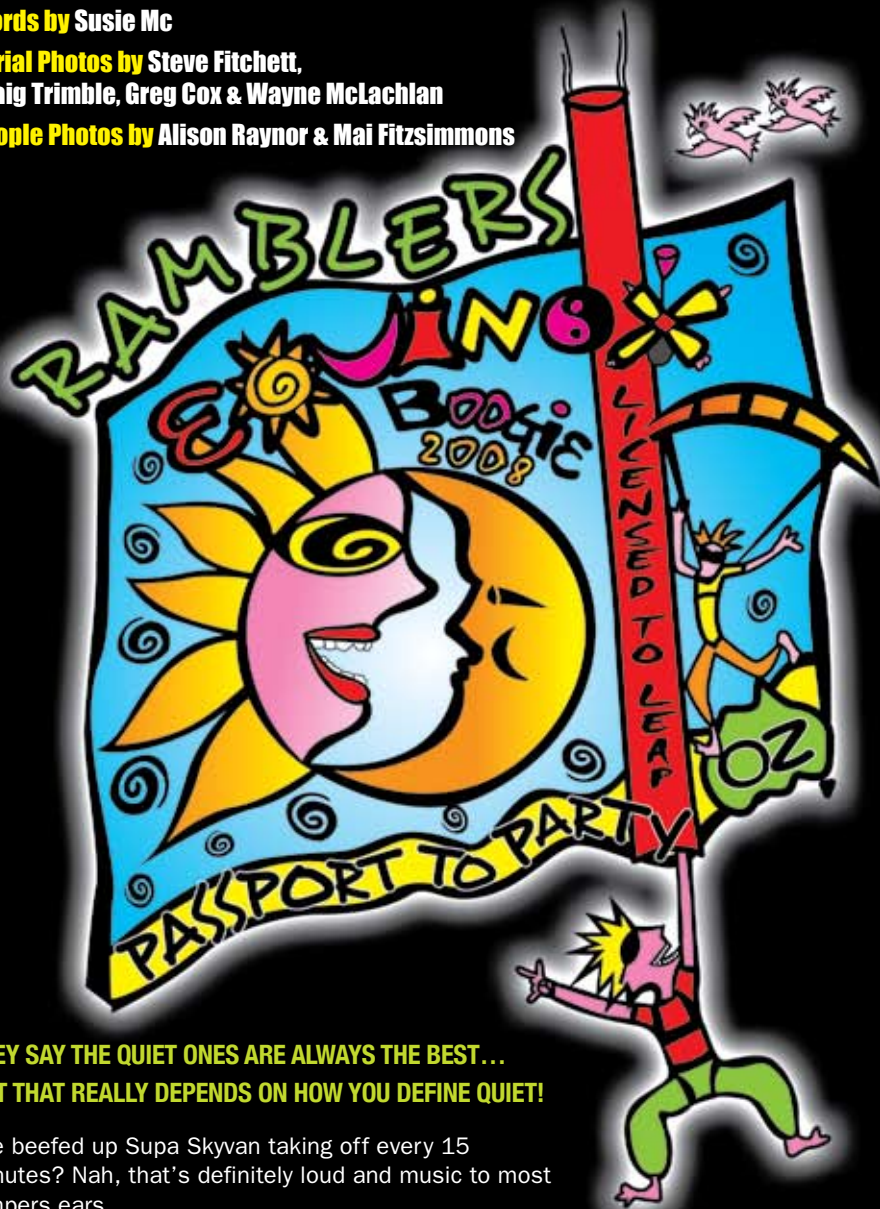




Words by Susie Mc

**Aerial Photos by Steve Fitchett,
Craig Trimble, Greg Cox & Wayne McLachlan**

People Photos by Alison Raynor & Mai Fitzsimmons



**THEY SAY THE QUIET ONES ARE ALWAYS THE BEST...
BUT THAT REALLY DEPENDS ON HOW YOU DEFINE QUIET!**

The beefed up Supa Skyvan taking off every 15 minutes? Nah, that's definitely loud and music to most jumpers ears.

How about the all-girl punk rock band 'Legless' going off? No, they certainly could not be described as quiet, nor could BingBong Dave Morris's dirtdives, Jules McConnel's CRew woohos or how about the Sydneysiders' grand entrance? Though they were a little quiet the next morning!

Perhaps the absence of Sean Hoffman and his infectious laugh made it seem a little quieter than normal. (By the way, where's your note Sean?) His usual partner-in-crime, 'Bloody' John McMahon, was vocal enough for the pair of them and the repetitive manifest calls "John McMahon's Star Crest group, gear up" is still ringing in my ears!

Elise Rogers was very quiet by day, but quite nocturnal, coming out for night jumps and achieving her Night Star Crest ambition!

Sure, it could be argued that the Territorians weren't as outrageous (or erm, boundary-pushing) without their fearless leader Handbrake for the whole duration, though in just 3 short days he did make himself very well-known (in his own style) to the DZ and the locals, even the friendly Sergeant. But, the Territorians had somewhat of a replacement for Handbrake – they brought their apprentice, Kristian, who was easily influenced and with his antics, they saved face!

Herman the German didn't have any canopy wraps or malfunctions, no facial scarring, no party tricks gone wrong and he never caught on fire once. So you could say he had a quiet one, but nah, he jumped his butt off, sung and strummed up a storm every arvo and even had a boogie romance, hardly a quiet one!

Roeland, the leader of the packing team, was definitely quiet at night, everything to do with personally packing over 200 rigs each day. He packed 75 rigs on the last Sunday... there were only 7 loads that day!

Absent Archie was noticeable, not as many laughs to be had without the tall, skinny one's clumsiness or sense of humour as MC and in the camera pool. He had an acceptable note from his Mum though.





Nick Grillet from Performance Designs was pretty quiet, for an American! Though his impressive stash of 20+ demo canopies sure brought out the “woohoos” in test pilots.

The high-pitched squeals of excitement by 10 year old Emma Cox as she left the Skyvan in tandem with her Dad (and another 8 people) were not at all quiet, rather ear-piercing and super cool – sure did make us all giggle.

Well over \$10,000 worth of raffle prizes sure made for some vocal evenings around the bingo balls... who wouldn't want to win a free Javelin Odyssey or a half price Icarus Canopy? “Pick me, pick me” for a Cookie helmet, a Vigil, a custom Airsuit, Dytters and half price Birdman suit. With over 200 prizes up for grabs, not many people went home empty handed.

The Equinox Olympics was anything but quiet, the torch relay through town set the scene with a patriarchal and very proud Greek leading the charge, followed by a birdman, a drunk, a cross-dresser, even a cripple, just to name a few! (You can view the video on the DVD or the Ramblers website). The Team Skulls, Individual Packing Race, Javelin (rig) Throwing and Foosle Tournament were just a handful of the ground events and believe me, they were loud and very roudy, and then there was the Human Ten Pin Bowling event which eclipsed them all. In the air, the Tracking Races, Dunny Paper Star Wars and Pylon Races were hotly contested, albeit a little physical with ‘friendly’ nudges and pushes! With over 20 nationalities in attendance, the competitive spirit was healthy, the team chants loud and the laughter infectious. In the final medal tally Australia came first, of course, the Poms were disqualified, haha, and Cyprus not only got it's first ever Olympic medal, but also ranked 2nd in the world!

Perhaps the meaning of ‘quiet’ is gauged on the number of people, so being only 220 paid registered boogiers (over 250 people in total) then sure, it was a quiet one... that is, if you call 250 jumpers in the one place **quiet!** Yes, the number of attendees was down 100 compared to previous Equinox Boogies, but what was lacking with numbers was doubly made up for in the great jumps and terrific vibe. The key difference being that everyone who was there **wanted** to be there.

There were a number of people who wanted to be there and weren't able to for a variety of unacceptable reasons, including shoulder surgery Rodney (though I must admit we did miss you Wilson). The jury is out and we've only let pregnant Issy and husband Brown off the hook for obvious reasons and also Scott & Lisa McDonald who missed their first Equinox and anniversary because of their newborn plus key team member Elad was excused as his little baby Maya was born the day before the boogie started. Not next Nox though - we missed you all too much – and so there will be a child minding service in 2010!

And so, just as the brochure promised, there were 9 days and 9 nights of absolute fun and enjoyment in the air and on the ground. Well, Ramblers is not “Famous for Serious” as Sarge so matter-of-factly pointed out.

Our celebrity load organiser came all the way from Italy - Marco Tiezzi - the brainchild of the Atmonauti concept. He could talk the front and hind legs off a horse, which translated well for dirt dives and debriefs and resulted in steep learning curves for the new and experienced nauti pilots alike. He was the avid professional plus the all-round good guy who, in effect, had everyone speaking a little Italiano lingo, while Crikey liked to take things a bit further and strut around in his black jocks in the packing shed, apparently that's how the Italians do it.

Equinox is not just about the jumping, though 3 beautiful turbine aircraft, acclaimed international and national load organisers for every aspect of the sport, videomen on every load and over 4,000 jumps 250 sorties could argue that point. Equinox is also a music festival with live gigs every afternoon and some evenings! Nothing creates a better atmosphere on drops than live tunes and cocktails by the pool in the arvo, or bands at night to get the party going. The Equinox is also a video festival – with so much jumping action each day and footage from a variety of camera angles to prove it, the editing of the day tapes is one mean feat. The boys in The Cave, especially without key leader Elad, did a sterling job and had their masterpiece on the massive outdoor screen each night to showcase the days lobs and lobbors, complete with a taste of Aussie humour. What a highlight! And the things people do to get on the day tape...!





We quite often hear that skydiving is not just about the jumping, that it's the people who make the sport so great, there's even a t-shirt to confirm this truth! The Equinox is always a great reunion and welcoming friends 'home' is probably the most endearing aspect of it all. Cementing new friendships is a hoot too, plus there are usually a few new romances to get the tongues wagging and complete any good boogie... this Equinox took triple honours for that. As I hum the tune of Days of Our Drop Zones I giggle at that old saying "you don't lose your girlfriend, you just lose your slot" and marvel at the "funny old world" we live in. If only the logs at the fire could tell...

Santhosh the Indian contortionist declared that for him the Equinox represented "quality not quantity", but Jump Pig Mason got the best of both worlds; he did 83 jumps and nearly doubled his jump numbers in just one week!

There are always a few comedians (rascals) with big personalities who stand out from the crowd and either endear themselves or annoy the rest of the crew by being their natural selves; the Aussie guy with the German name all the way from Western Australia – Hendrik – memorable for many reasons but probably mostly for his Winter Olympics event (sorry, too X rated to publish); self-confessed 'Sky Spaz' and coolest mother on drops – Leonie – you are gold, gold, gold, don't ever change; and all the way from Cyprus – Marios - who whooped in delight on every landing and went in every event except the Winter Olympics.

Kate Rose graced our skies after a long break from jumping and declared that she had "the best 9 days of my life!" We asked, "**your life?**" and she confirmed, yep, "**my life!**" She even put pen to paper and sent in a few pages of how great it all was, but I'm still left wondering how do you define **best?**

And then came the inevitable post boogie blues, boohoooooo... it never seems to get easier. Goodbye's are hard, thankfully hellos aren't and luckily we've already set the dates for the next Nox in 2 years time (every 2 years to make it special) and so, all the Ramblers crew and the Toogoolawah Skydivers Club Inc, the McEvoy family plus local legends Airsuits, Cookie Composites and Al McVinish and his Caravans together thank you for playing with us and wish you so long, we look forward to welcoming you to the next Nox, 15th to 23rd of October, 2010!





“ When people ask me about Ramblers and the Equinox I tell them it is like a ‘Skydive Disney Land’ and the Nox 2008 didn’t disappoint. Ramblers is a special place and Nox is a special boogie. I have been lucky enough to go all over the world and nothing compares. A perfect mixture of relaxed yet professional and for this Pom a nice hot climate makes skydiving there a pure joy. The standard in all disciplines is very high especially formation skydiving and with Al’s aircraft at our disposal and the Skyvan, we can put up to 50 people in the air at one time and we did.

One thing that impresses me most about the Nox is the quality of the ‘up-and-coming’ skydiver. I don’t know what you are feeding them down there but when I see a fresher to large formations with only 100 jumps like Riss Anderson performing flawlessly on 50-ways I want to export the training programme. Well done Riss, you rock.

2004, 2006 and 2008, I think maybe I have become part of the family, I hope I have because it is a great family to be part of. I already have my invite for 2010 so see you there. Rev up, remove the chox, coz Nox rocks!

Dave (Bing Bong) Morris ”



“ I loved my time at Nox, did some great jumps, appeared on every day tape, won a ticket in the raffles, ate and drank my fill every night and incredibly even lost weight!

Douglas Mickle, Spirit Skysports ”

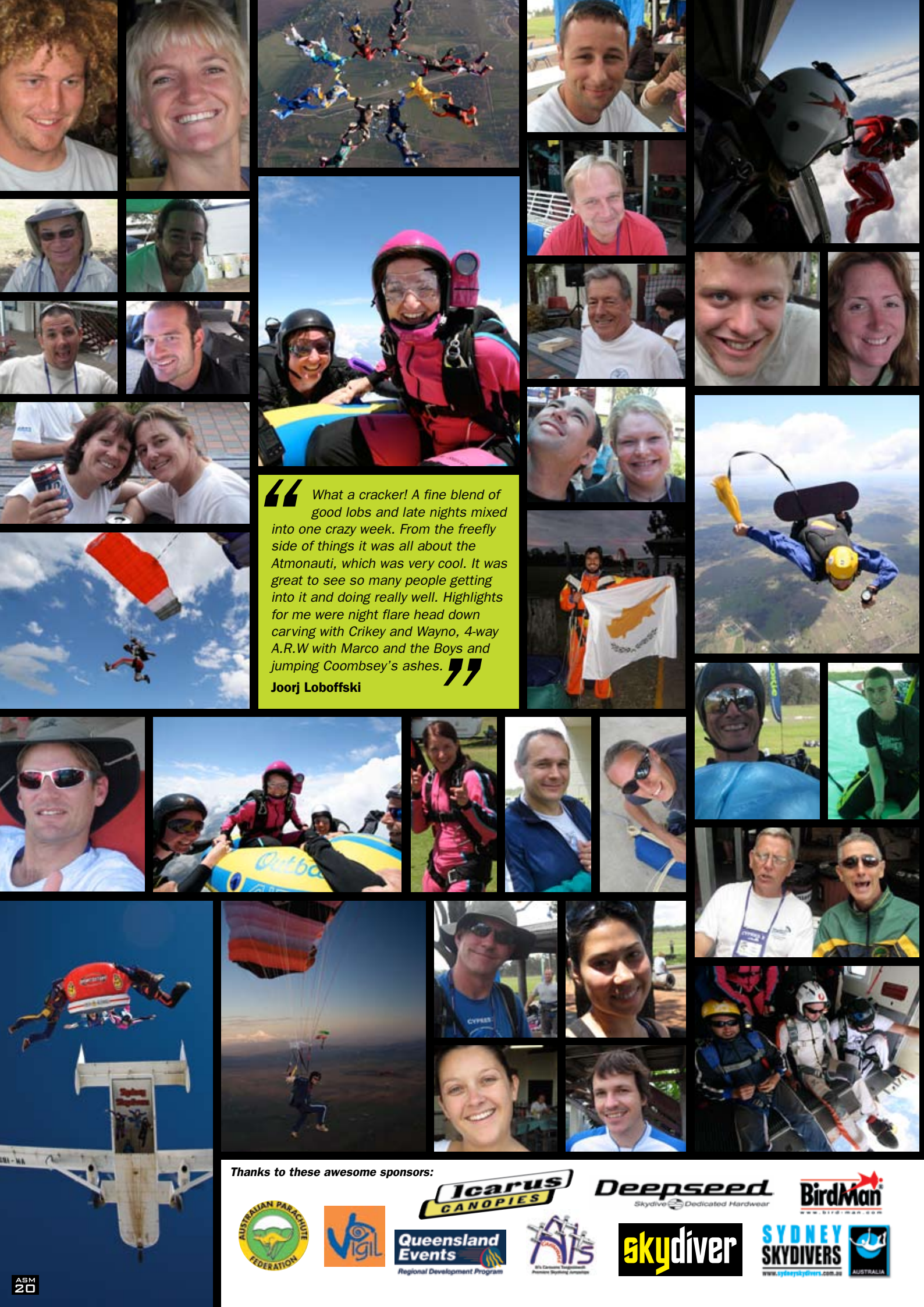


“ The boogie was amazing and the team seemed so relaxed while making the event run so smoothly. Thanks heaps for making so many people, including myself, feel so at home and happy during Equinox. We are so lucky to have this paradise to runaway to whenever we need to. ” **Janet Schneider**



“ It may have started with a whimper, with low clouds stopping us jumping or even arriving on the Skyvan on the first day but in true Toogoolawah style we all made up for it on subsequent days. The jumpers were keen to learn and to help out others and I'd like to thank everyone I jumped with for making my 'Nox the best ever. It's great to see the progression people can make over a week and as I was mainly doing Star Crests and intermediate level jumps the learning curve was very steep and rewarding. Congratulations to all those who got their Star Crests! It was also good fun to do some formation loads as well with the almost complete 50-way on the last Saturday a particular highlight for many. Thanks for the jumps and I hope to see you next Equinox. ” **Fiona McEachern**





“ What a cracker! A fine blend of good lobs and late nights mixed into one crazy week. From the freefly side of things it was all about the Atmonauti, which was very cool. It was great to see so many people getting into it and doing really well. Highlights for me were night flare head down carving with Crikey and Wayno, 4-way A.R.W with Marco and the Boys and jumping Coombsey's ashes. ”

Joorj Loboffski

Thanks to these awesome sponsors:





“ WOW! What a great Equinox it was this year! So many people from so many different places doing so many different disciplines in the sky! For the freestyle side of things, though it has to be said that it was pretty much “The Atmonauti Equinox”, it was fantastic to have Marco here to share his great vibes and experience with us. Doing a 35-way Atmo jump from two planes was awesome and personally, to be able to do an 11-point 4-way with Marco was really special. From my point of view, the Equinox this year was a huge success. Everyone I spoke with had such a great time, learnt heaps and are looking forward to the next one. Can't wait to see everyone again!” **Pony**

“CRW at the Nox went off! What more do I have to say? Well, let me elaborate just a little... We had first timers, newly hooked CRW pups and experienced dogs, filling the skies of Toogoolawah with colour, both day and night!

For the squealing newbies we did lots of 1-on-1s, introducing them to the wonderful world of nylon in the sky is always a joy! From 14,000 feet they learn very quickly that a parachute won't collapse if you grab it with your hands and stick your legs in the lines, in fact the parachutes both stay flying, and the squealing transforms to laughter as the newly born pilot flies a 2-stack in circles high in the sky – WOOHOO!

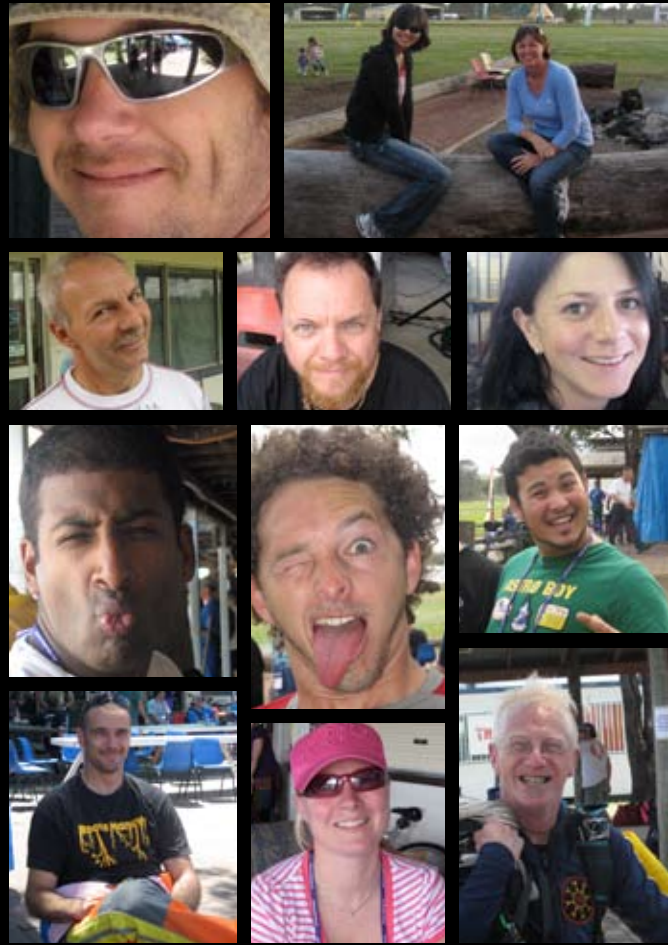
For the more advanced, we warmed up with some 3, 4, and 5-stacks before advancing to wing docks. Before long we had some nice 4-way diamonds for the Calapso bar sunset hecklers to enjoy watching from the ground. This was a great warm up for those guys and gals planning to attend the Aussie Record attempts in March, 2009.

A night CRW 5-stack got the hearts pumping – not much to see up there, even with a full moon! Being number 5 to dock was interesting, coming from a long way to find the formation rushing towards me as I looked into the distance thinking a stray star was someone's torch! “You'll be able to see fine up there!” Wayno tells me on the ground before jumping – he wasn't doing the CRW though, was he?!

It was awesome for the DZ to accommodate CRW with multiple aircraft running freefall and high openings at the same time without incident. With only a couple of delays, which got sorted out early on in the week by keeping us on one side of the airfield and freefallers on the other – Belgium Steve did a great job as DZSO to make all this run smoothly and incident free!

We got plenty of great footage and pics to fill Monkey's day tape thanks to camera extraordinaires Steve Fitchett, Ben Nordkamp, Greg Cox and Robbie McMillan, and inside video from Jules and her “HC” Cookie belly mount!

A big thank you to Sarge for the use of all his CRW specific PD Lightning canopies and also Belgie's new “crew” sharing their brand new spunky Lightning 143s to get more people in the air. ” **Jules McConnell**



Cookie





Cox' at Nox' Wingsuit Party

"Precipitation and unnavigable cumulus clouds kept our wingsuit party ground bound for the opening day, but inspired by enthusiasm, an "easterly change" promise and the knowledge it would improve... we waited, until when late Sunday, unable to contain ourselves over a couple of breaks in the sky, Greg and I surveyed the imminent change by dancing a 2-way around the cloud valleys to enable us to get home to roost! In all seriousness, WS and cloud play are only symbiotic when there are sufficient blue holes to navigate by and competent experience to navigate with. Which is why as the weather continued to improve slowly, we focused on flocking and kept First Flight Courses on the ground.

We had some aesthetically impressive tight 3 and 4-ways with coloured streamers adding another visual dimension; Celeste and Mike Rogers did some great flying, joined by Claire and Frank for some 5-way action. BMI Mark Rainey arrived from Coffs and diamonds became the most popular base with a variation of stingers and wings as the flock grew. Peter Brierley and John Leach had an awesome day of 5 flocks and the party kept on growing as BMI Lawrence "Pom" Hill arrived and Kimbo, Herman, Gayle, Splinter and Mike Dyer came out to play.

All up we trained 14 new FFC's, 12 who jumped and 10 who made multiple jumps. Manifest chick and party diva, Leonie Wald, crossed over for a walk on the wild side! Her beaming face was a picture of heaven as she flew homeward alongside the edge of some pristine "cotton candy". Daughter Emma followed and both inspired, made more jumps, with a focus on the next all female WS record attempt scheduled for Skysisters 09. Girls, get your diaries out!

Emma had a flocking big boogie; first wingsuit jumps, first malfunction (spinning mess and in a wingsuit), plus she was also the lucky winner of the 50% discount wingsuit voucher sponsored by Birdman. Thanks Jari, she is ecstatic! Emma also wants to thank the local SES for their help in retrieving her canopy from a 20 metre gum tree.

Other FFCs included the inimitable Marios "to the horizon I will fly" Christadoupou from Cyprus, Paul Newberry, Simone Bull, Gabriele, Tony Stefan, Mike Schwach, Paul Tozer, Mike, Elise Rogers, Dom Hardy and Sydneysiders Laszlo and Rachel.

Perfect weather bought up the tail of the event and flockers were joined by BMI Hayden, Sam, Funky and James which allowed us to put together a couple of pretty neat hybrid flocks - the most awesome was the 3-way vertical stack base consisting of James and Hayden backflying with Greg leading and 2 double stack wings forming the arrowhead, Paul and myself on one and Sam and Funky on the other.... really cool jump guys and I cannot believe we didn't have stills on that one! All too focused!

The last day the Flockers went hard whilst most of the DZ suffered the effects of Sat night partyitis. Paul Tozer began the day on his FFC jump on a Birdman Firebird and 5 loads later he was on the last sunset load of the boogie; a 5-way, flying a high performance Tengu! Go Paul! He sent us an email that summed up his thoughts of the day and perfectly encapsulates our reason for being in this discipline and why we avidly attend the boogie circuit with our demo suits...

"Firstly I can't thank you enough for the fantastic day of jumping/flying/flocking I had on Sunday. I have wanted to try out a Birdman suit for a while but didn't expect to do 5 of the coolest jumps I have ever done! It has been a fair while since I have had that buzz from skydiving. I can see why you are both passionate about this discipline! Yours dreaming of flocking!"

Thank you Paul and thank you to all the 16 Flockers who joined us plus the new blood of 14 FFCs! Thank you to all the Ramblers team for another great Nox and for inviting us to be part of it." Elaine Cox

