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Media Release

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NATIONAL CHERRY FESTIVAL SUCCESS!

International cooperation proposed to thwart cheating pip spitters

International cooperation has resulted in the elimination of a serious threat to the integrity of the famous 'Cherry Pip Spit' event to be held at the 60th Anniversary of the National Cherry Festival in Young NSW.

Tourism Manager, Shannon O'Connor reacted immediately on intelligence from Ulrich Walger from the Cherry Festival in Witzenhausen, Germany received on the 1st of April 2009.

"The news from Germany was extremely worrying," said Mr O'Connor. "Ulrich sent photographic evidence that the perpetrators intended to bring their cheating ways to Young. These so called 'Athletes' simply did not care about destroying the purity of the Cherry Pip Spit and the National Cherry Festival's 60th Anniversary! I took immediate action to inform the Mayor," Mr O'Connor added.

Stuart Freudenstein, Mayor of Young Shire Council said that he felt 'sick to the core' on seeing and hearing the intelligence. "Young is so close to Sydney, Wollongong, Canberra and the NSW/VIC border that it would have been easy for pip manipulating cheats to travel to the National Cherry Festival here in Young and destroy an event that is successful because it is fair," stressed Mayor Freudenstein.

"So serious were our concerns that we discussed making representations to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to use force if necessary to stop anyone who looked like a bad piece of fruit, but at the same time we had to be careful not to inconvenience the tens of thousands of people attending one of the longest running festivals in NSW," Mayor Freudenstein stated, worry very evident in his voice.

"However, when it comes to the day, if we think there is any chance of cheating we will demand that participants publicly eat the cherries to extract the pips to be used. This should help us avoid body searches, but if necessary we may even resort to asking competitors to remove clothing prior to the event to ensure they have not hidden cheating seeds on their person. Of course, we hope it won't come to that," Mayor Freudenstein stated very firmly.

Local Real Estate agent John Pattinson, Principal at Delta First National in Young is worried that his decision to increase the prize money for the Cherry Pip Spit may have been the catalyst in exposing the event and the entire National Cherry Festival to the risk of manipulated cherry stones.

"It was supposed to be the big one, the 60th Anniversary! I made a junior, men's and ladies competition... and it gives me the pip to think that there are people who would manipulate cherry stones to win! It shocks me," Pattinson remarked angrily. "They're not going to put the prize money towards buying a house or block of land in Young like everyone else is doing at the moment, are they? That makes this despicable act totally unacceptable!"

The National Cherry Festival in Young is clearly important to the town and those running this very demanding event will be taking all possible action to make sure nothing untoward happens at the Cherry Pip Spit.

Mayor Freudenstein summed up the feeling of the town... "If you want to come and use manipulated cherry stones to win an event in Young, we will catch you. But if you want to come to Young, enjoy the 60th Anniversary of The National Cherry Festival, all of the entertainment it offers and our genuine country hospitality you are most welcome to join us on the 4th, 5th and 6th of December'.

ends.

The 60th Anniversary of the National Cherry Festival is being held on the 4th, 5th and 6th of December. Details can be found on www.visityoung.com.au. The festival is one of the longest running events in NSW and has many feature events running across the three days

Should you have any requests or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Shannon O'Connor the Young Visitor Information Centre on 0417 458725 or email shannon.oconnor@visityoung.com.au

Mayor Stuart Freudenstein, Shannon O'Connor, and John Pattinson are available for further media interviews and comment if required