

VRRDA Hall of Fame 2017

JEFF POOLE

Jeff Poole, affectionately known as DJ Jeff, has made an enormous contribution to the Rock'n'Roll dance scene, providing us with many hours of entertainment over several decades.

Jeff became interested in Rock & Roll as a dancer in the early 1970's, dancing at the Springvale Hotel, Chelsea Hotel, and at several RSL clubs.

Did you know that Jeff danced on stage at the Melbourne Glasshouse in the show "Elvis to the Max" with the band Flashback in 1988?

A long time ago... around 42 years ago, in the mid 1970s, there was a young man named Jeff who began working as a DJ between band sets at the Springvale Hotel, playing 45rpm records.

Most of us here are old enough to know what 45s are, but the younger people here tonight might not even know what 45s are! (they existed long before we used CDs and downloads). Jeff loved Rock'n'Roll, and loved playing that music! He then went on to DJ at the original Mordy Rock and the South Eastern Rock'n'Roll Club between band sets.

When Jeff became older and wiser, he thought of a great idea, and started to put it into motion! In 1995, Jeff approached the Dandenong Workers Club and arranged to DJ a Rock & Roll night every second Sunday. This was the first venue that Jeff played at as a stand-alone DJ without a band. He then introduced Gordon Jones (DJ Flash) to DJ on alternate Sundays. Sunday night Rock'n'Roll at the Dandy Workers became a popular favourite with rock'n'roll dancers and it has now been running successfully for 22 years.

Jeff started up Rock'n'Roll at a variety of venues and clubs, and has helped many people learn basic rock'n'roll dancing or encouraged them to join dance classes.

In 2005, Jeff and his wife Susanne started the annual Australia Day Rock'n'Roll Picnic Day at Gumbuya Park, where Jeff plays music all day. This has become a hugely popular event with dancers and car enthusiasts and attracts large audiences of over 3,000 people. Jeff has also been DJ at the Rockin' Suzie's Good Friday Appeal since 2006, playing his fantastic mix of music between band sets.

Over recent years, Jeff has also worked as DJ at many country festivals, and Susanne has accompanied him as MC. These include festivals such as Ballarat Rockers, the Ballarat Beat Rockabilly Festival, Club Mulwala Rock'n'Roll Festival, and Country Music Festival, the Geelong Summer Rock Festival, Ararat's Jailhouse Rock Festival, Camperdown Cruise Rockabilly Weekend, Horsham Rockers Festival, and the Hooked On Rock dances in Gippsland. Jeff has also run an annual dance at the South Tweeds Sports Club as part of the Cooly Rocks On Festival since 2013.

Some of Jeff's greatest achievements:

1. Sourcing a range of songs that have become popular with all styles of dancers, and that many bands then choose to play at dances.
2. Dancing as one of three couples in the very first Progressive Cha-Cha at the original Mordy Rock.
3. Having a song that Jeff played on 45 records become the first Rock'n'Roll Line Dance in Melbourne: this was Glen Miller's 'In The Mood'.
4. Starting up his Sunday night Rock'n'Roll at the Dandy Workers which is still running successfully after 22 years.
5. Being able to source many dance songs that dancers have then turned into Partner Dances and Line Dances e.g. Made In Japan played for The Drifter, and Upside Down played for Chicago Swing.
6. Meeting so many wonderful people, who share his love of music, swing and rock'n'roll...

Ladies and gentlemen, the VRRDA is honoured to induct Jeff Poole into the 2017 Hall of Fame...

Annette Niven
VRRDA Secretary