

Chillagoe finally on the map

By Ryan Groube

RECORD numbers of travellers on the Tableland are descending on tourist information centres for their holiday advice.

Overall, there has been a 32 per cent increase in visitation to information centres on the Tableland from last year.

Remarkably Chillagoe leads the way with almost double the number of visitors than 2009 taking time to visit Jim and wife Tonia at 'The Hub'.

"Our figures have been tremendous," said Mr Evans.

"It goes to show our persistence in marketing Chillagoe as a great holiday destination is finally starting to pay off."

Such has been the boom in Chillagoe's visitor numbers to the remote town Channel 7s *Queensland Weekender* program did a feature on the town this week.

"When you are trying to develop your tourism market you can't even get a television station to have a look at you," he said.

"They actually got in touch with me; I couldn't believe it and the episode will go to air on August 14."

Tablelands Regional Council's coordinator of tourism and culture Louise Knol said the figures had to be taken with a grain of salt.



Tourists Warwick and Maggie Sheffield visit Louise Mabbutt at Mareeba Information Centre.

"These figures have to be treated very cautiously because they only represent one section of the tourism market," she said.

"We have been getting reports some sectors of the tourism market are up but also that some are down on last year and others are on par."

Manager of Mareeba Herit-

age and Information Centre Louise Mabbutt attributes increased promotion of the region at camping and caravanning shows down south as a major reason for the increase.

"The numbers of grey nomads coming through the centre this year has been astonishing," she said.

"The way our holiday brochures have been disappearing reflects that already this month we are up 23.5 per cent on last year."

In the period of July 2009 to June 2010 a staggering 195,400 people have visited info centres in the Tablelands Regional Council area.