



KYOGLÉ COUNCIL

M E D I A R E L E A S E

OCTOBER 7, 2014

After the inaugural Lions Tourist Trophy Motorcycle Festival was held in Kyogle this weekend, Council and the organisers are focussed on the early engagement with police and other stakeholders to plan for next year's festival. The process will involve learning from this year's event, so that Council and the community can work with the organisers to build an event that everyone can enjoy safely and build into something big for Kyogle.

The event was the first of its kind, and this year was focussed on proving the concept for the event. The feedback from everyone involved has been positive, with a clear desire for the festival to return in 2015.

Council firstly wishes to acknowledge the involvement of the NSW and QLD Police in ensuring that the event was undertaken in a safe manner. The co-ordination between the Police both sides of the border and the event organisers was one of the positive highlights from the first year. One of the setbacks experienced by the event Organisers, Lions TT Ltd, was the late engagement with the Police, particularly on the Queensland side. The need for early engagement with both QLD and NSW Police in the planning for next year's event will be the major focus for Council and the event organisers in coming weeks. The NSW and QLD Police will meet to undertake a debrief this week, with a similar process to occur between the event organisers, Council, and key stakeholders from the community in the next two to three weeks. This process will highlight areas where changes need to be considered for future events.

Council wishes to thank the Kyogle Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club and other local community groups and businesses for their involvement in the preparation and operation of the festival, and particularly those residents affected by the road closures associated with the event. Initial estimates place visitor numbers at around 2,000 in Kyogle, with an associated economic benefit to the area in the order of \$100,000 to \$200,000. Council's Tourism and Economic Development Officer, Malcolm Wallis says that;

"The Lions TT concept proved its worth with participants alone dropping in excess of \$68,500 into the local economy. All indications from participant surveys and Visitor Information Centre statistics show the event was a great boost to the local visitor economy. The feedback from the riders and visitors was that they were very pleased with the welcome and hospitality they received, general comments were received along the lines of "Great town, friendly people, great food and incredibly friendly and helpful staff, we will be back"."

The event was focused around the iconic Lions Road, built by community volunteers lead by the Kyogle Lions Club, who still take a collection through a voluntary "toll" at the NSW QLD

border on the road. Athol McQueen, President of the Kyogle Lions Club was asked for his impressions of the event;

“The Lions Club will support anything that brings people to the town. All the feedback I received from businesses, community groups and visitors alike was positive. Many people said they just came for a look, liked what they saw, and would be back next year. Everyone needs to learn from this year’s event and start work on planning for next year. Next year will be twice as good.”

Doug Allen Chairman of the Kyogle Chamber of Commerce was also asked for his initial impressions of the event;

“The feedback I have received is that it was a very prosperous weekend for the businesses. Not only the food & beverage establishments, IGA and the garages had a great weekend as well. There was a real buzz throughout the town and with some tweaking this would be a great annual event for Kyogle and the surrounding areas.”

Unfortunately, there were a series in incidents and injured riders, with the body of evidence suggesting that this was due to high speeds. The event was never intended to be treated as a race or time trial, however it was clear from these incidents and other events over the two days that some of the participants had decided that they would ignore this, and take the opportunity to use the event as a race. Following an incident on the Lions Road stage of the event early on day two, the event organisers decided to cancel that aspect of the event.

It should be recognised that the majority of riders participated in the true spirit of the event, enjoying the opportunity to tour along such an iconic and scenic section of road without the risk of meeting oncoming traffic. It was disappointing for all these riders that the actions of the few led to the early cancellation of the event on day two, spoiling this opportunity for those who came to do the right thing.

The Kyogle Mayor, Clr Danielle Mulholland saw the potential for the event, even using her annual Mayoral allowance to sponsor the music and entertainment organised by the Kyogle Chamber of Commerce to accompany the festival activities in Kyogle;

“The event brought valuable dollars into town, and provided an opportunity to highlight the lifestyle benefits of the Kyogle Local Government Area. It was great to see that everyone involved behaved themselves, and I can see that the festival has the potential to become a great annual event. I look forward to seeing everyone come back next year, and bring along their friends and families, and anyone else who they feel will enjoy what Kyogle has to offer.”

END OF RELEASE

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