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## MEDIA RELEASE

### The Simpson Desert Racing Carnival is off and racing

The lucrative \$300,000 Simpson Desert Racing Carnival kicked off on the weekend with the Betoota Races. Renowned as the race that breathes life into Outback Queensland's famed ghost town, more than 400 racegoers packed the dusty track to watch *Grey's a rockin'* take out the title of the annual event.

With the dust barely settling, the racing action now moves 173km west to Birdsville this weekend for Australia's most famous outback race: the Birdsville Races. Held on Friday, August 31 and Saturday, September 1, some 6,000 race punters and party people from all over Australia are expected to converge on the iconic outback town to participate in all the on and off track shenanigans.

Birdsville Race Club President David Brook said, "The Birdsville Race Club celebrates 130 years this year and we are expecting crowd numbers to be up."

"We have strong nominations across all fields again this year with trainers travelling on average of more than 1,000km to be a part of the Birdsville Racing Carnival. Campers and racegoers have been rolling into town for the last 10 days to find their favourite camping spot under a Coolibah on the Diamantina River in anticipation for the XXXX Gold Cup."

The Carnival trifecta then rounds off on the following weekend, Saturday, September 8, with the Bedourie Races. Now in its 54<sup>th</sup> year, this race is the only race meet in the Carnival to have run consecutively since its inception in the late 1950s. This year to add to the festivities, racegoers are encouraged to dress the desert in pink to help promote awareness of Breast Cancer.

Set against the backdrop of the Simpson Desert, the Simpson Desert Racing Carnival gives the local community, punters, tourists, jockeys, owners and trainers alike the opportunity to come from near and far and celebrate country racing at its best.

Diamantina Shire Mayor, Cr Geoff Morton said the importance of the Carnival to the Diamantina Shire was hard to overlook.

"The Simpson Desert Racing Carnival imports so many people into the region and greatly stimulates our economy," Mayor Morton said.

"It also extends our normal tourist season by about a month," he added.

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“Without the race meetings by September it starts to warm up so the number of tourists would normally taper off, whereas because of the three race meetings their influx maintains our tourist season for an extra month.”

To help capture the spirit of country racing in the Diamantina Shire, this year the Council enlisted the aid of home-grown branding specialist, Ms Karen Brook of Karen Brook Studios, to create a new logo. The end result was a logo that is a modern and dynamic interpretation of the key elements that make the Simpson Desert Racing Carnival unique.

“The carnival is full of racing colour, emotion, energy and atmosphere,” Ms Brook said.

“Therefore the design is ‘in flow’ blending the shape of the jockey into the design giving the sense of a horse in motion. The three sand dunes represent the three race clubs: Birdsville, Bedourie, Birdsville, while the specs in the sky represent both dust and stars.”

For more information on the Simpson Desert Racing Carnival contact the Warrarri Visitor Information Centre on 4656 3300 or email [info@diamantina.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@diamantina.qld.gov.au).

ENDS

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