



For the last 18 years Andrew Jetten has been fielding enquiries throughout each year for the WA Show Ski Team to perform water ski shows around the state of Western Australia. As the show director for the WA Show Ski Team he has been involved in the planning of many water ski shows performed by the team.

The shows have been performed around the state on rivers and lakes, in harbours and inlets and even on the ocean off the coast of WA. All of these venues created many challenges for the 70-strong team to perform choreographed water ski shows involving an array of entertaining water ski acts from around the world.

But it was the enquiry that he received in August 2005 that was to prove the most challenging in his 18 years with the team. A company in South Korea had heard about the WA-based show ski team and enquired as to the possibility of the team travelling to South Korea to perform at the 2006 World Dino Expo in Goseong.

Apart from the obvious logistical problems of distance, most show ski events are performed over 2-3 days. The Koreans required the team to perform two shows each day during the 52-day Expo. The WA Show Ski Team is a large team, probably the biggest in Australia; it

experience as well as being safe.

Their concerns soon proved to be unwarranted, as they found the Korean people to be very friendly, the country clean, and apart from a communication problem with the language, a very easy place to get around. They travelled to the Expo site, which is in Goseong, 400km south of Seoul. The Expo site was approximately 40 hectares in size, located on a natural ocean inlet; the area was ideal for water ski shows and the Koreans indicated that the weather conditions during the Expo would be perfect.

After completing negotiations with the Koreans and attempting to source a suitable tow boat in Korea, it was decided that the WA team would supply two of their own boats, together with all skis, ropes, costumes and inflatable pickup boat.

Back in Perth the team had six months to create a water ski show with an Australian theme and co-ordinate three teams of skiers who would be able to duplicate the shows over the 52-day

LOCAL SKI TEAM GOES INTERNATIONAL

is affiliated to the WA Water Ski Association and is based at the Burswood Water Sports Centre. It is an amateur group of skiers, ranging in age from 6 to 50, and even though they are all enthusiastic to perform, organising one group to perform overseas for two months would be difficult. To overcome the problem Andrew suggested that the show skiers could provide three separate teams, each to perform over a three-week period during the Expo. The Koreans agreed, and in late September Andrew and WA Show Ski president Paul Hobbs were heading to Korea to check out the site as well as the country. If they were going to send groups of families to a foreign country to perform water ski shows, they needed to be reassured that everyone was going to enjoy the

period. Particular attention had to be paid to the type of music used in the shows as well as having all the commentary pre-recorded and then translated to Korean.

The teams were divided into three relatively small groups of about 14. Between them, they had to perform a 30-minute water ski show consisting of acts such as barefooting, aqua-ballet, comedy routines, flag pasts, trick skiing, high-speed stunt skiing as well as a three-tiered pyramid.

The final challenge was to squeeze two 400hp ski boats, plus skis, ropes, pickup boat, ample spare parts and all other necessary items, into a 40ft container for transportation. With some careful planning this was achieved and the container left Perth in March 2006 bound for South Korea.



Team 1 departed for Korea in early April with some trepidation. They had just finished a summer season skiing in Perth, and although it was spring time in Korea, they were greeted with 60C and very windy conditions in Seoul. When the team arrived at the site the only change in the weather conditions was that it was raining. Water conditions were

wind dropped and the first team performed to of a crowd of 3000 and a television audience of many millions. During the ensuing weeks skiing proved difficult, as the temperature remained low and the wind remained constant everyday. Nevertheless, regardless of conditions the team managed to perform 26 shows to



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also vastly different from the conditions Andrew and Paul witnessed on their previous trip: the water was very choppy and they had to contend with a three-metre tide, which made it very difficult for the boat drivers to ensure that they didn't run aground during the shows. Withstanding all the negatives, Team1 was there to ski, and even though they could not practice before the first show due to bad water conditions, opening night proved to be perfect - the

audiences who apparently had not seen much of this type of skiing; in fact they found the audiences very appreciative of anything they performed on the water. By early May Team 2 arrived, and with the weather conditions improving slightly and the temperature sitting around 220C, they were able to complete many shows to large audiences. During the week they performed to thousands of school children who were transported to the site by bus from all over the country;

weekend audiences were mainly families. By mid-May Team 2 had completed 28 shows and were ready to head back to Perth and Team 3 had arrived for the final three weeks. The temperature and water conditions had improved even more and Team 3 were able to put on more shows for the enthusiastic Koreans; by the time they had completed their three-week stint they had performed 38 shows and enjoyed every one of them. Such was the experience of performing in Korea that all members from all three teams wanted to stay longer. After hastily packing all the equipment back in the container, the final team returned to Perth in mid-June. After nine months of planning and in three months of skiing the WA Show Ski Team performed a total of 92 water ski shows to a combined audience of over 1.5 million people. The entire exercise certainly gave the Koreans a insight into the world of show skiing as well as putting the local Western Australian show ski team on the international map. For more info on the WA Show Ski Team go to www.showskiwa.org.au

