

Hitting new heights for its 18th birthday



ASHLEY JONES
FIRM FOCUS

CHIEF pilot and Floating Images managing director Graeme Day is celebrating 18 years of service to the Ipswich community.

The familiar sight of the hot air balloon early in the morning has delighted about 15,000.

Mr Day said the past 18 years has been an amazing and proud journey.

Mr Day and his passengers have spent around 1800 hours above Ipswich City, the Scenic Rim and Somerset regions.

"I have watched how Ipswich has grown and changed from above. Ipswich is normally a very green city, not a concrete jungle," Mr Day said.

"As well as being only minutes away from the countryside, we have the advantage of both city and country views to enjoy.

"It only seems like yesterday Floating Images Hot Air Balloon Flights embarked on its inaugural inflation and tethered the *Queensland Times* balloon at Limestone Park in Ipswich on Saturday, December 1, 2001.

"We have been bringing domestic and international customers to Ipswich to experience a balloon flight and to learn and explore Ipswich and the surrounding regions.

"For 18 years, these visitors are spending money in the Ipswich economy, paying for accommodation,



UP AND AWAY: Passengers and crew enjoy a Floating Images hot air balloon flight.

meals, visiting other attractions and aiding in creating employment."

Mr Day continues to play an important function in the local economy and tourism industry.

He has spent much time overseas promoting the business and the region. Areas covered include China, US, Canada, Mexico, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. This has been a first for a local tourist operator.

"My passengers continu-

ally tell me that you have the best job in the world or office view. I get to show Ipswich, Somerset and the Scenic Rim region at its best, in a hot air balloon basket floating above the region," Mr Day said.

Passengers are usually tourists or celebrating an event.

"We have had birthdays, Mother's and Father's days and Valentine's Day is very popular," Mr Day said.

"We have even had family reunions, anniversaries,

proposals and weddings. The corporate market uses us for marketing functions or networking events. Experiencing a hot air balloon is a great way to do these things."

Mr Day is proud of the achievements of this small family business.

"Floating Images Hot Air Balloon Flights is Ipswich's longest-running aviation adventure tourism business, and the first ballooning operator to offer hot air balloon flights in Ipswich and

Somerset and the Scenic Rim region," he said.

"We do have experience vouchers; these are gift vouchers that you can buy. They make a great gift and at this time of year, people do get these for a Christmas gift."

Mr Day looks forward to the years ahead and welcoming more people to this area and to his business.

For more information, visit its website at www.floatingimages.com.au or call 3294 8770.



Work on the hot air balloon gets under way.



Taking a Floating Images hot air balloon is an experience never to forget.



Ipswich Icon Floating Images Hot Air Balloon Flights has turned 18.