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## Jackson tunes up for city's first 'ukestra'

ANNA YEO  
 28 Jul, 2010 08:17 AM



The ukulele is seeing a significant resurgence across the world and Maitland player Mark Jackson is keen to form the city's first ukestra – a ukulele orchestra.

The Cairns Ukulele Festival attempted (unsuccessfully) a few weeks ago to break the "most ukes playing in the one spot" record.

They had 677 ukulele players, but that wasn't enough to break the record held by London (851).

Mr Jackson is keen to help out with clinching the record at next year's Cairns Ukulele Festival and has already contributed significantly to "spreading the

gospel according to the ukulele" here in the Hunter.

He has brought the concept of the ukestra to hundreds of people in Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens since November last year.

It involves a bunch of people learning and playing the ukulele together and singing along with it for fun.

The Ukastle Ukestra in Newcastle has about 30 regular attendees on a Tuesday night and Mr Jackson thinks it is about time that Maitland had an opportunity to fall in love with the easy-to-learn and endearing little ukulele.

"I have regulars coming down from Pokolbin, Phoenix Park and Brandy Hill," Mr Jackson said.

"I figure that Maitland really deserves a ukestra of its own."

Grand Junction Hotel publicans Melissa and Ben Quinn are allowing the ukestra to use a room each Monday night so that the two-hour Maitland ukestra session can have a bit of privacy while grabbing a social drink.

For more information phone Mr Jackson on **0430 434 291**, email him at [mark@ukestra.com](mailto:mark@ukestra.com) or look up the ukestras website at [www.ukestra.com](http://www.ukestra.com)



HAVING FUN: Ukulele player Mark Jackson wants to form a ukulele orchestra in Maitland. Picture by CATH BOWEN 260710CB279

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