

Janine Hayes, Proprietor & Chief Instructor Aerial Skydives, Latrobe Regional Airport

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Janine Hayes spends many of her working hours flying in freefall at 220km an hour. Although she is earthbound for the rest of the working day, she tends to throw herself at her business with just as much energy.

Gippsland-based Aerial Skydives is an adventure tourism product offering tandem jumps to visitors, local and business people. It started with a caravan on a bit of grass seven years ago, but now has a secure lease in the airport building, is purchasing its own aircraft and is looking at building a hangar at the site.

As an experienced business woman, Janine knows that wider industry involvement is not an optional activity for small tourism operators, if they wish to stay in business.

“ You really have no option but to get involved and become as networked as you possibly can. I’m lucky that I enjoy that part of the business, but you need to be determined and disciplined to make yourself do it. It often means that I’m up till midnight doing business paperwork so that I’m able to do other things during the day, but I’m prepared to do that because it’s so important”.

Although the business is young and on a rapid growth curve, Janine has found time to help establish the Latrobe City Business Tourism Association, has undertaken the 20+ day Gippsland Tourism Leadership program and she attends as many seminars and workshops as she can. In between, she has bid for, won, and organised the 47th Australian Style and Accuracy National Championships.



“ I recognised early on that I needed to legitimise my business with other people, so you have to get out there and let people know about yourself. It also gives them an opportunity to sell their business to me, which means that I can recommend their product to my clients with confidence; it’s a symbiotic relationship.

“It gives you a great source of contacts and you can even learn things about innovation and changes in technology just through associating with others.

“ Because I needed to grow the business I identified what skills I needed to acquire and I have been able to choose from the many workshops and training programs available to fill those needs. I think I’ve just about completed a pseudo marketing degree over the years through attending short courses.

“ Gippsland might be a large area, but by the end of the Tourism Leadership Program it seemed a lot smaller to me because I had made great contacts with people from right across the region. I can now go all over the place and drop in on people to chat for a few minutes about how things are going.

“ We’re all busy people, but you really can’t afford not to be involved. Otherwise, you’ll sit in your own little patch, isolated, and things will pass you by”.