



All correspondence addressed to:
The Chief Executive Officer
506 Herbert Street
BEDOURIE QLD 4829

Telephone: (07) 4746 1202
Facsimile: (07) 4746 1272

✉ admin@diamantina.qld.gov.au
🌐 www.diamantina.qld.gov.au

Diamantina Shire Council

MEDIA RELEASE

The Simpson Desert Racing Carnival reaps rewards for the Queensland economy

The 2012 Simpson Desert Racing Carnival has drawn to a close, with this years' Carnival being bigger and better than previous years.

All races in the Carnival, which includes the Betoota, Bedourie and iconic Birdsville Races, experienced a surge in crowd numbers with racegoers, trainers and jockeys converging on the Diamantina Shire in Outback Queensland from all across Australia.

Birdsville Race Club Event Coordinator Prue Fargher said that near record crowds rolled in to town for the Birdsville Races held on August 31 and September 1.

"The racetrack withheld the pressure of 3500 race goers on Friday, an overwhelming increase from the year before," Ms Fargher said.

"The crowd increased to over 5000 on Saturday and punters were treated with fine sunny weather to see Roma horse *Dancefloor Prodigy* snag the 2012 XXXX Gold Birdsville Cup just ahead of Betoota Cup winner *Grey's a Rockin*."

The Royal Flying Doctor Service benefited from donations of over \$8000 by patrons on the shuttle buses operated by Kangaroo Bus Lines, and for a short while Birdsville Airport became one of the busiest airports in Australia with nearly 140 aircraft flying in for the event. Seven of these aircraft belonged to the Australian Defence Force with the RAAF Roulettes putting on two stunning displays over the racetrack.

The economic significance of the Simpson Desert Racing Carnival, in particular the Birdsville Races, to the Diamantina Shire is enormous.

In 2011, the Diamantina Shire Council commissioned an economic assessment of the Birdsville Races which found that whilst the races had \$1m - \$1.4m in direct value-added impacts in the shire, it also contributed between \$4.2m - \$5 m in value-added impacts in regional Queensland. The race meet also helped increase employment in the Diamantina by 8.6% to 10.4% and created 52 to 61 full time equivalent positions in Queensland.

General Manager of the Central Western Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD), Mr David Arnold said that what the Birdsville Races Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) helps identify is the value of the races in hard economic terms.

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“This is quite important not only for the Diamantina Shire Council but also for the whole Central West region when seeking support from Government on priority areas like roads and infrastructure.” Mr Arnold said.

“For example, when the shire or region lobbies on these matters, State and Federal Governments want to see hard data and this EIA adds to the collection of data needed to support lobbying efforts,” he added.

With the Simpson Desert Racing Carnival done and dusted for another year we look forward to doing it all again in 2013.

ENDS

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Media inquiries: Mr Scott Mason, Chief Executive Officer (email: ceo@diamantina.qld.gov.au) Ph (07) 4746 1202

Mr Steven Baldwin, Tourism and Community Manager (email: tourism@diamantina.qld.gov.au) Ph: (0408) 824 179