

Main Street Shearing

Given Barcaldine's long and significant history with the shearing industry, it is only fitting that shearing is set to become a focal point of this year's Tree of Knowledge Festival to be held over the May Day long weekend.

However, the Festival committee is not planning just any old shearing display, they are in the process of organising "The Run".

In every way possible "The Run" will bring all the sights, sounds and smells of a working shearing shed to the main street of Barcaldine.

During "The Run", which will go for the standard two hours of the second run of the day between 10am and 12 noon, six shearers will take to the stands while shed hands and working dogs draft and pen up, rousies clear the board, pressers turn out bales and trucks deliver and take sheep away.

In replicating all the workings of a shearing shed, spectators won't know where to look for all the action.

The concept is the brainchild of Barcaldine Regional Council Mayor, Rob Chandler who has had a long association with industry having been a shearer himself.

"Many people have never had the opportunity to see a real shearing shed in full swing," said Mayor Chandler.

"So we are planning on bringing it to them and it will make for a pretty interesting spectacle because there is always so much happening in a shed during shearing."

However, in order to turn "The Run" into a reality, it will require the combined efforts of a diverse group of people such as graziers, stock and station agents, shearing contractors, trucking companies and even engineers.

All will be needed to provide the infrastructure, such as stands, portable panels and loading ramps, the workforce and the sheep themselves in order to transform a vacant block in Barcaldine's main street into a working shed.

Around 250 sheep are expected to be shorn by the six shearers during "The Run".

Spectators will be invited to take part in traditional smoko which will commence at 9.00am as well as lunch after the dinner bell rings and the shearers turn off their gear.

The committee also plan to have a commentator relating the proceedings so as those new to the game will gain a greater understanding of what is occurring.

"Barcaldine has a special relationship with the shearing industry," said Mayor Chandler.

"We want to share this with others as well as grow this as a focus of the Festival," he said.

In future years the committee is hoping to further develop this concept to include permanent infrastructure and a shearers' reunion to be held in conjunction with the Festival

For more information visit the website: www.treeofknowledge.com.au