21 May 2012

Town of Katherine renamed Tom Curtain for the day

The town of Katherine has been renamed *Tom Curtain* for today after the winner of the Great NT Hat Yak tourism competition.

Tourism Minister, Malarndirri McCarthy joined the Mayor and town councillors by the side of the Stuart Highway at the southern entrance this morning to unveil the town’s new name – *Tom Curtain*.

Minister McCarthy said that renaming the town after winner for the day is the ‘money can’t buy’ first prize in The Great NT Hat Yak competition.

“The competition provided an online platform for Territorians to share their personal stories about life in the Territory, and it attracted hundreds of entries in the three months it ran,” she said.

“The winner – Tom Curtain – trains horses for use on cattle stations and his entry stood out for several reasons. He sang it, he wrote it - so it’s very personal - and he sang it while sitting on his horse, which was lying down.

‘I would like to thank the Mayor and the people of Katherine for so generously permitting the renaming of their town. Now it has two famous sons – Tour de France winner Cadel Evans, and Tom Curtain.’

‘The Great NT Hat Yak has proved to be a very educational and entertaining way of promoting tourism to the Territory.”

The Great NT Hat Yak started with the distribution of 100 Akubra hats to Territorians, and these have since travelled almost 40,000 kilometres. They were used like a talking stick, with each person who received a hat being asked “If you had one story to inspire people to come to the Northern Territory, what would that be?”

They told their story, uploaded it to the hatyak.com website, then passed the hat on to another Territorian with a good yarn.

The various storylines which emerged have moved across the Territory to other capital cities in Australia. One has even reached London, gathering and sharing stories of the NT’s unique character along the way.

Besides having Katherine named after him for the day, Tom’s prizes include travel to Alice Springs, Uluru and Darwin, spending two days in each, with flights, accommodation and transport all included. He’ll be treated to some classic Territory experiences, including a camel ride, quad bike tour, and dip in Darwin’s Cage of Death, as well as have Mayor Damien Ryan as his personal guide in Alice Springs. He was also presented with an Akubra and a camera to record his journey.

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First Prize
Tom Curtain, Katherine, Middle of the Territory

Runners Up
Five runners-up will each receive a Canon 1000D SLR camera. They are:
Peter Eve, Alice Springs, Camels and Crocs
Steve Goddard, Tennant Creek, Horsin’ Around the NT
Leticia Keane, Alice Springs, Dance
Cindy Watson, Darwin, Mudjula
Warren De With, Katherine, Why I Love the Territory

TOM CURTAIN BIO
Tom Curtain began his horse training and music career in the Northern Territory in 2001, working first in the stock camp at Heytesbury Beef’s Mt Sanford Station. Here he worked with the station horse breaker and musician Martin Oakes, who recognised his penchant for all things musical and encouraged him to pick up a guitar and begin writing songs about his experience in the Territory.

This led to the release of the award winning album ‘Smack Bang!’, the title song from which stayed at the top of the Australian Country Music Charts for several weeks. During this time Tom decided to go out on his own, contract breaking throughout the Territory in order to continue his love of working with horses and the pastoral industry while being able to continue his song writing and singing.

In 2005 Tom met his wife Sky at the Daly Waters Campdraft and Rodeo and shortly after moved to Kingaroy, Queensland to further his music career and establish a horse training business on his property. After touring extensively throughout Australia with Sara Storer, the Sunny Cowgirls and other Australian Country Music Artists and releasing his second album ‘Heatwave’, Tom focussed on building his horse training business and his young family.

It was only a matter of time before the Northern Territory lured him and his family back to Katherine where he continues to train horses and break horses in for the pastoral sector. While he spends time between both his NT and Qld horse training businesses, his love of the Territory provides great inspiration for him both as a singer/songwriter and horse trainer.