***Taking Care of Bruns***

**Falls Festival 2018/2019**

**11 January 2019**

The Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre partnered again with The Falls Music & Arts Festival in 2018/2019 for the ‘Taking Care of Bruns during Falls’ project. The purpose of this project is to mitigate some of the possible negative effects of the festival on the amenity of our town during the busy New Year period. The project was managed by the Brunswick Heads Visitor Information Centre with partnership funding provided by The Falls Music & Arts Festival. Kevin Fitzgerald was Co-ordinator.

This year the festival ran from Sunday 31 December 2018 to Wednesday 2 January 2019. The bus stop in Park Street in Brunswick Heads was modified by placing water barriers and straw bales from Saturday 30 December 2018 to Thursday 3 January 2019.

Community liaison was undertaken before, during and after this year's Falls Festival to gain feedback, suggestions and support during the duration of the Falls Festival. This included meeting with representatives from the local police, Byron Shire Council Enforcement, Byron Shire Council Events team and North Byron Parklands. Establishing relationships with the various stakeholders involved is a very important and vital function of the project to facilitate a harmonious experience for all involved.

Once again there were no significant disturbance to the amenity of the town during the period of the Falls Festival at the North Byron Parkland site.

This is a credit to all who have worked on the project in the past that laid a solid foundation for us this year as well as the involvement and cooperation of local residents and groups, business operators, project volunteers, local, state, interstate and overseas visitors, festival patrons, Falls Festival staff, North Byron Parklands staff, Byron Shire Council staff, Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre staff and volunteers and engaged toilet cleaning contractors.

People spread out comfortably in our parks, rivers and beaches and our cafes, shops and hotel. The town's open spaces were clean as well as rubbish bins emptied and toilets regularly cleaned.

The car parks were a premium as the timing of the Falls Festival coincides with the busy summer holiday period when the town’s holiday accomodation is fully booked and locals and visitors are attracted to the town for day trips.

This year there appeared to be more people in town between Saturday 22 December 2018 and Sunday 6 January 2019. This is possibly because of the sunny 280C weather experienced during this time attracting many people from the Byron Shire, Tweed Shire and the Gold Coast to our beaches and river.

In 2016, following discussions between the Project partners, Falls Music & Arts Festival and the Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre, the Falls organisers have restricted festival patrons’ vehicles from leaving the site and arrangements have been made to bus festival patrons in and out of the local towns during the festival.

This year there appears to have been more people sleeping in their vehicles since just before Christmas. My estimate is there may have been up to fifty vehicles being used for sleeping in this busy period of the year. This morning, Friday 11 January 2019, I counted 14 vehicles on my drive into Brunswick Heads that appear to be used for overnight sleeping. Without knocking on their doors and asking them where they are from and why they are camping in their vehicles it is hard to know of their circumstances. Since the number is still high my guess is that most of them are not and were not solely camping to attend the Falls Festival.

The Falls Festival security company provided a marshal for the bus stop in Park Street in the centre of Brunswick Heads. She and five volunteers liaised with the bus drivers to maintain a steady flow of buses into and out of town, kept festival patrons off the footpath in front of shops in Park Street, monitored festival patrons attempting to take alcohol and opened drinks onto the bus and supported the harmonious energy of the town during the festival.

The toilets in Brunswick Heads are on crown land and administered by the North Coast Holiday Parks. North Coast Holiday Parks outsource the cleaning of the toilets in Brunswick Heads to Byron Shire Council.

We liaised with the Byron Shire Council to do two cleans per day during the busy summer period. The Byron Shire Council engaged ‘House with No Steps’ to clean the toilets. They made two rounds per day. Their round included cleaning toilets in Ocean Shores, New Brighton, Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby.

We engaged a professional toilet cleaner to clean the portable toilets near SLSC/ tennis courts, toilets at Torakina Park, The Terrace Park and Banner Park. She cleaned each of these toilets twice during her three hour shift.

The cleaner we engaged and the Byron Shire’s toilet cleaning contractors met and kept in touch throughout the days of the Falls Festival liaising on how to best keep the toilets clean. This year we experienced less mess and less blocked toilets than any of the years since the Falls Festival commenced. Our cleaner received numerous comments of appreciate for our efforts to clean the toilets clean as well as receiving comments that the toilets were cleaner than normal. i.e. during the quieter times of the year.

Out of the funds provided by Falls Music & Arts Festival, we ordered 5 extra recycling bins & 3 extra waste bins and two empties from Sunday to Wednesday to cover any additional use because of the Falls Festival as well as from locals and visitors.

This worked very well. Bins were not overflowing and little waste was put on the ground.

During the festival we had three groups of volunteers cleaning up the town from Sunday to Wednesday starting at 7.30am and finishing at 4.30pm. They reported less rubbish at the start than last year and very little rubbish during the festival period. The placement of the bins, the example and work of the volunteer litter collectors and the participation of the whole community (residents, visitors and patrons) kept the town in my opinion and others 'cleaner than normal'.

I walked around the town four to five times a day during the Falls Festival and I noticed that the town is very clear from rubbish.

On New Year’s Eve a number of the toilets were written on. The style was identified as that of a local graffiti artist.

We counted and recorded the bus arrivals and departures from 8am to 4pm from Sunday 30 December to Wednesday 2 January.

**Bus Counts:**

**2018/2019**

Sunday 30.12.19 Monday 31.12.18 Tuesday 1.1.19 Wednesday 2.1.19

*Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures*

*Patrons:*  85 44 370 531 776 747 638 723

*# of buses:* 17 31 41 37

Total: 1819 1960 passengers

126 buses

**2017/2018**

Saturday 30.12.17 Sunday 31.12.17 Monday 1.1.18 Tuesday 2.1.18

*Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures*

*Patrons:*  71 40 979 1100 1529 1405 1307 1449

*# of buses:* 13 55 65 60

Max # at any time: 43 877 1278 1087

Total: 3886 3994 passengers

193 buses

**2016/2017**

Friday 30.12.16 Saturday 31.12.16 Sunday 1.1.17 Monday 2.1.17

*Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures*

*Patrons:*  ? ? 1031 988 2130 1959 1789 1316

*# of buses:* ? 36 57 46

Total: 4950 4263 passengers

139 buses

**2015/2016**

Wednesday 30.12.15 Thursday 31.12.15 Friday 1.1.15 Saturday 2.1.15

*Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures Arrivals - Departures*

*Patrons:*  74 ? 405 ? 623 ? 767 ?

*# of buses:* 16 18 23 23

Total: 1869 ? passengers

80 buses

(? = passengers not counted)

Patrons were well behaved arriving and departing. On arrival they quickly cleared the bus zone and surrounding areas. There was one incident at the bus stop were a local resident attempted to entice 2 young female Falls Festival patrons into his car. The volunteers physically stood between the man and the two young women and the security guard told the man to leave. He drove off in his car. I have asked the security guard to write a report about this incident. The man was identified by one of the volunteers who is a local resident.

We surveyed people in town of their experience of Brunswick Heads asking them to rate:

* cleanliness
* attractiveness
* tidiness
* friendliness
* family appropriateness

We also asked them two questions and where they were from:

* Brunswick Heads resident
* Byron Shire resident
* NSW resident visitor
* Interstate visitor
* Overseas visitor
* Festival Patron

Below is the response to the two questions on Sunday 30 December 2018 (23 surveyed)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *How do feel the Falls Festival has impacted the town?* | Can you suggest anything that could have made y0ur day in Brunswick Heads more enjoyable? |
| No idea  I haven’t been in the festival  Festivals are good for us  Just makes the town generally busier and more hectic  Busy – quite a few people around  Just more people  Haven’t noticed  Extra people.. Nut much better than Byron. Still enough to park and get around  Hasn’t  More tourists  busy  More traffic – more people – more money  Traffic. Spend. More life  It’s excellent  Not really  None  Too many people everywhere  I don’t think it has – more -tourists -more of our beautiful town to share with the world  -  Hasn’t yet  N/A  Bruns looks good! Hasn’t yet – don’t think it will | Meeting people volunteering to clean up the foreshore  Get roads fixed and more car places  Keep it cleanest  Just less people congestion  Road signage – markings to improve traffic flow  No  More playground for kids  More parking  More grass  It’s perfect  More faeries  Free water  No  No  Pool  All is well  Less people  More fish/chips/fresh seafood  More dog friendly areas  More seating around river/beach  All great  Byron Shire in general – more highway rubbish collectors, particularly between Bruns-Mullumbimby |

Below is the response to the two questions on Monday 31 December 2018 (19 surveyed)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *How do feel the Falls Festival has impacted the town?* | Can you suggest anything that could have made y0ur day in Brunswick Heads more enjoyable? |
| Good for the economy  Negativity – don’t bus festival goers into Bruns  Not sure  We only visit occasionally and while it is busy today it is no more than I would expect in summer holidays  Not at all  More customers. Created a vibe.  Brought hooligans and loud youth to this beautiful town but also money  No impact whatsoever  No problem  So far so good  I don’t think it has  Didn’t know it was on  Great for business, possibly puts stress on locals  It has bought more visitors to the area and more awareness of the town  Busier, but good for local businessesI  increases trade, introduces new people to small towns | No  Get some of the cars out of town  No. It’s been perfect today.  Parking is difficult. Sad to see the seafood so-op is closed  More dog friendly places. Overall love this area.  No. More shade but!  Need more transport between Byron Shire towns  Cleaner public toilets in Byron Shire  More animal friendly places.  More toilets  More shaded areas to sit with family  More shade places and cheaper lunch options  Fish and chip shop open before 11am  No, we really enjoyed the thrift shops |

Below is the response to the two questions on Tuesday 1 January 2019 (26 surveyed)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *How do feel the Falls Festival has impacted the town?* | Can you suggest anything that could have made y0ur day in Brunswick Heads more enjoyable? |
| It has bought a lot of happiness and hopefully revenue to it  Not notable  N/A  Crowds. Parking difficult  I think it is a good impact for surrounding town  Al lot more revenue with the extra people in town but that increases litter  Very good for businesses  Parking is hard. Bakery very busy  No idea  Haven’t noticed any difference apart from more cars  There’s a lot more young people in the town which makes it nosier  Can’t say that it has  Town get busy for four days, also good for shops. People spend more money than usual (also more people)  Brought more people, good for business but would be annoying for locals who don’t have a business here  The town is definitely busier now a days  I think Bruns is know on ‘the map’ and it has impacted negatively with being too busy. Last three years change has been crazy.  I wasn’t here  Good for business  Made it more fun  More people  Don’t know  Until I was told I didn’t know it was on  Parking and traffic is more of an issue at the beach, particularly campers in vans  More younger crowds on beach  Didn’t even realise it was on  Yes! Falls has been awesome | Dog friendly waters  BBQ on the other side pf the bridge  Less cars  More shade, More areas for eating  Always a great day  No  Nothing  More parking  No  Better/more accomodation options  Shuttle buses to surrounding areas, less potholes in the road, more parking  More public transport to Byron Bay, Mullumbimby (hard if you don’t have a car)  Easier parking  Usually avoid Bruns in summer cos can’t park/too crowded. But 8am on New Year’s Day is lovely.  Free stuff  No  It’s perfect  No  More rangers to move vas/campers on  More shaded spaces to sit and relax  Everything was perfect  More planned activities on beach/parks |

Below is the response to the two questions on Wednesday 2 January 2019 (12 surveyed)

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| *How do feel the Falls Festival has impacted the town?* | Can you suggest anything that could have made y0ur day in Brunswick Heads more enjoyable? |
| Parking is an issue  No  Unsure  Increased visitors  Crowded with people in parks and cafes  I feel good about the impact  Made it very busy  Not applicable  N/A  Good  Good for business which makes the town feel alive | No  Parking  It’s perfect  Less people  A fresh coat of paint in the toilets  Less sun !!! but lovely place  No |

I walked around the town four to five times a day during the Falls Festival and people were spread out comfortably in our parks, rivers and beaches and our cafes, shops and hotel. The town's open spaces were clean as well as rubbish bins emptied and toilets regularly cleaned.

To have a physical record of the town, I told 34 photos on Sunday 30 December 2018, 31 photos on Monday 31 December 2018, 40 photos on Tuesday 1 January 2019 and 22 photos on Wednesday 2 January 2019. These photos show that there is plenty of space free in Brunswick Heads during the Falls Festival. Car parking is at a premium at this time of year and since Falls Festival patrons are prohibited from driving their cars off site during the festival most of the cars are from locals and visitors to the town rather than Falls Festival patrons.

This year the feel of the town was the very harmonious with locals, visitors and festival patrons all enjoying the delights that Brunswick Heads has to offer.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Fitzgerald

Coordinator

‘Taking Care of Bruns during the Falls Festival 2018/2019