

What Tiona means to me





Photography by Anne Bonnefin - Tiona Reunion 2023



Rick Sarre, Adelaide

My first Tiona was in December 1970, staying in a cabin with my grandparents, George and Grace Turner. I was 15. We drove across the Hay Plains in George's 1967 VE Chrysler Valiant. George drove the whole way. The day we arrived Colin Bannister took me fishing, figuring that I was a young lad out of his comfort zone who needed to feel included. Since 1970 I have had more than 50 years of Tiona reunions (usually at 4 year intervals, given that there were reunions closer to Adelaide than the NSW mid-north coast), church conferences and youth forums. But whenever I arrived, whether it was with my grandparents, my friends, or later with my wife Debra and our family, the anticipation and experiences never failed to excite. In the early days, meals were in the dining hall at the park entrance, and all services were in the old reunion tent at the southern end of the avenue. Nowadays the facilities are superb, especially the new additions to the conference centre, and its fabulous catering team. But some things never change, the things that are life-affirming: the worships, the singing, the late night fellowship, the breakfasts in our tent, the sunsets, the sound of the waves crashing onto the beach, the Booti race, Good Morning Tiona, and the barbershop quartets. It was on the Tiona beach, at sunrise on the morning of January 1, 2000, that a group of us welcomed the new millennium with meditations led by Presiding Evangelist David Brock. I still smile when I think of the new year's eve concert with the actors playing Carolyn and David Brock, and dressed in lederhosen, proclaiming "We are so delighted to arrive in Austria!" Over the years I have taken strength, comfort and solace from the wonderful companions who have joined me on this significant Tiona journey, many of whom are no longer with us. I look forward with great anticipation to more Tiona adventures in the years to come.







Jake Cohen

The Tiona reunion camp is something that is a new experience for me but it has become a community I enjoy being a part of. The collective spirit shown amongst attendees makes it such a great community to be involved in, whether a new or old visitor to Tiona. The serenity of attending the camp is something that I definitely continue to look forward to.

Nancy Santorelli

Tiona camp welcomed me in like a warm hug. Though I was a fresh face to many, I felt as though I was part of the family. I spent time listening to many stories of Tiona's history and how many have been visiting since they were young. To me this special place where the wild ocean is so close the majestic Wallis lake feels so fitting for sacred ministry and retreats. It's a place and a retreat that needs to be experienced to understand how remarkably special it is. I always leave Tiona feeling replenished and with a deep longing to return.

Leanne Johnson

Tiona has a heritage for me as a place where community is lived, where we seek the Good Spirit together, and where we can be inspired and find renewal in our faith.

Helen Granleese

As we now live at the coast, I am not going to Tiona for a holiday but more of a holy-day experience.

This is where I go to have a spiritual check-up with my spiritual doctors and compare symptoms and issues with other travellers on the journey. I learn new ways to be a better disciple as we share our year's insights with each other.

Tiona provides a unique, natural sanctuary for multi generational sharing, learning and communing.

Tanya Livermore

What Tiona means to me is the stunning lake, kind people and spiritual renewal.

Linda Hazell

At Tiona Reunion there are many people who have known each other for years and it is often not easy with all the busyness and organisation needed to notice a quiet stranger on the fringes. On my first visits to Tiona Reunion, for someone from a small congregation in the country, I felt isolated and had no connections with the crowd that I wanted to be with.

Over the years, I have become one of the people who knows lots of people. Tiona Reunion is a chance to enjoy excellent worships and classes and experience deeper theology and innovative ideas and I treasure the chance to be challenged by new ideas and different approaches, and to touch base with people I may not see for years and it's always wonderful when we do bump into each other. However, I try to be very aware of the people on the fringes, who are curious, but don't feel like they fit. Lord, help me be awake and ready to respond, not distracted and oblivious, as can be my default, in the busy, exciting, challenge that is Tiona Reunion for me.





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