

Jacaranda Festival 2022

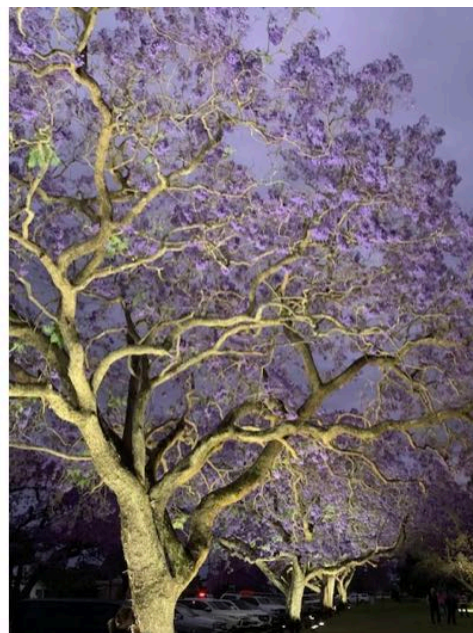
Grafton

Friday 28 October to 6 November 2022



Jacaranda time in the town of Grafton in northern New South Wales is a particularly magical time. Each year in spring, the majestic trees around this heritage town put on an extravagant display of colour, with an explosion of purple blossoms.

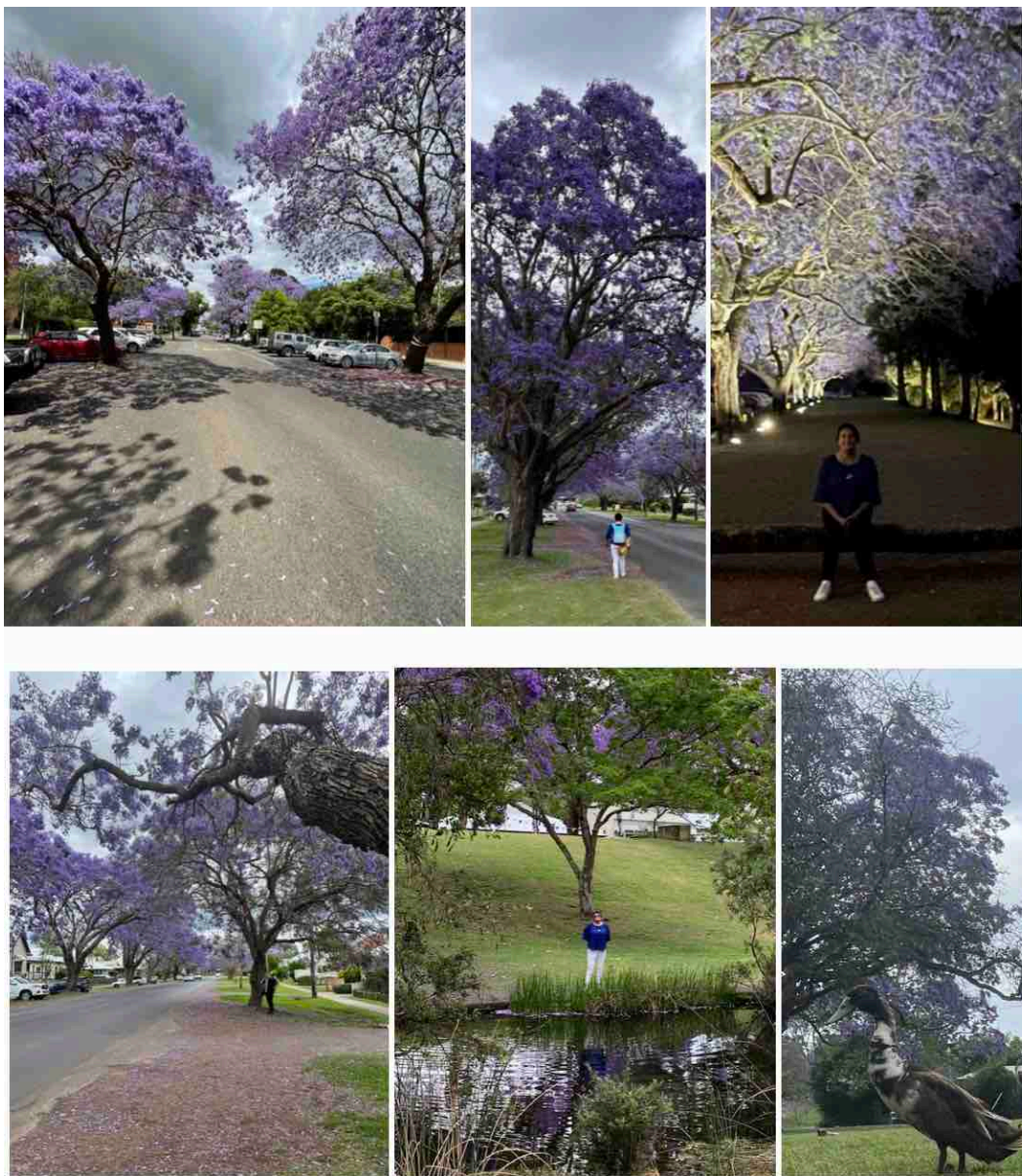
The Jacaranda (*Jacaranda Mimosifolia*) is of South American origin, mainly Brazil. It grows well in sub-tropical regions and may grow to a height of 20 metres.



Jacaranda trees have flowers in maroon and white as well as the popular blue mauve. Life expectation may be up to 200 years and the timber is a creamy to rich yellow pinkish colour and can be used for ornamental woodwork.

On 2nd July 1879, Grafton seed merchant Mr H. A. Volkers, was contracted to plant trees for the Grafton Council.

During the 1880's he was instrumental in supplying and planting hundreds of Jacaranda trees in the streets of the town.



First held during the 1930s, the Grafton Jacaranda Festival celebrated its 88th year in 2022, and for the first time in its history, the Jacaranda Queen candidacy has been opened to include all gender identities.

The candidates could choose their own title including Queen, King or Ambassador should they receive the honour of being crowned during the traditional Jacaranda Royal Party Crowning Ceremony in Market Square on October 29.



Jacaranda Festival has something for everyone.

Clock Tower



Erected July 20, 1909, to commemorate the Jubilee of the Incorporation of the City of Grafton, the town's Clock Tower stands as a symbol of civic pride and strength.

In 1953 it was decorated with flags and bunting as well as a huge crown for the street parade in celebration of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Since then and carrying this tradition the Clock Tower is now ceremoniously decorated with a splendid crown of lights each year to mark exactly 30 days before the Jacaranda Festival begins.

Jacaranda Thursday



One of the most popular days during the festival is Jacaranda Thursday when the town is given license to 'let its hair down'. Main streets close, local businesses dress up and people meander throughout the CBD soaking up the atmosphere.

A feature of Jacaranda Thursday is the wearing of colourful leis. In the fifties and sixties young girls wore leis hand made from crepe paper at Jacaranda Festival time. Even people's pets and the swans in the fountain couldn't escape the neck piece.

These days the leis are more likely to be made of plastic, but the tradition continues strong.



First Jacaranda Baby

A custom particular to the Grafton Jacaranda Festival is the naming of the Jacaranda Baby.



Each year the baby born closest to the time of the Jacaranda Queen crowning is bestowed the prestigious title.

Locals Cheryl Barnes and Kay Paine visit the lucky parents each year and present them with a gift.

Volkers Bar



In a nod to the city's heritage, the aptly named Volkers Bar was on hand and opened to serve up a range of refreshing brews and beverages including the festival's very own Her Majesty Larger and the Festival Punch Purple Lemonade.

If you're wondering why Volkers, well planting 100's of Jacaranda Trees would be thirsty work. His legacy is now celebrated every year through the Grafton popular festivities including the Venetian Carnival, where they create life-long memories during one of the premier events in Northern NSW.

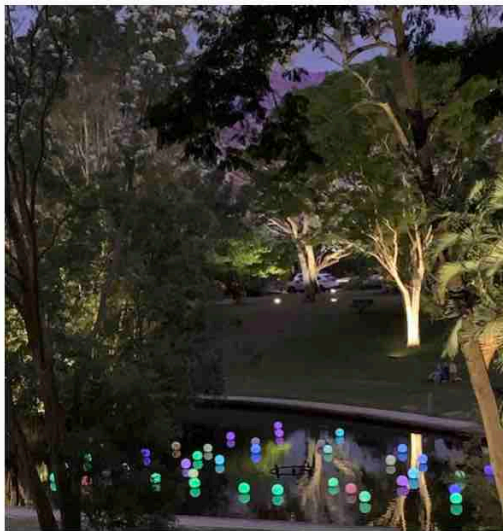
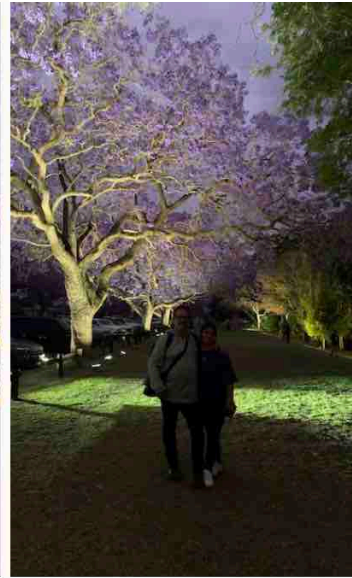
Venetian Carnival

The Venetian Carnival is one of the Jacaranda Festival's most beloved events. On Friday November 4th, Market Square hosted a variety of talented performers from across the Clarence Valley. This year we were entertained by marvellous musicians with sensational songs and divine dancer with cracking choreography.



See Park

Jacaranda Festival has something for everyone. This year the Jacarandas were Illuminated in the See Park. As the sun goes down, the beautiful Jacarandas of See Park light up.





Thank you to Grafton community for the great hosting and very entertaining time. We were very impressed with the whole city which was just a blaze of colour with all Jacaranda trees in full bloom and all the businesses and local people wearing the lilac-mauve colour of the trees in the clothing.

We thoroughly recommend anyone to go and stay at Grafton for the Jacaranda Festival next year. It is unforgettable experience!

Photos: Danuta and Bogusław Piotrowscy

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