



NEWSLETTER – December 2017

Wall-to-wall fun at Clarence Valley Country Muster



It was wall-to-wall caravans and wall-to-wall fun at the 2017 Clarence Valley Country Muster at Ulmarra, near Grafton, NSW. With some of the best traditional acts in Australian country music such as Tania Kernaghan, Glenn Jones and the Gunbarrel Highwaymen, plus international guest Jett Williams,

organiser Wendy Gordon, entertainment manager Terry Gordon and their team can take a bow. The clouds held their contents for most of the weekend, but what was received didn't mar the friendly gathering of nomads, baristas, mates, kids, dogs, fans, friends, traders and stars – all together on a picturesque, landscaped paradise on the Clarence.

Above, Brad Bergen and Tania Kernaghan having way too much fun on stage. And right, Kelvin Nolan and Jett Williams, doing exactly that on Sunday, during Jett's performance with Australia's version of The Drifting Cowboys.

Photos: **AI Slade**



A bit of a slippery start



Photo: **ABC drone**

With more than 700 van/RV sites booked at the 2017 Clarence Valley Country Muster, a last-minute downpour meant vans had to be towed in by tractor – a fun start to a fabulous week of country hospitality and music.

It's quite a sight – all 700 or so caravans and motorhomes lined up in what looks like an endless sea of fibreglass, aluminium and canvas stretching as far as the eye can see.

And how easy it is to find your site, with roads and streets on the campsite named after country music stars!

The festival broke all attendance records to date and Wendy is quietly confident when she closes off the books for next year's festival, she will have reached her magic milestone of 1000 bookings.

She's already got a head start on that with almost 400 sites being booked for the October 22-28, 2018 muster before the final notes were played at the 2017 event.

Sun shines on a picture-perfect site



Despite a somewhat slippery start, the fifth annual Clarence Valley Country Muster was another outstanding success held in fine, mostly sunny conditions.

After a prolonged drought on the Clarence, the rains finally tumbled down in July, August and September giving green-thumbed gardener and Clarence Muster organiser Wendy Gordon plenty of reasons to smile.

Come mid-October and Wendy's Ulmarra property near Grafton, NSW, was an absolute picture, with muster-goers treated to a sea of lush green grass, and vibrant pops of colour every which way you looked.

In the weeks leading up to the muster, the property had hosted at least two weddings and a garden party. It's become quite popular with garden clubs in the district.

Clarence Muster gains reputation as a 'great-value, friendly festival'

The 2017 Clarence Valley Country Muster sure as eggs earned its accolade as the friendliest, best-value-for-money festival around.

The consistently high standard of food offered each day was remarkable.

Wendy's brother-in-law Ken's grain-fed cattle proved to be the winning ingredient in the kitchen's melt-in-your-mouth steak sandwiches.

The roasts were to die for and the hearty breakfast of bacon and eggs was more than worth getting up for each day.

And you couldn't beat it for value. No rip-offs on the Clarence! Even the coffee van was well-priced – and a delicious brew, too.

From camping gear to caravans

There was quality, not quantity in the market stalls at the 2017 Clarence Valley Country Muster.

From camping gear and gadgets to jewellery, clothing and kitchenware, there was something of interest for those with a yen for a little retail therapy.

Muster buddy Ian Grant comes all the way from his home base of Traralgon in Victoria each year, bringing along a few of his fabulous caravans to show throughout the event.

People get the chance to wander through and check out the latest design features. And doesn't Ian just love it when he doesn't have to tow them all back home again!



Traralgon caravan man and avid country music fan Ian Grant shows Tania Kernaghan around his Grant Cruiser – and the lady was very impressed!

Wedding fever on the Clarence

We're not sure if there was something in the water at the Clarence Valley Country Muster, but there sure was a lot of love in the air.

On Sunday morning, with storm clouds gathering, in a fabulously decorated stage and setting, civil celebrant Tania Kernaghan popped the question: Do you? ... and the unanimous reply was: I do ... as the sun came out.

A swag of people, including Gayle and Glenn Jones, decided to take up the option of having their wedding vows renewed, by one of the stars of the muster, Tania Kernaghan.

As well as being an award-winning country music star, Tania can legally hatch, match and despatch folks these days, as one of the busiest celebrants on the Gold Coast.

The Tex Morton Stage was a picture, as were the romantically-set tables, each with two baby bottles of Passion Pop and garlands of flowers.

After the official part of the ceremony, the "renewlyweds" sat down to high tea in the gardens.



Here's celebrant Tania Kernaghan with Glenn and Gayle Jones and Carol and Al Slade (photographer extraordinaire) after the marriage vow renewals at Ulmarra.

More highlights than you could count



There were highlights aplenty at the 2017 Clarence Valley Country Muster, with Chad Morgan's performances leaving punters spellbound; Tania Kernaghan's hot band taking it to the next level; bush poet Ray Essery's highly successful book launch; the regular morning chuckles led by bush poet Gary Fogarty with Ray Essery, Errol

Gray and special guests; the 100th anniversary of the Charge of Beersheba featuring Glenn Jones; meeting Jett Williams, daughter of the legendary Hank Williams, and hearing her fabulous Aussie band, The Drifting Cowboys; and so many other heartfelt moments that stick in your memory – when beautiful ballads or hysterical yarns made your eyes leak.



Photos of Dianne Lindsay, Glenn Jones: **Al Slade**



Jett Williams and her Australian Drifting Cowboys Band – from left, Brannon Crickmore (fiddle), Kelvin Nolan (guitar), Rod Coe (double bass) and Dallas Southam (pedal steel guitar).

Photo: **Al Slade**

So what's in store for 2018?

The sixth annual Clarence Valley Country Muster has a cracker of a line-up headlined by Australia's favourite Poster Girl, Beccy Cole and the Aussie Road Crew, plus Terry Gordon OAM, Wayne Horsburgh, Col Finley, Dale Duncan, Digger Revell, Laura Downing, Jeff Brown, Justin Standley, Kiara Rodrigues, Charmaine Pout, Bill Kearns, John and Christine Smith, Craig Giles – and many more!

Don't forget to bring along your dancing shoes as one of the original rockers, Digger Revell (pictured below, left), will be the special attraction on Friday night only. Bookings have already begun in earnest with almost 400 sites reserved. Once bookings reach the 1000 mark, no more will be taken so it's advisable to reserve your site early to avoid disappointment.



Treat your mum to lunch with Charlie Landsborough

A special event to tide you over until next October rolls around is on Mother's Day at Ulmarra.

Internationally renowned country music star Charlie Landsborough (famous for his smash hit, *What Colour Is the Wind*), will be the special guest at a Mother's Day luncheon at the muster site.

For \$60, you can enjoy a two-course lunch from noon, with entertainment from Charlie commencing at 1.30pm.

It will be a day to remember in the visually spectacular garden setting, which at that time of year, should be a picture.

Those patrons wanting to bring a van and stay a few days can ring and reserve a site for \$20.

If you don't want to stay, being a lunchtime function, it's a

relatively easy day trip from the Gold Coast or elsewhere for the day.

To reserve your place at the table with Charlie, phone 0432 741 947, or email

wgordon@cvcmuster.com.au

