



PORT MACDONNELL

150th Anniversary Celebrations

Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 April 2010

Based on feedback from the community, the District Council of Grant established a Working Party to develop and plan events to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the naming of the Port of MacDonnell on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th April 2010. The Working Party's aim was to provide the community with a central forum to coordinate events and activities for the township.

A full day's program of free family entertainment, events and activities was held on Saturday, with Sunday being reserved for reflection and commemorative activities; a number of large family reunions were organised to coincide with the event resulting in high visitor numbers; the Port MacDonnell Tourist Association recorded 317 visitors to their centre on Saturday.

Events were free to the public and sites were free to all community groups involved, with a large number of community groups participating and/or organising events and activities co-ordinated by the Working Party including:

- Allendale East Area School
- Allendale East CFS
- Allendale East Tennis Club Inc
- Demons Softball Club
- Gambier City Lions Club
- Holdens of Age Club
- Kirinari Kindergarten
- Mount Gambier Veteran & Vintage Car Club
- Mount Gambier West Rotary Club
- Port MacDonnell & District Bowling Club
- Port MacDonnell & District Lions Club
- Port MacDonnell & District RSL Sub Branch
- Port MacDonnell Baytown Group
- Port MacDonnell CFS
- Port MacDonnell Community Hall Committee
- Port MacDonnell Community Response Team
- Port MacDonnell Football Club
- Port MacDonnell Golf Club
- Port MacDonnell Landcare Group
- Port MacDonnell Netball Club
- Port MacDonnell Offshore Angling Club
- Port MacDonnell Professional Fisherman's Assoc
- Port MacDonnell Surfing Group
- Port MacDonnell Tourist Association
- Recognition of Port MacDonnell Pioneers Advisory Committee
- RSL Blue Lake Highland Pipe Band
- Tenison Woods College's Outdoor Classroom Wednesday Group
- Ulysses Motorcycle Club

Feedback from businesses, community and visitors alike was very positive; the Port MacDonnell Foreshore Tourist Park was full to capacity and the Victoria Hotel, Periwinkles Café, Port MacDonnell CFS, and Mount Gambier West Rotary Club all had to purchase extra food supplies during Saturday. An overflow of visitors had to be catered for by allowing camping at the Port MacDonnell Football oval.

It is estimated 3,000 people attended the celebration; this is based on the following:

- During the event over 600 people registered as attendees using booklets placed at 3 indoor heritage display locations. Many of these people were direct descendants of Port MacDonnell settlers.
- The “Then to now” Street Parade had a continual audience along both sides of Sea Parade for approx 1km.

Patrons who registered as attendees come from the following regions:

District Council of Grant	42%	Victoria	9%
Other Limestone Coast region	37%	NSW, Qld, WA, international	3%
Other South Australian regions	9%		

The District Council of Grant Working Party coordinated placement and timing of events organised by other organisations, which enabled all events to be in the same general location, while programming relieved competition for the same audience. For example the *Vintage Tractor Pull* demonstration was organised under the auspice of the Port MacDonnell Tourist Association, the *Bay Easter Book Fair* by the Port MacDonnell RTC, the *Bay Easter Market* by the Baytown Group, children’s entertainment by the Port MacDonnell Tourist Association, book launch and displays by the Pioneers Committee, and assorted food stalls by other community organisations were all located in the Charles Street area. This street was closed to traffic to enable a safe environment and easy flow for patrons.

The “*Then to Now*” *Street Parade* attracted a very large crowd to watch more than 370 people travel on 90 vehicles, floats or by foot approximately 1km along Sea Parade from Tenterden Reserve to Hammonds Drain; a wonderful representation by the community considering the population of Port MacDonnell is approx 600 people (ABS 2006 Census). Entries included sporting clubs, fishing boats, heritage costumes, musicians, vintage cars, surfing group, horse riders, emergency vehicles, RSL Blue Lake Highland Pipe Band, and Easter Bunny.



The *Hay and Silage Arts Project* was funded by the Working Party in association with the Tenison Woods College Outdoor Classroom Wednesday Group. The students painted characters and items onto 80 plastic wrapped silage bales as well as onto plastic, which was attached to hay bales; approximately 2 weeks prior to the event these bales were placed in paddocks facing Bay Road for the 6 kilometres from Allendale East to Port MacDonnell. The cost of this project was minimal due to paint donations from local businesses and volunteer support from the students, bale owners and removalists. The project was well received and added a festive atmosphere while helping to promote the upcoming event – it had a great impact on local interest in the event.



The naming of the Port of MacDonnell occurred on the 4th April 1860; the 150th anniversary fell on Easter Sunday 2010. Holding the celebration on the long weekend was an advantage for visitors, however all events and activities were organised by volunteer organisations with many finding it difficult to obtain help from their volunteer base due to holiday plans.

Over \$3,000 of income from the Easter Book Fair and Market organised by the Port MacDonnell RTC will be used for library projects, and many local community groups also benefited financially from the day.

Professionally written media releases resulted in a number of TV, radio and print interviews and articles including *SA Life* magazine, and the event was well covered by the local media. .

