

Interview with Lisa Jocumsen

2 June 2005

Lisa is Secretary of the Gympie Goldrush Festival Committee

Speaker	Text
Rob	This is an interview with Lisa Jocumsen, who is the secretary of the Gympie Goldrush Festival. Ok, um, now, I've shown you the information sheet, which basically explains what my project is. I guess what I want to know from you is how the Goldrush Festival is run, how long it's been going for, if you're aware of those details, and what you think the significance of those, or the Goldrush Festival is for the community here.
Lisa	Ok, from, just off the top of my head, I think it's been going for about thirty years, I'm not quite sure what the date was, so that's the figure that I've got in mind. The way it's run, it's an annual celebration of the first gold find in Gympie. The James Nash gold find. And it's a time that we celebrate, you know, the Gympie, you know, as the city that saved Queensland from the demise of bankruptcy. It takes the form of a week's celebrations, so there's activities that happen over the week. The date that we celebrate is the 16 th of October. We celebrate on the 16 th of October, what is it? 1867 I think it is.
Rob	That's right, yep.
Lisa	And um, so we have activities that run through the week. So it's the week that has the 16 th of October in it that we celebrate on. And the momentum builds up until the Saturday, and the Saturday is the real big festival day. We have different activities running, there's a bush poets roundup that we have in the street. This year we're going to encourage a lot more things happening in Mary Street, sort of, on the Saturday morning, and then it works into the afternoon with, you know, sort of things happening on the stage, with plays and music and that sort of thing. Then over in Nelson Reserve, just across the road here, it, we have activities happening there – the Queensland Gold Panning Championships are held annually, and this will be the sixth year for it.
Rob	Ok, six years.
Lisa	I think. It might even be seven. I'd have to go and check the records, but um, yeah so we have that as an annual event. That's a bit of a highlight of the celebrations too, I think. I suppose that brings in the theme, sort of, with the gold. We have different youth activities, so there's the skate bowl that we have competitions. We've had a youth, we've had a band competition, and so there's things happening on a stage over here in the park, and sort of throughout the day as well. Then we have such things as the Milo energy force team came and ran children's events last year and that. Then, sort of, it builds up until six

	o'clock when we have a twilight street parade through Mary Street and it comes to an end over here in Nelson Reserve, so people are sort of led down into the park where we have a night of entertainment, you know music and that sort of thing. There's stalls and food and rides, you know kids rides and that sort of thing happening, so it's a really big thing then to build up, so that's sort of when we close, close down the celebrations. But we have a birthday cake generally, so that, you know, everyone can...
Rob	Have a piece of the cake...
Lisa	Yeah, so you know just bring it to, to... it's just a, a thing to remind people that yeah, you know, it's our birthday and this is the way we're celebrating it and that.
Rob	How many, um, how many people tend to go to this event? I mean, obviously through the week there'd be a lot because there's all these different activities, but, you know, the Saturday, is that fairly...
Lisa	Well I'd say about three thousand people, you know, so, maybe not all in the park together, but sort of throughout the day, people coming and going, you know. I'd say that about three thousand, sort of, you know, take part in some form over the day.
Rob	And over the week?
Lisa	Over the week...
Rob	It would obviously be more than that, because you'd get all the school kids involved...
Lisa	Yeah, well look, with it being a voluntary organisation, and the way – it depends on sort of, we're the committee is at. Sometimes you'll have huge years where people have been able to, you know, put the time aside and really get in there and put all their time and effort into the planning and building it up and that sort of thing. And it can be a huge celebration, and so given commitments and people that are willing to come in and help and that, sometimes it just happens that we just have a week and, oh well, that was Goldrush, you know? So this year we've actually got a fantastic committee, so we've got some, the Goldrush Queen is being reintroduced, that's been out of action for a few years. That was always, was always a part of it, but, as I say, it's one of those things that we're reintroducing this year, so hopefully that'll introduce a little, you know, different interest.
Rob	Yeah, and is the, the Goldrush Queen, is that also based on fundraising and things like that?
Lisa	Yes, yes, so they're out there. And this is hopefully us generating some more funds for the, well for the continuity of it, you know, because for the last few years we've been relying very heavily on the council's input, as well as we've got a major sponsor in the way of IGA, you know sort of a local supermarket here. So, you know, yeah, so what we're trying to do is really find ways of being a little bit more self-sufficient with it. We've got, reintroduced a raffle with it too that we've had in the past that has lapsed in the last couple of years, so

	yeah... There's sort of a renewed enthusiasm this year, which is good, because you know last year it was one of those years that was, you know, it was just, it just happened...
Rob	That just happened, yeah?
Lisa	For many reasons, you know. A few people were called away with the three elections in the one year, so our president was actually – ran for two of those elections, so... And then the treasurer had commitments elsewhere to help family, and you know it was just one of those things, and it really ran on a very minimal voluntary basis, so this year, there's been a few people, you know, sort of a few more people have come forward...
Rob	Mmm, that's good. Ok, and I'll try to keep this a bit shorter because of the fact that you've got customers. What do you think the significance of the Gympie Goldrush Festival is?
Lisa	Well, it's just a means of celebrating our history, I suppose, and it brings to people's minds all the time, "Oh, that's what we're – this is we're we've come from." I know as a child having grown up in the area, you know, it was sort of, "OOOOHHH!! Goldrush", you know you used to get sort of excited about it, and it, it sort of brought it to the memory. I dunno, I think it's a great opportunity to come out and meet your neighbours, so to speak, because a lot of times, you know, you don't catch up with, you don't get to see a lot of people, you know, at least sometimes when you come out you go, "Oooh, G'day", you haven't seen someone for ages, you know. Yeah, I don't know. I think we try to, we try to keep the focus on the heritage side of it, and that's what it's all about, you know, Goldrush. So, yeah.
Rob	Yeah, I've seen the, the advertising stuff. What's his name, um, the old guy that's always in the pictures, what's his name again?
Lisa	Yeah, yeah, Bill Pearce?
Rob	Yeah, but they call him...
Lisa	Nuggetty Bill.
Rob	Nuggetty Bill. That's it!
Lisa	Sorry, sorry. That's his, yeah, yeah. And that's what's on our letterhead, you know...
Rob	A picture of Nuggetty Bill
Lisa	That logo, yeah we've got the logo of Nuggetty Bill.
Rob	Yeah because I saw some of that stuff in the library, they've got a box full of stuff on the Goldrush, and so I've seen the pictures of Nuggetty Bill, I just couldn't think of his name for a second there.
Lisa	Well see we used to have a Nuggetty Bill competition too, where sort of all the guys, all these guys would come forward, so, a fella by the name of Bill Pearce was our last Nuggetty Bill, so he's been the one whose picture's been used probably the most.
Rob	Yeah.
Lisa	You know, when it comes to a photograph, yeah, so he's the one who's... But our logo is just a sketch of old Nuggetty Bill.

Rob	Yeah, so it's sort of an event where people are coming together to sort of just celebrating the history of the place and just sort of remembering where you've come from, I guess, in a sense.
Lisa	So that as well as, hopefully, you know getting a bit of that community spirit, you now, just come out because, so, you know that there's others there that will come out. So they're sort of some of what I'd like to see happen a little bit more. You know, to come out and catch up with you know...
Rob	That's kind of been they way it's been in the past except for those years when it's been a bit, you know, it just happened...
Lisa	A bit ordinary, yeah. But yeah, we're trying to build it up, you know... Like I, it, the thing is, it always needs, it continually needs work, you know, on it, and we're always talking about that shot in the arm, what is it going to be this year, but ah, yeah, so. Like the one year we actually took it from a, you know a sort of an afternoon parade to a twilight parade, and that was huge. It was huge, and then we had a celebrity, a Channel 7 celebrity from Home and Away...
Rob	I saw that.
Lisa	That was a huge year. You know so, it just, basically it needs a...
Rob	A gimmick
Lisa	...new, a gimmick, yeah. A new idea every year, yeah.
Rob	If you will, yeah no, excuse the use of the word, yeah.
Lisa	No, but that's exactly what it is, though. Um, to encourage people to come out. We like the way it is, it just needs to be getting busier and busier. It's still, "oh do I really have to go out, you know...". You've gotta try and get enthusiasm sort of built into it.
Rob	Give them an excuse.
Lisa	So that people want to come. I suppose getting a celebrity, you know, the kids want to come out and see it, so mum and dad, you know, the excitement builds from the kids, so I suppose, and that's sort of where our target is too, with the rides and that, and we'll be offering sort of a free ride
Rob	And I've noticed actually, that the people are very keen to celebrate Gympie's history. I mean, even at the show this year they had a couple of displays from the schools about, you know, in the agricultural displays – did you get a chance to go in and see that?
Lisa	We had a stall, a stand there...
Rob	Oh, right.
Lisa	So no, I don't get away from it.
Rob	Oh, right, well even there, like the, you know, the Dagon School and Victory College both had displays on Gympie's history, like you know the, because this year's the centenary of Gympie being declared a city.
Lisa	That's right, and that's what our theme is for Goldrush this year.
Rob	Yeah, and so I noticed that there were displays about that, and there was stuff going on with that, I mean <i>Gympie Times</i> just produced that book, you know thinks like that. And I get the sense from everyone

	that I've spoken to in Gympie already that their history is something that they're really, really proud of, and it's something that makes them feel unique and special as a place.
Lisa	Yeah, I well, that certainly is the case. Like, I suppose, you know, well my mother was born in Gympie, and we ended up coming back to Gympie, so I, you know, I class Gympie as, you know, as sort of my town and yeah, and extremely proud of it. And you know, always sort of boasting, you know, that yeah, it's the city that saved Queensland. And we've got, we've got celebrations coming up in 2009, the 150 years of Queensland being a state. So you know, we're hoping that we can actually really, you know, use that to our advantage, too, in saying, well, what better place to celebrate, you know 150 years of Queensland being a state that in Gympie, you know, because you wouldn't, you wouldn't know the, um, it, the state's the way it is today because of us. [Laughs] Yeah, so, you know, that's, that's sort of in the pipeline a little bit at the moment too. We're hoping to run national gold panning championships here in...
Rob	Fantastic.
Lisa	We were hoping to get onto the world, you know to actually get the World Championships here, and that will actually be decided on in September, so I don't know whether that is going to happen yet.
Rob	Wow, so you're trying to make it a global event, not just a local one.
Lisa	Yeah, yeah. But anyway, we'll um; we'll just see how it goes.
Rob	That's fantastic. Ok. Great, well, I might end it there seeing as you've got customers, and I saw one walk out before, so I'll probably stop there. But thank you very much...
Lisa	No that's fine. I hope that...
Rob	No, well you've given me some good information there, if nothing else, about the way it's run and the way it goes, so... That's fantastic, and thank you very much, and um, we'll leave it there.