

## Elvis arrives – with wiggles and water

Already the Australian tourism industry is considering the likely adverse impact the world economic crisis will have this year.

No doubt, there will be fewer people travelling. However, maybe many Australians who may otherwise might have been heading overseas in 2009, will now spend holiday time on home soil. Certainly, there are many events and activities from which to choose.

For instance, during the second week of January every year, the central NSW town of Parkes hosts the annual Elvis Festival. Local numbers could be swollen by 10,000 visitors eager to become part of a hip swiveling population.

This year an additional aspect of the Festival will be the display of unique Elvis memorabilia from the collection of former “yellow wiggle”, Greg Page.

It's 32 years since Elvis left the building, but just two years since Greg Page was forced to retire from The Wiggles, Australia's most successful musical group.

Greg has a condition known as orthostatic intolerance. When he stands up, particularly when he stands up quickly, his heart doesn't quite cope with the need to adjust the rate of pumping blood around the body. The result is dizziness, giddiness, fatigue and fainting. So jumping up and down, and wiggling, is out of the question.

Similar symptoms are sometimes experienced by people taking medications; especially medications for treating high blood pressure. Quick movements, movements such as jumping up out of bed, getting up quickly from a seated position and Elvis-like gyrations, all need to be avoided.

While the Elvis impersonators are congregating in Parkes, another Elvis has arrived in Australia. It's the name given to one of the water carrying helicopters used each year about this time to help control bush fires.

It's a reminder, even in a country regularly subject to floods, just how important water really is. Much of Australia has suffered drought conditions in recent years.

Water is really important at a personal level too.

Not replacing water sufficiently leads to symptoms of dehydration – headaches, fatigue, mood changes, slow reaction time, dry lips, dry mouth and dry nasal passages.

In severe cases weakness is more pronounced, confusion occurs, kidneys fail and the body can't remove toxic waste products. Death can result.

In hot weather re-hydration is essential. Drink before you get to the stage of feeling thirsty. Water is the best option (the best value, too). Remember other drinks – some soft drinks, tea, coffee and alcoholic drinks – are no real substitute. Although they contain water they also contain dehydrating agents.

The so-called isotonic sports drinks are a suitable alternative particularly during intense or prolonged exercise.

When dehydration is caused by profuse sweating or vomiting or diarrhoea, the oral rehydration solutions such as Gastrolyte or Hydralyte are a good choice.

Water keeps you feeling good and looking good. It's required to regulate our body temperature. It helps digestion and the excretion of waste products. It reduces the risk of kidney stones and bladder infections. It lubricates and cushions the joints. And it works as a moisturiser to improve the skin texture and appearance.

Depending on where you live, there may be restrictions on washing the car or watering the garden, but whether you're at the tennis in Perth or beside the radio telescope in Parkes, there's no restriction on watering and washing your body's insides.