



Celebrations buoyed the economy

IT WAS a memorable weekend in October 2009 when the 70th anniversary celebrations of the RAAF in Evans Head took place.

A visit by Governor General Quentin Bryce and her husband Michael Bryce set the scene for a large contingent of visitors to descend on the town.

Now a recently released report commissioned by Richmond Valley Council shows the celebration had a significant impact on the local economy.

The event was highly successful in attracting many visitors from outside the Richmond Valley Council area with 72 per cent travelling from Canberra, Victoria, Tasmania and Southern Queensland.

Information collected for the report shows the average visitor spent \$600 on food, accommodation and other expenses.

Visitors stayed for an average of three days with some staying up to a week.

"I am very pleased with the results of the survey which showed not only financial benefit to the community but more importantly a highly positive response from visitors," event convenor Lillian Colless said.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to honour the World War II veterans who trained and served at Evans Head.

"We know the veterans were delighted."

The Governor General unveiled a plaque which recognised the important role the RAAF has played in Evans Head's history.

The RAAF continues to have an active presence at Evans Head on part of the World War II training facility.

The Evans Head Memorial Ae-

rodrome was the first of the RAAF's Empire Air Training Scheme Stations to be established in Australia.

More than 1000 personnel who trained at Evans Head lost their lives in the service of their country.

The aerodrome is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

The event was hosted by the Evans Head Living Museum and Community Technology Centre in conjunction with the local Sub-branch of the RSL and the Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Committee.

Mrs Colless thanked the community for its support and particularly those who paid the council fee to hire the aerodrome for the occasion so it was not a burden on the organising committee.



DIGNITARIES: Jean Haughton-James, patron of the memorial aerodrome committee and Evans Head Living Museum and Governor General Quentin Bryce during the RAAF reunion at the Evans Head aerodrome.