



MEDIA RELEASE

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LOCALS TAKE HOME TOP PRIZE AT KINGFISHER COPETON INVITATIONAL

Bundarra local Jeremy David is cheering after taking out the top prize with three Murray Cod at the Kingfisher Copeton Invitational, held last weekend at Inland Waters Holiday Parks (IWHP) Copeton Waters. With a whopping 1155mm Murray Cod plus four Yellowbelly in his arsenal, Inverell's Jarod Walker came a close second.

Now in its fifth year, the Invitational saw 78 competitors cast their lines and fight it out at Copeton Dam to earn the status of 'big fish' among their peers. Run by the Inverell RSM Fishing Club with support from IWHP Copeton Waters, the Invitational promotes fishing tourism in the local region and supports the restocking of native fingerlings.

The fishing club estimates that around 250,000 fingerlings have been purchased and released since the Invitational's inception, ensuring future fishing fans can enjoy the local waterways for years to come.

Overall 54 Golden Perch and 21 Murray Cod were caught and released over the weekend, with representatives from the Fishing Club reporting that these numbers greatly exceeded the overall catch from last year's competition.

With nine fish caught the Yellowbelly category was won by keen Inverell fisherman Josh Usher, closely followed by fellow Inverell local Jo Press at seven fish. Jeremy David also won the Murray Cod category with three fish caught, with Inverell's Chris Russell hot on his heels at two fish.

IWHP Copeton Waters Park Manager David Allan said the event is a great boon for tourism in the area, due both to the large amount of competitors and volunteers who travel to the region for the event and for its positive effect in protecting fish populations in the local waterways.

"Funds raised from last year's competition saw 2,500 advanced Murray Cod fingerlings released into Copeton Dam on Saturday morning to mark the commencement of the event, with money raised also being matched dollar for dollar by NSW Fisheries," Mr Allan said.

"It is great to see such a positive event take shape in support of our local community, as it not only benefits our waterways but also local businesses. Fingerlings were sourced from Gwydir Fish Hatchery, which is owned and operated by Ron Randel. Ron has been a great supporter of our park and local fishing for many years, so thanks goes to him for giving our Dam a much needed boost in population numbers.



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HOLIDAY PARKS TRUST



“Congratulations goes to all winners of the Invitational though I would like to extend a special mention to Inverell’s Makala Arnold who caught her first Murray Cod over the weekend – a monster Murray Cod measuring 1150mm which was caught on a surface lure made by her dad.”

NSW Crown Holiday Parks Trust (NSWCHPT) CEO Steve Edmonds said he was excited to hear of the event’s success, calling it an example of the Trust’s mission to support and enrich the local communities in which the Group’s parks are located.

“The Kingfisher Copeton Invitational is an important event within the Inverell and Gwydir Shire region and we are pleased to see that it has such a positive effect for the local community,” Mr Edmonds said.

“As with many of our Inland Waters parks, fishing is a major drawcard at Copeton Waters and the Invitational’s support of the release of fingerlings into the Dam ensures the sustainability of this popular pastime well into the future. I’d like to extend my congratulations to the winners and we look forward to seeing all competitors back at the park next year.”

The Kingfisher Copeton Invitational is just one event taking place at IWHP Copeton Waters over the next few months, with the Gwydir Shire Freshwater Swim set to kick off on the 8th April. This will be followed by the return of keen fishermen to the park on 22nd April, competing for the top prize at the JJ Plague Topwater Cod Invitational Competition.

Bookings for these events are filling fast, so head to www.inlandwaters.com.au to secure your accommodation now. If you’re looking for a coastal getaway in stunning locations across NSW, book your next trip today at www.northcoastholidayparks.com.au or www.southcoastparks.com.au.

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