***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 ideaI haven’t been in the festivalFestivals are good for usJust makes the town generally busier and more hecticBusy – quite a few people aroundJust more peopleHaven’t noticedExtra people.. Nut much better than Byron. Still enough to park and get aroundHasn’tMore touristsbusyMore traffic – more people – more moneyTraffic. Spend. More lifeIt’s excellentNot reallyNoneToo many people everywhereI don’t think it has – more -tourists -more of our beautiful town to share with the world-Hasn’t yetN/ABruns looks good! Hasn’t yet – don’t think it will | Meeting people volunteering to clean up the foreshoreGet roads fixed and more car placesKeep it cleanestJust less people congestionRoad signage – markings to improve traffic flowNoMore playground for kidsMore parkingMore grassIt’s perfectMore faeriesFree waterNoNoPoolAll is wellLess peopleMore fish/chips/fresh seafoodMore dog friendly areasMore seating around river/beachAll greatByron 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)

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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? |
| Good for the economyNegativity – don’t bus festival goers into BrunsNot sureWe only visit occasionally and while it is busy today it is no more than I would expect in summer holidaysNot at allMore customers. Created a vibe.Brought hooligans and loud youth to this beautiful town but also moneyNo impact whatsoeverNo problemSo far so goodI don’t think it hasDidn’t know it was onGreat for business, possibly puts stress on localsIt has bought more visitors to the area and more awareness of the townBusier, but good for local businessesIincreases trade, introduces new people to small towns | NoGet some of the cars out of townNo. It’s been perfect today.Parking is difficult. Sad to see the seafood so-op is closedMore dog friendly places. Overall love this area.No. More shade but!Need more transport between Byron Shire townsCleaner public toilets in Byron ShireMore animal friendly places.More toiletsMore shaded areas to sit with familyMore shade places and cheaper lunch optionsFish and chip shop open before 11amNo, we really enjoyed the thrift shops |

Below is the response to the two questions on Tuesday 1 January 2019 (26 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? |
| It has bought a lot of happiness and hopefully revenue to itNot notableN/ACrowds. Parking difficultI think it is a good impact for surrounding townAl lot more revenue with the extra people in town but that increases litterVery good for businessesParking is hard. Bakery very busyNo ideaHaven’t noticed any difference apart from more carsThere’s a lot more young people in the town which makes it nosierCan’t say that it hasTown 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 hereThe town is definitely busier now a daysI 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 hereGood for businessMade it more funMore peopleDon’t knowUntil I was told I didn’t know it was onParking and traffic is more of an issue at the beach, particularly campers in vansMore younger crowds on beachDidn’t even realise it was onYes! Falls has been awesome | Dog friendly watersBBQ on the other side pf the bridgeLess carsMore shade, More areas for eatingAlways a great dayNoNothingMore parkingNoBetter/more accomodation optionsShuttle buses to surrounding areas, less potholes in the road, more parkingMore public transport to Byron Bay, Mullumbimby (hard if you don’t have a car)Easier parkingUsually avoid Bruns in summer cos can’t park/too crowded. But 8am on New Year’s Day is lovely.Free stuffNoIt’s perfectNoMore rangers to move vas/campers onMore shaded spaces to sit and relaxEverything was perfectMore 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 issueNoUnsureIncreased visitorsCrowded with people in parks and cafesI feel good about the impactMade it very busyNot applicableN/AGoodGood for business which makes the town feel alive | NoParkingIt’s perfectLess peopleA fresh coat of paint in the toiletsLess sun !!! but lovely placeNo |

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