Taking the Orroroo ladies loo to the web

TECHNO FILE
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My favourite town in South Australia is Orroroo, a charming community about 260 km north of Adelaide.

Not only is it the perfect pit stop en route to the northern Flinders, but it offers strong coffee and the cleanest public toilets in the state.

In fact, I have it on good authority that the walls of the women's toilets in Orroroo are graced with "thank you" notes from grateful patrons for its hygienic state. It also offers a list of 10 things to do in the town.

What I love about travelling around SA is the great places you discover by chance: The Crystal Brook bakery; Quandong pies at the Wild Lime Cafe at Blinman; a Fargher lager at Parachilna's Prairie Hotel. Although the Wild Lime and the Prairie both have admirable websites, the same cannot be said about communities such as Blinman or Parachilna.

While these towns can be found on the web, scattered across a mixture of local government and travel information websites, they and other South Australian gems are missing out on the opportunities offered by the web.

If you type www.blinman.com.au in your browser, you get an error message. If you type in www.parachilna.com.au, you get redirected to www.parachilna.com, which is a site for Parachilna Computer Services. However, if you type in www.orroroo.com, you are immediately redirected to www.orroroo.com.au which is the digital equivalent to the "10 things to do in Orroroo" at the town's ladies' loo.

The website welcomes visitors with the cheeky tagline: "Orroroo: Conservative, boring and shy – do you reckon?"

Orroroo registered its www.orroroo.com URL many years ago, publishing council minutes, details of infant tourism enterprises and even a guestbook for sharing comments. Although that first iteration of the website "faded away", it has been rebranded and relaunched as www.orroroo.com.au.

Local web developer Tim Froling, who released the new website as a labour of love about three weeks ago, is encouraged by initial interest, which includes reports about the Mid North Art Exhibition.

The simple, eye-catching site boasts support for a plethora of social networking tools such as Facebook, MySpace, Google and Twitter.

Also, its admittedly thinly populated calendar of events tells you that the 57th Carrieton Rodeo – just 30km up the road – will be held on Sunday, December 27.

Although the website has a way to go, Orroroo is on to a good concept: The town is actively promoting itself as a brand on the web.

As well as the potential to attract more visitors to the town, the website ensures that those who do turn up can take full advantage of what it has to offer.

If the community gets behind its website as enthusiastically as it has with the main street, then Orroroo will set a great example for the other "hidden gem" towns in SA.

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