

Volleyball champs aiming to return

30 Dec, 2009 04:00 AM

THE beach is likely to come to Bendigo again in 2010, following the success of the Virgin Blue Regional Beach Volleyball Series earlier this month.

The beach volleyball festival, held in the Williamson Street car park next to Lansell Gardens, proved to be a great location for the event, attracting after-work visitors and those looking for entertainment on a Saturday night.

The crowd was entertained by many exceptional athletes, including Olympians and world champions from across the country.

In the men's elite final, Josh Slack and Brett Richardson beat Dan Carey and Isaac Kapa, 21-14 18-21 15-13.

Eliza Dean and Mariefe Artacho Del Solar won a hard-fought elite women's final against Sarah Battaglione and Lauren Spark, 19-21 21-19 15-11.

Director of VicBeach, Greg Jury hopes the event will become an annual tournament in Bendigo after the success of the inaugural event.

"Being the first year, it was exceptional," he said.

"I think looking forward, I expect the event to triple in size."

Jury hopes the event will be even bigger in 2010, and plans to get more of the community involved in the beach volleyball festival.

"We'll be looking to get secondary schools and primary schools involved in the future," Jury said.

"We also hope to have some family activities in Lansell Gardens, like jumping castles and pony rides."

Jury intends on changing the volleyball culture in Bendigo, from a predominantly indoor volleyball based town, to one with a strong beach volleyball force.

"We'll also be looking at having our own beach volleyball facility in Bendigo," he said.

"We did that in Geelong two years ago and we already have more than 250 teams.

"If we do that we expect it will change the volleyball culture in Bendigo."

City of Greater Bendigo manager of marketing and major events, Leanne Rosewall said this year's event was an original idea.

"Bringing a beach volleyball court to Bendigo is a very new idea," she said.

"We thought the event went really well for a first year event."

Rosewall said the City of Greater Bendigo council received positive feedback from the community about the beach volleyball event. “The feedback we got was the people were pleasantly surprised about the standard of people competing,” she said.

“We are already in talks about the event coming back next year.

“It’s highly likely that we would bring it back again.”



POWER-PACKED: Action from the men’s final at the Bendigo beach volleyball series.