

MINUTES OF BALRANALD SHIRE COUNCIL TOURISM COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 7TH MAY 2019 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MARKET STREET, BALRANALD COMMENCING AT 5.10PM

Meeting Opened: 5:10pm

1. **Present:** Iain Lindsay-Field (Chair), German Ugarte, Linda Nelson, Ken Spinks, Gavin Helgeland, Wayne Whitby, Simone Carmichael, Dianne Williams
2. **Apologies:** Peter Lawler, Ken Barnes, Vivienne McEvoy
3. **Acceptance of Minutes from April Meeting:** Linda N, Wayne W
4. **Business Arising:** \$ for \$ Fishing Funding – held over until Ken B present. Conversation held around the announcement of the \$5M native fish hatchery proposed for Menindee in response to the mass fish kill event. The new hatchery may provide a source of fingerlings for restocking. Discussion also held around fish kill events and what causes them. Simone gave an explanation on the causes of the recent events at Menindee and Redbank Weir, namely low river flows causing temp stratification with cold deoxygenated water at the bottom, algal blooms further depleting oxygen and sudden cold weather ‘flipping’ the water column. Simone advised there is considerable educational material on-line and will also provide contact details for relevant community liaison officers to possibly conduct local info sessions as Iain concerned about misinformation in the community. Iain to follow up with Viv to see if we can get information on these summer fish kills into the Shire newsletter.

Gavin advised the shire are partnering with Charles Sturt Uni on a detailed water quality study in the LowBidgee. Ken S raised the matter of household rainwater tanks – this discussion held over to next month’s meeting.

5. **Monthly Reports:** Tourism Reports – Gavin had not received Vivs report to present other than to advise that visitor numbers were up on last year at the Balranald VIC. Ken advised this was also the case at the Gallery. German, Wayne and Di also advised numbers were up for their respective businesses. Paika is reporting repeat visits/bookings and the Club Motel is at high levels of occupancy with the majority tourists rather than industry. German advised it had been the ‘busiest time ever’ for Outback Geo Adventures.

Status of Tourism related Grants & Projects. Gavin advised that there are a number of spin-off projects from the streetscape redevelopment including the Theatre Royal Car Park and the Senior Citz Kiosk. Gavin also advised the

council are sponsoring a number of submissions in the “My Community Grants” which are due on the 15th May. These include; - a grand piano for the Theatre Royal, Lions Park Upgrade, Splash Park and Slide at the pool, Gallery creative learning centre, school hard tennis courts, silo art (pending). Discussion followed around the virtues of a mural and projected show on the water towers. The committee resolved to visit the laser sound and light show at the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement. Date to be set.

6. New Business

- Tourism Committee to join Riverfront Revitalisation Working Group. Committee accepted. Moved Iain L-F, 2nd Di W
- Marketing activities and Calendar of Events. German raised the need for a coordinated approach to a full calendar of events and activities spread across the year and strategic marketing actions for those events. There needs to be some fill-in activities in the quiet shoulder months. Gavin raised the idea of a ‘Harvest Festival’ staged in Autumn celebrating the grape and nut tree harvest. Simone suggested incorporating solar. The idea would be to invite the major companies to finance the festival. There is also a need for regular business get-togethers so everyone is familiar with what others offer. Committee resolved to workshop the calendar at the next meeting and to invite other groups to contribute.
- Souvenirs and Merchandising at Discovery Centre – German raised concerns that there should be more merchandise promoting local businesses rather than just generic souvenirs. Gavin stated that it was not in the scope of this committee to say what was sold at the VIC but suggestions would be considered.
- New Frogs for the Frog Trail. Discussion held and support for new frogs. Gavin suggested looking at commissioning The Steady Chameleon <http://www.steadychameleon.com/index.html> as part of the streetscape project to produce a large frog sculpture.
- Sunraysia Tractor Trek Club visit. Ken S reported a highly successful visit from the club. They visited The Gallery, Yanga Homestead, The Southern Cross Museum and Howard Hillerman’s property. Everyone was very impressed.

7. Meeting Closed: 6:20pm. Next Meeting is Tuesday, 4th June.

Recommendation That the report be received and noted.