

Festival a money-spinner

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NOOSA entrepreneurs are seeing new opportunities for events to help stimulate the local economy, such as the recent Great Noosa Camp Out, held for the first time this year.

Organisers said they had spent at least \$60,000 directly in the local economy, with flow-on effects for Noosa businesses. ``And this was just in the first year,’’ said organiser Frank Pardon.

The two-day music festival, held in January at the House With No Steps complex at Doonan, where a major music festival will be held in May, attracted about 1500 people, despite a “mini-cyclone” striking on the first day.

Organisers are planning next year’s event which Mr Pardon promised would be bigger, with at least double the budget of this year’s festival.

The event was the first of five projects to come from the Noosa Creative Alliance, developed from Richard Florida’s Creative Communities Leadership Program model. About 30 “catalysts” were chosen at the start of the Alliance last year to work on projects to boost Noosa’s economic prosperity by attracting and supporting creative industries.

``If it wasn’t for the catalysts, the Great Noosa Camp Out wouldn’t have happened,’’ Mr Pardon said.

“It’s people power harnessing the intelligence of a lot of people.

“It’s a combination of think-tank, networking, an exchange of ideas, people with really good skills in technology and people who have great creative talents.

“Anything that can stimulate the economy, we’ve got to be in it.”

He said 80 per cent of the Camp Out’s 30 paid musical acts were from the Sunshine Coast. Wages were paid to local casual employees, water and softdrink came from Cooroy Mountain Spring Water, donations went to the House With No Steps and Tewantin-Noosa Lions Club, and a local security firm had been employed.

Organisers had been buoyed with news that the Camp Out’s first crowd had exceeded numbers at the first Woodford Folk Festival which last year had an aggregate attendance of 120,000.

“There are plenty of events such as the Jazz Festival, Noosa Triathlon and film events that bring a lot of money into Noosa,” he said. “We’re just small potatoes now but it was very successful and the formula seemed to work.”

Managing director of Stockwell Developments, Mark Stockwell, who initiated the Florida program, said it had given entrepreneurs the chance to realise some of the opportunities around Noosa and make an idea a reality.

The Ignition New Media and Film Festival, to be held in Noosa in May, is another project to come from the Noosa Creative Alliance catalysts.