

# Skydiving for fun just got a little easier



**OFFICIAL OPENING:** Mayor Bob Abbot joined the Skydive Ramblers team to officially open their new airport-based Clubhouse on Monday. Over 100 invited guests enjoyed an afternoon of music, chute packing races, competitions and a fun, festive atmosphere.

IT'S been a long time coming, but an excited Skydive Ramblers team finally celebrated the official opening of their new clubhouse on Monday.

The half a million dollar club house was constructed thanks to the contribution of a \$100K Australian Tourism Development Program (ATDP) grant and has long been a dream of Ramblers owners, Susie McLachlan and her dad, Dave McEvoy.

"The new club house will become a vibrant hub where passionate skydivers can congregate, irrespective of whether they have done thousands of jumps or if they are trying a tandem for the first time," said Susie, who has completed over 2,600 jumps and is an Australian gold and silver medallist for formation skydiving.

"This facility gives us the opportunity to welcome people and make them feel comfortable about jumping out of our "perfectly good plane". We can train people in a custom-designed environment and then have a laugh with our customers and their family and friends when they review the video of their jump on the big screens straight after their jump."

The morning's celebrations were attended by over 100 people, with

Mayor Bob Abbot declaring the facility officially opened around 1:00pm.

"It's great for the tourism industry and the airport. It's been a long time in the making and Dave and Susie have done really well to get this far. It's part of the scheme of the airport to try and improve the facilities here," Cr Abbot said.

"The airport's a long way from just being aeroplanes flying in and out. We need to improve our business capacity here and this is exactly the sort of business we would be looking at. It's a good advantage, good opportunity and indeed, it will be a bit of a highlight for us to show people what can be done."

Dave McEvoy thanked the local business community for their support, noting that the over 100 letters of support they received were the deciding factor for the approval of their federal funding grant.

Although unofficially known for some time, Mr McEvoy also took the opportunity on Monday to officially hand-over the reins of the long term local business to his daughter Susie McLachlan and husband Wayne.

Skydive Ramblers is one of the Coast's most established, family-run tourism businesses taking people up

to enjoy the Coast skydiving experience since 1972. In addition to the new airport location, they have skydiving centres in Toogoolawah and Rainbow Beach which collectively facilitate approximately 20,000 skydives per year.

The business had been operating from a back room at Coolum Beach Hotel for the past 11 years, but their long-awaited new clubhouse will allow Skydive Ramblers to offer a better range of services to the general public and serious skydivers.

"It provides a central location for anyone interested in the sport to come along and get a taste of just how much fun it is to be involved. We'll be having regular skydiving movie nights, seminars, social BBQs, charity fundraisers and we're also planning on making the Clubhouse facility available as a venue for businesses and organisations to hire," said Susie.

The bright blue clubhouse on the corner of Airport drive and Kittyhawk Close is sure to grab people's attention as they travel to and from the Airport and the club house is expected to become a significant attraction for the Coast.

For more information on Skydive Ramblers please visit [www.skydiveforfun.com.au](http://www.skydiveforfun.com.au).