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## MEDIA RELEASE

### Australia Day Ambassador for the Diamantina announced

The Diamantina Shire Council is pleased to announce that Mr Ross McKinnon OAM, the Curator-in-Charge of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens at Mt Coot-tha, will be attending the Australia Day celebrations in Bedourie on January 26, 2013.

Council's Mayor, Cr Geoff Morton, said the Ambassadors play an important role in Australia Day celebrations.

"Australia Day is a special day for all Australians to come together and celebrate our community and what we love about the country we call home. And this year the Diamantina Shire is proud to welcome Mr McKinnon to be part of the community on this special occasion" Cr Morton said.

Having spent time growing up in the Australian Outback Mr McKinnon, who was awarded the "Order of Australia" for "Outstanding Services to Horticulture" on Australia Day in 1999, said he was looking forward to his visit to the Diamantina.

"Part of my childhood was spent on family properties in outback South Australia but marrying a city girl, the love of my life, has kept me in the big smoke and in charge of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens for 40 years," Mr McKinnon said.

"Living in a Brisbane suburb of 20 000 people, is a world away from Bedourie's 140 residents or Birdsville's 120 population. But, I guess you can take the boy out of the bush but you can't take the bush out of the boy."

"So I am looking forward to hearing what the residents of the Diamantina have to say about Australia, what Australia Day means to them."

"Oh, and taking part in the Bedourie pie eating competition!" he added.

Mr McKinnon's official duties will include an Australia Day Ambassador's address at the Diamantina Shire's Breakfast in the Park, which will be held at ANZAC Park in Bedourie from 7.30am, as well as aid in the judging of a pie eating competition and the most patriotic pushbike competition.

During his stay in the Diamantina, Mr McKinnon will also present two community gardening workshops offering advice on how best to plant, grow and sustain an Outback garden. The first will be in Bedourie on Friday, January 25 from 5.00pm-6.00pm at the Bedourie Community Hall, with the second to be held at the Birdsville Town Hall on Sunday, January 27 between 10am-11am.

The Australia Day Ambassador Program sends high achieving Australians to over 300 community celebrations nationwide every Australia Day. Ambassadors are sportspeople, scientists, business

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people, actors and community workers who provide added inspiration and pride to Australia Day events and activities.

The Australia Day Ambassador Program is coordinated by Australia Day Councils and Committees in each state and territory. It has been proudly sponsored by Woolworths for the past ten years.

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