

Eyewatch wins award for keeping on top of criminals

RODNEY STEVENS
news@northernstar.com.au

A NSW police online crime reporting project that utilises Facebook has claimed top honours at the Australian Business Awards.

Launched in August 2011, Project Eyewatch, which put the Neighbourhood Watch program online, has now been rolled out across 92 local area and specialist commands across the state.

Casino Neighbourhood Watch area coordinator Donna Maria Colbrelli Adams said the program has transformed crime reporting.

She said the Australian Business Award was well deserved recognition for a wonderful community-based project.

"It is an amazing tool for crime protection... its use is skyrocketing and the success rates are huge," she said.

"It's the best thing that could have happened for crime prevention to be able to go online and report crime immediately and be linked in with people from all around the world."

Mrs Adams said in just three months the Casino Neighbourhood Watch Facebook page had attracted 15,208 friends and fans.

She said the response from the community since the launch of Project Eyewatch at Casino in April had been fabulous.

"It's exciting to be able to reach a vast number of people with just one communication."

"By keeping our traditional community profile and linking that in with our Project Eyewatch Facebook profile we are able to get information out to those people in the community that don't have internet access."

Police minister, Michael Gallacher, said the awards recognise the police force's ability to adapt to changes in lifestyle through technology.

"Project Eyewatch was developed as a modern version of the Neighbourhood Watch program, acknowledging the increasing demands on day-to-day life," he said.

"Most people don't have time to attend community meetings regularly."



CELEBRATION: REX Airlines celebrated their 10th Birthday yesterday with cake, balloons, and gifts for passengers. From left are, first officer Richard Knowles, pilot Gavin Autio, flight attendant Emma Owen, Corey and Aaron Thelander.

PHOTO: CATHY ADAMS

PARTY TIME: Regional Express celebrates 10 years as the country's largest regional airline

Flying to greater heights

BRONWYN MCNULTY
bronwyn.mcnulty@northernstar.com.au

AIR travellers flying with Regional Express, aka Rex, were in for a treat yesterday as the country's largest regional airline celebrated its 10th birthday.

Commuters at Lismore Airport got a small gift as well as the option of a slice of birthday cake before boarding their flights.

Rex rose from the ashes of Ansett Airlines on August 2, 2002, after regional airlines Hazelton and Kendell merged, said Rex sales manager, NSW and Qld, Maurice Gahan.

"We are now the biggest independent regional airline

in Australia, with 40 regular public transport services," Maurice said.

"Our route network has expanded and over the past 10 years we have seen exceptional growth. At our peak we were carrying about 1.4 million passengers a year, but since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) we have been carrying about 1.2 million a year."

Last month Rex had another reason to celebrate when Aviation Week and Space Technology magazine, considered the world's leading aviation and aerospace magazine, voted the airline as the 11th best-performing airline ahead of

“There were the wars in the Middle East, the pilot shortage, the GFC, runaway fuel prices, Eurozone crisis, among many others. It was not a good time for an airline to be born. Yet survive we did and we are still standing tall today.”

Rex executive chairman Lim Kim Hai.

most of such distinguished competitors as Cathay Pacific, British Airways, Lufthansa, Air France-KLM, Southwest and Qantas.

Rex executive chairman Lim Kim Hai said the decade in the aftermath of September 11 was "one of the most

toxic ones the aviation world had ever seen".

"There were the wars in the Middle East, SARS, the decade-long drought, the pilot shortage, the GFC, runaway fuel prices, volcanic ash from Iceland, the Eurozone crisis, among many others,"

he said. "It was not a good time for an airline to be born.

"Yet survive we did and we are still standing tall today."

Rex will celebrate its birthday with a special Open Day at Rex's Australian Airline Pilot Academy in Wagga Wagga on September 8.

Rex's fleet of Saab 340 aircraft fly 1300 weekly flights to 35 destinations throughout NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland.

The Rex Group comprises Regional Express, air freight and charter operator Pel-Air Aviation, and Dubbo-based regional airline Air Link, as well as the Australian Airline Pilot Academy.

\$249,000 for Big Scrub Landcare for six more years

JAVIER ENCALADA
news@northernstar.com.au

THE NSW Government's Environmental Trust awarded yesterday Big Scrub Landcare Group a \$249,000 six-year grant.

Big Scrub Landcare Group is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2012 controlling weeds and preserving subtropical rainforest in the Northern Rivers.

Ken Dorey, from Newrybar, was one of the original Big Scrub volunteers from 1992 and has restored 8ha of rainforest on his own land over two decades.

He explained that the group applies principles of "integrated pest management: working with nature to keep pests and predators in balance".



Jenny and Charlie Handley own one of the last rainforest remnants at their Wollongbar macadamia

farm. It was a big change for them to go from a farming culture to one of integrated

“Jenny Handley: Weeds have gone, we had a prolific increase in wildlife like wallabies and birdlife that we have never seen before.”

TEAM WORKS: Tony Parkes, President of Big Scrub Landcare, Jenny and Charlie Handley and Ken Dorey of Big Scrub Landcare.

PHOTO: MIREILLE MERLET-SHAW

pest management on their property.

"Big Scrub Landcare came and helped us in 1997 when

we started improving our property", said Mr Handley.

"Weeds have gone, we had a prolific increase in wildlife like wallabies and birdlife that we have never seen before," said Mrs Handley.

Over the years, the remnant at the Handleys' property has been cared for by seven Green Corps teams, three bush regenerators working for five years one day a week, plus follow-up maintenance one full day a week.

President Tony Parkes explained that the grant confirms the long-term future of the grassroots organisation in the Northern Rivers.

Local MP and acting minister for environment Don Page delivered the cheque to Big Scrub president Tony Parkes yesterday.