



MEDIA RELEASE

Mareeba Heritage Museum Officially One of the Best Grey Nomad Experiences

A leading Mareeba attraction has been named a finalist in the Grey Nomad Awards, cementing the Atherton Tablelands region's reputation as a bucket list destination for mature age tourists.

The Mareeba Heritage Museum and Visitor Information Centre has been shortlisted in the 2020 Best Grey Nomad Attraction or Tour category.

The winners will be announced on **Tuesday 2 March** at a celebratory event on the Sunshine Coast, QLD.

The multi-faceted attraction, which includes interactive exhibits, a café, giftshop, booking office and function venue, features 6,000 artifacts over 47 exhibits, with six artefacts being of national significance and another eight of state significance. With a keen interest in history, grey nomads are a key visitor segment for the Mareeba Heritage Centre operation that is proudly sponsored by the Mareeba Shire Council.

To complement these offerings, the Museum has recently introduced numerous new experiences that impressed the judges, including a service where visitors can gain their Fossicking License at the centre, the inaugural Mareeba Quizzards Trivia Series and intimate "Come with Mary After Dark" and "Mary's Love Affair with our Museum" tours with the Museum Curator.

Awards Director, Kim Morgan, said the Grey Nomad Awards provide vital, credible information to these and other mature-age travellers while supporting positive aging through soft adventure and social inclusion.

"The COVID situation has meant that some older Australians felt uneasy about travelling in 2020, with health and safety becoming an even greater factor in their decision making," she said.

"That is why the Grey Nomad Awards' criteria focussed on the actions that tourism operators, caravan parks and campground managers took to make the lives of grey nomads happier, healthier and safer," Ms Morgan said.

She said, "In this way, the Awards are fostering a better lifestyle for over 50s by providing verified information that will guide their decisions on where to travel safely in 2021 and what to experience along the way".

Ms Morgan said that with a 31% decline in overnight trips within Australia for the year to September 2020 compared to the same period to September 2019[^], it is even more important that mature-age Australians have somewhere to turn that inspires and encourages them to travel.

"Tourism is pivotal to many regional economies, with money from visitors supporting local businesses and generating employment," she said.

Mature-age Australians are a largely untapped segment that represent one of the biggest opportunities in domestic tourism. This age segment possesses 32% of Australia's disposable income* and love learning about the country. Importantly, they are fiercely loyal. Once they discover something they like, they will return.

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The Grey Nomad Awards are judged by mature-age tourism professionals, some of whom have experienced the grey nomad lifestyle personally, adding weight to Mareeba Heritage Museum's success as a finalist.

The judges congratulated the centre and the Mareeba community on a successful year of operation despite the challenges, saying "We love that such a dedicated team of tourism professionals and volunteers have pulled together to deliver a memorable experience steeped in local history".

They commented "In so many ways, 2020 elevated our consciousness about what we can do and how quickly we can do it, and it's clear that the Mareeba Heritage Museum and Visitor Centre embraced that to evolve in leaps and bounds".

^ Tourism Research Australia (TRA) - National Visitor Survey September 2020

* Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

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