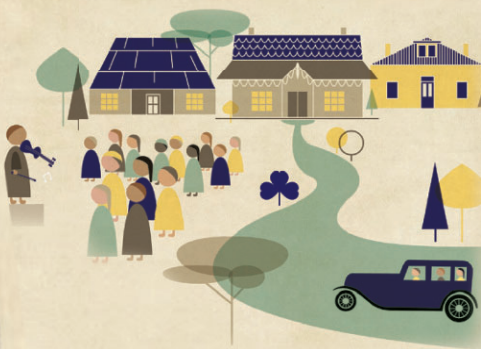


NARRANDERA'S JOHN O'BRIEN



Festival

of BUSH POETRY & MUSIC
March 13th to 16th 2014



ANNUAL BUSH POETRY FESTIVAL

Australian bush culture comes alive at a unique Bush Poetry Festival in Narrandera.

John O'Brien is one of Australia's most celebrated bush poets. The quiet Riverina town of Narrandera is host to the annual and ever popular "John O'Brien Festival".

In 2014 this iconic bush festival celebrates its 20th year.

Father Patrick Hartigan lived in Narrandera from 1917 until 1944. Under the pen name 'John O'Brien',

Father Hartigan wrote the majority of his poems during his residency in Narrandera, the most famous being "Around the Boree Log". These poems played a tribute to the Irish Settlers, hence the festival being held around St Patricks Day.

Like any culturally proud Australian town, claiming a celebrity of this magnitude means that an annual three day celebration is superlative. The local festival has become one of the hall marks of country town culture. Backed by a passionate community and an ardent fan base the festival is now one of the largest in NSW, a credit for a shire of 6,000 people.

The annual festival centres itself around 3 days of festivities. Poetry reading competitions, live performances by bush and folk singers, wine tastings, parades, camp oven cook offs and market days come together to form a quintessentially Australian festival. Hosted in a town nestled amongst stunning nature based tourism, Narrandera is an ideal holiday destination, especially at the time of the John O'Brien Festival. A stroll through ancient gum trees on a guided koala discovery tour may take your fancy before you re-join the festival to watch some live music. A swim at one of the towns many natural rivers may please you before the wine tasting starts. Heritage walks, beautiful town gardens, majestic old buildings are all on display at the time of the festival.

Mr Andrew Brown, Tourism and Marketing Manager with the Narrandera Shire Council, clarifies the festival as a way of celebrating and maintaining the waning tradition of bush poetry. The reflection of communal attitudes and Australian Culture is at the core of Bush Poetry. The language used is characteristically colloquial and colourful, the underlying thematic concern is the emergence and development of Australian identity. Bush Poetry is best celebrated at the John O'Brien Festival in a rural Australian town that has maintained the classic Australian identity over its 150 year history.

Noel Stallard of the Australian Bush Poets Association is a returning performer and stalwart fan of both John O'Brien's poetry and Narrandera. Noel has a strong belief that, "if we want to know who we are and where we are going; then we need to know who we were and where we came from, thus the importance of our traditional bush poetry".

Another returning performer, 'Mulga Bill' is a traditional and contemporary performer both at once and at the same time! Self-described as a performer with "a lot of humour and a touch of Irish" Mulga bill is also eager to make his return to the town and the festival.

The John O'Brien festival is more than performers. It's more than a street parade, more than a bowl of Irish stew and more than bush poetry. It is all these things encompassed into a country town that prides itself on traditions that are communicated in a perfect blend of modernism and customs.

So save the dates, 13-16 March 2014 for our local John O'Brien Festival.

If it doesn't bring out the Irish in you, the festival just may bring out the bush poet in you.

\$60 WRIST BANDS AVAILABLE FOR THE WEEKEND

Narrandera Visitor Information

Centre 02 6959 5545



Endorsed and promoted by:



Visit the John O'Brien Bush Festival website at

www.johnobrien.org.au

for information about what's on