

Deadly sell out

Local indigenous culture was celebrated in front of a sold out crowd at the Deadly in Gippsland Conference last week.

'Deadly' is a word used to describe something that is excellent and outstanding, and the conference is a celebration of the deadly work being done by Aboriginal people every day. The three-day conference is also about banning together and achieving recognition in partnership.

Hosted by Council, the event was held at Wilson's Promontory (Yiruk Wamoon) where Council's Community Strengthening Coordinator, Ned Dennis, said participants were inspired by the breathtaking surrounds with the theme of the event being 'Connected – Community, Family, Culture, Land and Youth.'

"The aim of the Deadly in Gippsland Planning Group was to create a space where Indigenous culture was celebrated and where connections could be strengthened and developed," he explained. "The original vision was to hold an Aboriginal peoples' conference that would allow Gippsland to tell its own stories, spread the word about the positive things happening here and build on and strengthen the relationships between community, local organisations and government who are working together to achieve great things in Gippsland. I truly believe this was achieved."

After attending the Deadly conference in Brisbane in 2007, three Latrobe Local Indigenous Network (LIN) participants, Aunty Esme Thompson, Karen Mobourne and Katie Yoemans along with Leonie Solomon Green, the Indigenous Community Development Broker, were inspired to hold a conference here in Gippsland. The first conference was held in 2009 at San Remo and has continued strongly since then. The event travels around the Gippsland region, which is the perfect way to showcase the local depth of indigenous culture.

A feature of the event is the burning of the date on the message stick. The stick is a form of communication traditionally used by indigenous Australians that is passed between different clans to transmit messages. The message stick is passed onto each new conference host.

Event organisers are currently preparing a short film and photobook of the event which will be available early next year.

Caption: Photo 1 - The date of the Deadly in Gippsland Conference is burned into the message stick. Photo 2 – Local indigenous dancers performed throughout the three day event, including the opening and closing ceremonies. Photo 3 – Deputy Mayor, Cr Mohya Davies, proudly displays her handcrafted necklace.

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