10am** Doors open
Children's activities
Market stalls and displays
- 10.45** Kalbar Peak Crossing Concert Band
- 11.00** Official Opening
- 11.15** Dance School Demonstration
- 11.30** Bushwalks
Bus tours start
Boonah Junior Choir
- 12.00** Wildlife Presentation
- 12.30** Shandell Tosoni
- 1.30** Junc Orchestra
- 2.00** Shandell Tosoni
- 4.30** Close

Food and beverage

P&C CANTEN – serving quiche, sandwiches and soft drinks; BAR – beer, water, and orange juice from the Conference Centre's own trees; WINERIES (for tasting and buying); Devonshire teas; HOT FOOD – hamburgers, chips and chicken kebabs (Harrisville

Lions); sausage sizzle (Flinders Peak Rural Fire Brigade).

Environmental activities and displays
Bush walks; Nature Photo Displays; Orphaned Native Animals Rear and Release; Ipswich Koala Protection Society; Society for Growing Australian Plants; Ipswich Council Conservation; Geckoes Wildlife Presentation.

Stalls and displays

At the time of printing the following stalls and displays had been confirmed, with others expected to be added: Ipswich Tourism; Ipswich Art Gallery; Fire Brigade (fire truck on display and a gold coin collection to support their work); Harrisville General Store; Indian Crafts; Murr's Ceramics; Amberley Community Pre-school and Kindergarten; Hibiscus Society; Ellen Porter Jewellery; St Mary's Church shop; Strategic Sports; Hughies Grape & Golf Tours; Ipswich Historical Society; Spinners and Weavers; Ipswich Horticultural Society; 3-D Wall Art; Ipswich Woodcrafts Club.

A truly memorable event



IN FULL voice ... opera fans, *above* and *below left*, take in the beauty of La Traviata and, *bottom*, violinist Andrew Ward serenades diners in the Functions Centre.



A TRULY magical event, was how Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale described Opera at the Rock on Saturday, April 1 – the third year Ivory's Rock Conference Centre has played host to what is becoming an institution in Ipswich.

Cr Pisasale said he could not "speak highly enough" about the performances of La Traviata by some of Opera Queensland's stars.

"The amphitheatre at Ivory's Rock added an extra dimension to the performance," he said. "The facilities really are first rate at this venue. Each year Opera At The Rock at Ivory's Rock Conference Centre at Peak Crossing keeps getting bigger and better. "Council is always proud to continue its support of this event."

Equally pleased was Ipswich promoter Faye Flor, who has worked hard to make Opera at the Rock a reality.

"Featuring the magnificence of La Traviata made it very different to previous years," she said. "Everybody enjoyed it, and we are looking forward to working with Opera Queensland next year. And, once again, it will be something completely different." One of those who attended, Jan McGregor, said the unique location made it a "timeless

experience".

She said guests were put in the mood for an exciting afternoon of opera with a luncheon at the Functions Centre, set in tranquil bushland overlooking Ivory's Rock.

"After heavy rain the day before we were able to enjoy a wonderful sunny afternoon in the Amphitheatre while being entertained by some of the best opera singers in Australia," she said.

Many guests donned black-tie outfits or long dresses, while others dressed casually for the country location.

As the sun went down, it was time for some to depart, while others stayed for dinner at the Functions Centre, and more entertainment.

Not only the recognised stars impressed. A string trio from Springfield College also got a chance to show its skills. And a busker discovered in Queen Street Mall was a hit.

Roving violinist, Andrew Ward, no stranger to the restaurant and wedding circuit, was quite at home among opera lovers.

"I thought he was top class," one guest, Gwyn Hanssen Pigott, said. "His performances helped make Opera at the Rock very enjoyable for me."



AWARD winner ... Morning Mist highlights the Conference Centre's beautiful lake.

Centre's beauty again features in top awards

THE timeless beauty of Ivory's Rock Conference Centre has again been highlighted in one of southeast Queensland's most important photographic competitions.

Ipswich photographer Ed Corrigan for the second year in a row has won the Overall Adult Winner award in the Ipswich Enviroplan Photographic Competition.

The competition is designed to promote environmental issues and highlight the talent of local photographers.

Mr Corrigan's winning photograph, entitled Morning Mist, captured the beauty of the Conference Centre's lake reflecting the early morning sky, with Ivory's Rock as a backdrop.

Two of his other photographs, taken at the Conference Centre, also won awards – Grebe at Nest was the Adult Winner and Rock Face the Adult Runner-up.

The awards were presented last October

by Cr David Morrison, chairman of the Conservation, Parks and Sports Committee.

Mr Corrigan, who also took out the major 2004 award, said of his second win: "I was taken a bit by surprise. But everyone thought there was a lot of feeling to my winning entry, especially because of the mood created by the mist over the lake.

"I was especially pleased because a lot of people entered the competition, which is becoming very popular."

Mr Corrigan said photographing nature was very special.

"It makes you very aware of the environment around you, because from day to day it shifts and the same location one day will be very different the next."

And what is he spending his \$700 first prize on?

"More equipment to help my photography, of course," Mr Corrigan said.

Great weekend getaways ...



DANCING under the stars, above, was just one feature of a series of successful Getaway Weekends held at Ivory's Rock Conference Centre this year. Hosted by Elan Vital, guests attended from many parts of Australia, enjoying activities such as bushwalks, yoga, reciting poetry, playing guitars and singing around the campfire and watching videos in the conference hall. Joint chief executive officer Cath Carroll said: "The Getaways have been so successful that Elan Vital is now arranging to have more regular weekend retreats for people to enjoy the peace and serenity away from the hustle and bustle."

Fun for all the family

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Gympie Muster last year.

"Performing is the biggest buzz," says the graduate of the Country Music of Australia's College of Country Music.

At the Gympie Muster she took the stage before tens of thousands of people. It was pouring with rain and everybody was sliding in the mud, but Shandell and the country fans were having the time of their lives.

"I wish I could be up on stage all the time," she said.

She is now looking forward to her gig at Sunday in the Country. Armed just with her guitar and a load of talent she'll be singing a range of songs in "my own country style".

"Expect to hear a couple of originals, old songs, traditional and contemporary," Shandell said.

And expect to hear an emerging star of Australian country music.

Shandell will be performing at the Conference Centre's Pavilion from 12.30pm.

Sunday in the Country also promises many other attractions for the whole family.

One of the organisers, Kathy Mollenhauer of the Peak Crossing State School Parents and Citizens Association, said: "Sunday in the Country this year offers something for everyone." For those who love the great outdoors there are bushwalks, bus tours and wildlife and plant presentations.

"For those who are looking for a family day out on the last day of the school holidays there are market stalls, kids' activities and animal displays."

And its all for good causes in the local community.

"Just by having coffee and cake or a sausage sizzle people can support local community organisations such as the Flinders Peak Rural Fire Brigade, the school P&C and Harrisville Lions," Ms Mollenhauer said.