

## TITLE                    ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE BORDER RANGES RALLY

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### Summary/Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Economic Value of the Border Ranges Rally to local visitor economies.

### Community Strategic Plan Item(s)

- Economic Development

### Background Information

The Border Ranges Rally has been conducted in the north east corner of Kyogle Council for six years around the villages of Woodenbong and Urbenville. Kyogle Council was approached by the Gold Coast Tweed Motor Sports Club to extend the rally into Kyogle incorporating two stages used by the World Rally Championships in 2009. The Webbs into Hillyards Road stage and the West Wiangaree into Apple Gum Road stages were selected as the preferred stages to be used. Careful planning was undertaken and an application prepared for Council to consider. Permits were granted two weeks prior to the event which significantly inhibited marketing the event to the broader community.

### Previous Council Consideration

Council resolved in March:

That should the Border Ranges Rally as proposed by the Gold Coast Motorsporting Club Inc. to be staged over an extended course within the Kyogle Shire, that Council's Economic Development Officer be requested to undertake a review of the economic benefits (in dollar terms) as a result of the staging of this event within the Kyogle Shire.

### Report

#### Events

**Thursday** – Media day at Baileys Bridge Road was very successful with NBN and Prime News there along with local APN Newspaper media. All got to experience the thrill of a ride in a rally car and their respective reports reflected this.

**Friday** – Kyogle Showground. Crowds were a little disappointing on the Friday night, approximately 200-300 people, mainly due to the lack of effective timely marketing. Even with the media coverage received during the week, many people did not know the event was on. The involvement of Primary School children in the Promotional Start was well received and something that is intended to continue. Ten children were randomly selected from different primary schools in the district after entering a colouring-in competition.

This guaranteed the twenty two entrants families and friends would be aware of the event. This number is expected to grow after the children that were selected share their experience of flagging off a rally car with others. The circuit time trial in the arena was a new and exciting experience for the local spectators present. This will result in word of mouth recommendations for friends and relatives

to attend future events. There were activities for children like a jumping castle that was well received and more events for children will be incorporated into future events. Crowd control and parking went smoothly.

**Saturday** - Woodenbong: Not as much benefit as in previous years. This was considered to be mainly due to Friday and Sunday events in Kyogle. Competitors staying in Woodenbong had to travel to Kyogle 3 times whereas competitors staying in Kyogle only had to travel to Woodenbong once. Woodenbong Hotel was not fully booked; this was partly due to a party of Golfers canceling their booking for that weekend. "On the whole the Rally was not as beneficial to the town as in previous years due to more of the event happening in Kyogle. However, the town (Woodenbong) was happy with the event. No complaints or trouble".

Urbenville: Similar response to Woodenbong.

**Sunday** – Kyogle stages. Reports from local residents along the roads used were positive with many holding functions and inviting guests to view the event. Some are actively investigating the possibility of Special Event Temporary Accommodation such as Home Hosting or Camping. One resident did have a rally car crash through their property fence.

Hillyards Road spectator point was similarly attendance figures to the Kyogle Showground (approximately 200-300 people). They did travel long distances to get there, with people coming from Coffs Harbour, the Sunshine Coast (Qld) and Warwick (Qld). The spectator point was also well patronized by Northern Rivers residents from Tweed, Ballina, Lismore and Casino. Improvements will be needed on the site for future events such as leveling the site and shade covers provided.

### Survey Results

Results from surveys conducted at the Kyogle Showground on Friday night and Hillyards Road spectator point on Sunday revealed the following results.

Survey results for Border Ranges Rally	Locals	NR	NSW	SE QLD	Interstate	International	TOTAL
Visitors Statistics 2013	168	55	9	103	34	3	372
<b>Survey Responses - 207</b>							
<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Camp SG</b>	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Motel</b>	<b>W'bong</b>	<b>VFR</b>	<b>Day Trip</b>	<b>Travel</b>
	38	31	34	28	4	237	370 car 2 Trike
<b>Length of stay</b>	<b>3 days</b>	<b>2 days</b>	<b>1 day</b>				
	120	177	75				
<b>Average Spend</b>	\$15 - \$50	\$50 - \$100	\$100/\$500	\$500/\$1K	\$1K - \$2K	\$3,500	
Total = \$28,065.00 (group response)	172	6	12	10	6	1	207

The information gathered from the 207 respondents revealed that their group numbers totalled 372 and provided a financial benefit of \$28,000 to the local visitor economy. It is estimated that these survey results represent between 66% and 75% of the attendees at the above two events. Attendance figures were headed by locals, followed by our two biggest market segments South East Queensland and Northern Rivers.

The organisers alone spent well over a thousand dollars in the area providing accommodation, fuel, etc. for their officials. Added to this would be the 43 competitor teams consisting of an approximate

average of 8 people per team, the hire of both Showgrounds and the food sales made by the local service communities and it is estimated that the event would represent an economic benefit to the Local Government Area in excess of \$50,000.

The Kyogle Visitor Centre received 18 Rally enquiries over the weekend from Locals, Casino, Lismore, Murwillumbah, Armidale, Nerang and Brisbane. Most visitors had researched before attending.

Interesting survey results:

- A young couple on holiday from Orlando Florida (USA) saw an article in the Tweed Coast Daily newspaper regarding the rally prompting a two day visit;
- All visitors to Kyogle found it very friendly and felt very welcome;
- People travelled long distances to Hillyards Road spectator point, it has a reputation for being one of the best rally spectator points in the World.

## Marketing

### **Media**

The event received positive coverage from local media outlets. Both television stations ran news reports in the week leading up to the event. APN newspaper stories ran in all regional papers and the event was portrayed positively. Local ABC Radio North Coast conducted a live to air interview with event organizer and Clerk of the Course Steve Davies on the Friday morning and also one of the children flagging off the rally cars at the promotional start Abby Smith. A rap-up story of the event is being prepared for social and print media.

The Northern Star worked hard to get local involvement and should be congratulated on their efforts. The feature appeared in two of their papers as did a number of separate articles. The Richmond River Express Examiner had an article and Talking Turkey had two. All were well written and positive.

The fact that so many media attended the Media Day was seen by the organisers as a fantastic outcome.

It is disappointing however that after local businesses paid advertising in the Northern Star 'Border Ranges Rally' feature no follow-up story was forthcoming from them.

### **Social Media**

Kyogle Visitor Information Centre Facebook site received approximately 900 views on each posting leading up to the rally. 741 people have viewed the video posts placed on Facebook after the event. This number is growing which indicates plenty of interest in the event.

### **Flyers**

A number of spectators indicated they received their Rally information from the flyers distributed via email and posted around town. There were some complaints that the flyers promoted our roads as some of the fastest Rally roads around.

## Schools

The 'Design your own rally car' colouring-in competition was a moderate success with 22 students from 2 local primary schools entering the competition. Of these 10 were selected at random 5 from each school to flag off a rally car at the promotional start on the Friday night. This went very well with some very excited youngsters and even more excited parents and friends present. This will be developed for future events.

### Spectators

Numbers were down on expectations. This was mainly due to lack of marketing for the event in the lead up. Time restrictions while waiting for permits to be issued was the main cause of this.

### Competitors

To a person, competitors and crews felt extremely welcome in Kyogle and appreciated the friendliness of the local community. They definitely enjoyed their experience and will most definitely return. Comments received indicated that the roads were some of the best and challenging they have competed on.

### Gold Coast Tweed Motor Sport Club (GCTMSC)

Generally well organised, however a lack of communication left spectators confused as to the timetable of events/stages. A Rally debrief will take place shortly to sort out teething problems and exploit the positives.

GCTMSC were professional in their approach to most issues and were accommodating to work with. Minor issues will be discussed at the debrief but overall GCTMSC conducted the event in a professional and competent manor.

### Future Strategies

- Start Marketing the event at the earliest possible time once dates announced;
- Provide more children/family activities at the Kyogle Showground arena event;
- Provide improved facilities at the Hillyards Road spectator point;
- Encourage sponsorship and naming rights of the Hillyards Road spectator point;
- Encourage organisers to combine NSW and Queensland Rally stages/legs to create a 'State of Origin' Border Ranges Rally event for added interest and marketing;
- Design and develop Rally merchandise through Kyogle Visitor Information Centre and/or local businesses;
- Develop a 'meet the competitors' community breakfast as a welcome community engagement event on the Saturday or Sunday morning. Recommended by competitor.

### Post Rally Feedback and Comments:

**Ross Dunkerton** (competitor) Once again - the best rally on the Australian calendar by far.

**Derek Ayson** – (New Zealand guest driver) Just home from the Border Ranges Rally in Australia. A huge thanks to Ed Mulligan for the invitation to come over and drive his superb E30 BMW Rally car as Zero car for the event (and returned it unscathed)! What a cool car to drive and the... power and sound from the 6 cylinder on full song was just awesome (nearly as good as an FJ20...!!) What a great event with some fantastic roads including a couple that were used in the WRC a few years ago near Kyogle (about 2 hrs south of Brisbane) including going past the famous Hillyards Road spectator point. The event started with 2 quick laps around the Kyogle Showgrounds on Friday night, then 6 special stages during the day on Saturday in the Woodenbong area with another 2 short night stages that evening. Sunday had 4 stages in the morning and finished up at Kyogle just after lunch for prize giving. A great event and everyone was extremely friendly and very welcoming (and yes, there were the usual sheep jokes...). Would be great to get a few cars from NZ to go over to compete sometime as it really is a fantastic event using some awesome roads and well worth the trip over. Thanks to Ross and Lisa Dunkerton for letting us use their notes, Nigel Walters for co-driving, Deklin and Paul

for servicing and again to Ed for letting me thrash his car just a little bit...!! Thanks also to Matt Linning for bringing his sweet MK2 Escort down from Brisbane for me to drive at the media day on Thursday.

Hi, We live on the 'Happy Valley' course, and just wanted to let you know how much our family enjoyed the rally ! Please come again.

Thanks GCTMC for an awesome weekend. Had a great time watching the Happy Valley section....certainly made our little spot on top of the hill happy. Look forward to seeing you all again next year.

As a Kyogle local, we had a great weekend and thank you all for coming to our area. The weather was just absolute perfect. And huge thanks to Steve & Cooky in no 17 for making my 2 grandsons so happy , by allowing them to share in the excitement of sitting in a rally car. They now have 2 extra fans. Awaiting official photos of the event

Loved it, Attended the event at the show grounds on Friday. Can only think of two things that would have been good.

More Seating – There was only really the stand and with that taken up there was little else to do but stand or sit on the ground.

Directional Signage – I couldn't see any signs to tell me which was the best way to proceed on foot with the kids, I winged it and ended up in the middle of the cars heading to the start line.

Thanks for all your efforts, it was great to go and watch them race. Hope we can have it again next year.

The rally was great for the town, we had a lot of different people through the shop. They weren't all buying, but they might next time they come through Kyogle. It is always a positive thing to have new people walk through our doors. Lots of locals enjoyed the events, something to do on the weekend. Maybe a little more advertising would be good next time. It is pity the Express didn't do a feature on the Wednesday, or even come to see us about advertising.

We had some rally participants call on Mon wanting accommodation Thurs through Sun. We could not accommodate them, we were fully booked. None of our guests attended the rally.

No complaints from me was a very good day especially on Sunday as even though the event was held in the main street we were pretty much the only ones that were open. Good for us but a bad example from the rest of the town. We have had the guys from the rally come in and see us about putting a shop down at the event at the showground next year and we will be doing that...

I didn't venture out on the weekend so was glad to avoid the rally all together but you will have noticed my negative comments from a previous year's experience in my last email to you. As I said then, I will never take a rally accommodation booking.

A good weekend of trade. Nice people and good business. All well this end.

### **Recommendation**

That the Economic Value of the Border Ranges Rally report be received and noted.

