

15<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Mayor: Councillor John Medcalf

General Manager: Robert Hunt



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# MEDIA RELEASE

## 2018 Lachlan Shire Australia Day Ambassador Announced

Founder of Shoes for Planet Earth, Vivienne Kartsounis has been named Lachlan Shire Council's 2018 Australia Day Ambassador.

Ms Kartsounis will be front and centre of Lachlan Shire Australia Day events in Lake Cargelligo, Tullibigeal and Burcher and will be joining Lachlan Shire Council Mayor John Medcalf in presenting the 2018 local awards.



<b>Summary:</b> 2018 Australia Day Ambassador Announced	
<b>Authorised By:</b> Robert Hunt General Manager	<b>Contact:</b> Lachlan Shire Council Ph: (02) 6895 1900
<b>Distribution:</b> Local Media, Council Website, Council Face book page.	

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“My name is Viv Kartsounis and I was born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa and I was born to run! I ran competitively throughout my school years in South Africa, and through two university degrees – the first a Bachelor in Architecture (RSA) and the second a Masters in Land Development (Texas A&M).

In 1995, my family and I moved from South Africa to Kuala Lumpur (KL) Malaysia, where we lived for 6 wonderful years before immigrating to Sydney, Australia, in 2002.

I have always loudly shared my passion for running, establishing my own informal running groups for both adults and children in Malaysia and Australia. With my passion I found it very easy to inspire and motivate others to join in my running fun and together we ran along roads and discovered new and exciting bush and jungle trails. The benefits to all were huge and often a tear was shed as fears were conquered and medals displayed.

In 2004, and new to Australia, my life changed when I met Nick Drayton, a seasoned ultra-runner. It was him who saw my potential and encouraged me to try out for the Australian women’s 100km running team. I was not used to running anything more than a marathon but with a lot of training under my belt and with the support of my family and friends; I was given a place to run overseas for Australia in 2006, 2007 and 2008. These experiences sealed the bond I had for God’s Country and I ran proudly for Australia.

Seven years ago, my running found new purpose and intention. A visit to South Africa to run the Comrades Marathon took me to the very front row of poverty. A vision for the future became clear and exciting – getting shoes onto bare feet across the planet. It took us a good 6 months to get it all up and running but we never gave up and in October 2009 we formed the charity “Shoes for Planet Earth”.

Our first box of shoes went to runners in South Africa but we soon realised that the high cost of international shipping was more than we could afford. Rather than abandon our vision, we “looked local” to see if there was a need for shoes amongst the needy and homeless in Sydney and throughout Australia. We have never looked back.

“Shoes for Planet Earth” took its first steps slowly but then it started to run...

To date we have:

- Changed over 37,000 lives through the gift of a pair of shoes.

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- Given shoes to the homeless, indigenous sporting communities, natural disaster victims, orphans, church groups and people in need.
- Sent shoes to eleven countries other than Australia and we continue to grow.
- Started a weekly walking group for Sydney's Homeless.

Our charity has three primary goals:

1. To collect and send sports shoes to those in need throughout Australia and around the world.
2. Encourage a healthy lifestyle through exercise.
3. Reduce landfill.

The 2018 Australia Day Awards for the Lachlan Shire official ceremony and award presentation will be held at the Lake Cargelligo Sail and Power Boat Club on the morning of Australia Day 26 January 2018.

"Australia Day is a time to celebrate our great nation and honour our unsung heroes for their outstanding contributions to the local community," Cr Medcalf said.

"I encourage all residents to take part in their nearest Australia Day event as we celebrate what is great about Australia and our wonderful community."

For more information about the Shire's Australia Day celebrations, please contact Lachlan Shire Council or visit the Australia Day website: [www.australiaday.org.au](http://www.australiaday.org.au).

**RELEASE ENDS**



**AUSTRALIA DAY**  
IN LACHLAN SHIRE

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