

# A record season for the Gong

By GREG ELLIS

WOLLONGONG tourist operators have revealed the busiest summer holiday season on record.

Articles Fine Arts Gallery proprietor Frances Vander said it had been their busiest summer since the business began 25 years ago and Tourism Wollongong general manager Greg Binskin said international visitation was up, day visitor numbers from Sydney were through the roof and all accommodation providers were doing record business.

And the record numbers are not isolated to major tourist attractions or the northern coastal villages.

Mr Binskin said visitation was generally up across the board.

"Numbers at the Nan Tien Temple for its annual cultural festival (which traditionally attracts 8000 people) were really good and the Science Centre is also doing really well," he said.

Wollongong Science Centre director Glen Moore said the attraction had just recorded

its second-busiest day on record.

The busiest days traditionally occurred later in the holiday season, he said.

The latest news comes on the back of a 30 per cent increase in business for the first half of the financial year.

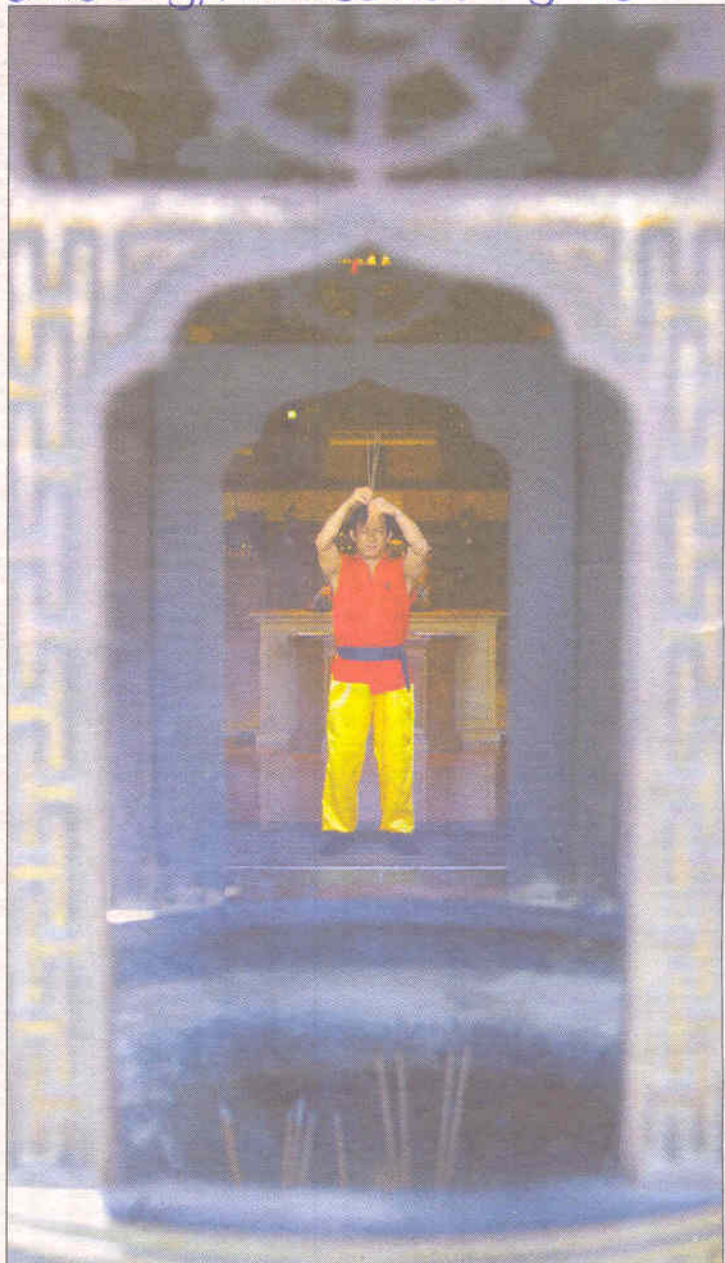
Mrs Vander said business at Articles had "gone berserk" as a result of Sea Cliff Bridge. "We are getting 1000 or more people per day. It has gone a bit mad," she said.

But Sea Cliff Bridge had also attracted a lot more people from other parts of Wollongong who were rediscovering the northern suburbs, Mrs Vander said.

Mr Binskin said there was no doubt Sea Cliff Bridge had made an impact this summer but visitor numbers were generally up across the city.

With more than 200 inquiries a day the tourist information centre was the busiest he had seen. All accommodation houses, caravan parks and B&Bs are solidly booked.

"Generally it is a bumper season," he said.



**Memorable:** Nan Tien Temple's cultural festival is just one of many memories for a record number of visitors to the city.