

Tree of Knowledge Festival Set to Grow – 9/2/2010

The western Queensland town of Barcaldine is set to come alive again this May as preparations for the annual Tree of Knowledge Festival, held over the long weekend, get underway.

With the first Festival meeting of the year being held last week, the Barcaldine Business Retention and Expansion Group (BRE) which drives the event, is confident this year's festival, to be held from Friday, April 30 to Monday, May 3, will be bigger and better than those of the past.

"Last year's event was massive with the official opening of the Tree of Knowledge Memorial, the VIP's who attended and the coverage this attracted," said BRE President, Mr Garry Bettiens.

"However, the roots have been put down so as to speak, and now it is time for us to consolidate on this and watch the concept grow," he said.

"We have a very good thing happening in and for our town with the festival and we have to ensure we are dynamic in our approach to developing it so it will continue to attract and increase the level of support it has enjoyed over the past years."

While 2010 will see the return of many festival highlights such as the Sportsman Dinner on the Friday night, street markets and horse racing on the Saturday, Rev Fest and rugby league on the Sunday, the legendary May Day parade and Goat races on the Monday, organisers are looking at ways to improve and build these specific events.

In addition to this there are plans afoot to introduce a number of new concepts into the festival and in particular a focus on the shearing industry.

"Last year our street side shearing display was very well received and we want to develop this concept and ultimately build up to the hosting of a shearers' reunion in the near future," said Mr Bettiens.

Therefore this year the Festival Committee will be encouraging local business houses to get into the spirit of the weekend and dress up their shopfronts in the shearing theme.

Another highlight of last year's event was the Saturday Night Street Party, and BRE secretary and the Festival Saturday Night Street Party organiser, Mrs Gay Gesch said the committee, keen to repeat and improve the event, are currently sourcing a popular band for the night.

Mrs Gesch said the Food Expo, held in conjunction with the Saturday Night Street Party, was also well received and while the Festival would like to see an international flavour remain, they are opening the Expo to any groups who may wish to host a food stall.

"We would like to hear from any individuals, business groups or local community groups who would like to host a food stall on the night as soon as possible so that a variety and adequate quantity of food can be ensured," she said.

While the programme for the weekend is relatively full, Mrs Gesch said the Committee is still open for suggestions from groups who may wish to host an event.

"We are also looking for additional activities and ideas to work alongside the Saturday Night Street Party. We are particularly keen to provide more for children so Mum and Dad can sit and relax and enjoy the band while the kids have something to do."

While relaxing is one thing western Queensland always gets right, there will be plenty for all to do in Barcaldine this May Day long weekend.

For more information on the festival contact the Event Coordinator, Mrs Andrea Lingard, 4651 5636 or visit the festival website: www.treeofknowledge.com.au

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