

A champion of the Kyogle local government area who devoted much of his professional life to growing and promoting the area was recognised on Saturday morning when the Kyogle and Villages Visitor Information Centre was formally renamed the Malcolm Wallis Visitor Information Centre.

Mr Wallis, who was Kyogle Council's Tourism and Economic Development Officer when he died in 2018, led the community campaign to establish a Visitor Information Centre in Kyogle more than 20 years ago.

Following his death, Council resolved to rename the Kyogle and Villages Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in his honour in recognition of his work in, and for, the community.

Kyogle Council Mayor Cr Danielle Mulholland formally unveiled a plaque honouring Mr Wallis at the VIC on Saturday (27 March) morning. Mr Wallis' family, council colleagues and many of the VIC volunteers he worked with also attended the ceremony.

The plaque details Mr Wallis' efforts through a grassroots campaign to set up a facility in Kyogle to provide visitors to the area with helpful and accurate information.

His work led to Kyogle Council handing over the canteen at the old Kyogle saleyards site to house the fledgling Kyogle and Villages Visitor Information Service in November 2001.

Located at the northern end of Kyogle's main street, the old canteen was not much larger than a bus shelter however Mr Wallis and his group of dedicated volunteers were thrilled to finally have a home. They also set up a Driver Reviver Stop out of the building offering tea, coffee and biscuits to weary travellers.

The old canteen was replaced with the current purpose-built Visitor Information Centre in 2006 in response to passionate pleas from Mr Wallis and other residents who were committed to supplying travellers with the best possible experience of Kyogle and its surrounding villages.

Such was Mr Wallis' drive and enthusiasm in developing and promoting the visitor experience and a vibrant local economy, he was appointed Kyogle Council's Economic Development and Tourism Officer in 2007. He brought his trademark passion for Kyogle and its villages and good humour to the role and in doing so gained widespread respect and admiration from the community and his professional colleagues. In his own words, he was "living the dream".

Mr Wallis' death in 2018 deeply saddened the community he had served so well and there was a huge outpouring of grief from people who recognised the area had lost one of its greatest champions.

Today, his legacy remains for visitors to Kyogle and surrounds to enjoy. The Kyogle and Villages Information Centre continues to help visitors achieve the very best Kyogle experience possible, thanks in large part to the irrepressible drive and vision of Malcolm Wallis.

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