Bathurst Bicentenary Celebrations – Proclamation Week 2015

1. Clear and concise event brief describing the goals, situational analysis, audience, event plan and format and what the event is intended to deliver.

In 2015 Bathurst celebrated the bicentenary of the proclamation of the settlement by Governor Lachlan Macquarie on 7 May 1815, marking the city as Australia’s first inland European settlement. The Bicentenary of Bathurst (B200) presented Bathurst Regional Council (BRC) a unique opportunity to reinvigorate a key historic event (Proclamation Day), and draw attention to the broad experiences Bathurst has to offer in a way that generated increased tourism expenditure and community engagement. See short video B200 activities: https://youtu.be/GtNg970C1JQ


Situational analysis: In 2015, Bathurst celebrated its bicentenary. Over the preceding five years, community engagement for Proclamation Day event had stagnated. In 2015 BRC re-told the story of its Proclamation by focusing on the shared history with the Wiradyuri people, the traditional owners of the land. BRC, in collaboration with a community based B200 committee, developed a 12 month calendar of more than 200 community and council-initiated events reaching approximately 80,000 people. A B200 Endorsed Events Program provided tools for the community to build its own unique events to leverage the bicentenary.

The key themes of Heritage, Culture, Recreation and Innovation, built from a comprehensive stakeholder analysis and Bathurst Bicentenary Celebration Strategic Plan guided activities for the year.

*Note: For the purposes of this award the event in focus is the week-long festival at the heart of the B200 celebrations: Proclamation Week Sunday 3 May – Saturday 9 May 2015. With 13 key events in seven days, the marque events were; Reinstating Macquarie’s Flag Staff; and Illuminate Bathurst.

Event goal: To have the Bathurst and wider community embrace the significance of and participate in the celebrations marking the history of Bathurst and its proclamation as a settlement 200 years ago.

Event objectives: (Community) To see maximum community engagement in B200 celebrations with involvement of a broad cross-section of the community. (Marketing) To maximise media attention for Bathurst as a result of the bicentenary celebrations. (Financial) To identify funding sources to co-fund bicentenary initiatives. (Sustainability) To ensure all areas of the B200 celebrations are based on the principles of sound sustainable practice including: environmental, financial, administrative and social.

Event audience: State and Federal governments, Australian and International dignitaries, Bathurst families, visiting friends and relatives, Bathurst seniors, Bathurst youth, Wiradyuri community members and national media.

Event plan & format: Proclamation Week events ran from May 3 – May 9 across a range of venues. See www.bathurst200.com.au/events/calendar choose May for full list of events held in Proclamation Week.

2. A short description of strategy development, communication and stakeholder involvement

Proclamation Week was the culmination of three years community consultation to build events that engaged the local community and encourage visitation to Bathurst. The event calendar was built from demographic analysis of Bathurst to ensure that events fulfilled the expectations and excited the regional community.

The strategic plan (B200 Strategic Plan.pdf) developed in 2012 identified six stakeholder groups; Business/Education/Tourism/Government/Community/Arts & Culture.

Within these groups, specific organisations and individuals were consulted to ensure events delivered to multiple audiences. The Strategic Plan was guided by the community nominated B200 Celebrations Committee. The event program was designed to peak during, April 27 – May 17 with more than 75 free and ticketed events held at multiple venues. The broad stakeholder engagement resulted in additional sporting events, tourism conferences, art exhibitions, motor racing meetings, food & wine festivals and performances hosted in Bathurst during 2015. Additional event management staff in administration, logistics and marketing were contracted to support delivery of the program as part of BRC’s commitment.
3. **Summary of event funding, budget and revenue if applicable and available**

BRC allocated a $1million budget for Council-initiated B200 events in 2015. An additional $1million was allocated to fund the construction of the signature monument The Macquarie Flag Staff. Event costs were offset by income of est. $510,000 in ticket sales, sponsorship and (Fed and State) Government grants. Council-initiated Proclamation Week activities cost $175,000 with approx. $100,000 in the feature week and Illuminate Bathurst event.

4. **Show communication methods and distribution outlets, use of innovation and differing communication tools and how they motivated their audience**

The communication and promotion strategy evolved from the B200 Strategic Plan’s event strategy. The majority of marketing activities were aimed at people within a three hour radius of Bathurst and a focus was on digital marketing.

**Website** – The Bathurst200.com.au website was developed independently of the BRC website to provide a better event marketing platform. The B200 Calendar of Events was updated daily. Analytics software indicated 39,900 users visited the website.

**Facebook** – Facebook was a key platform for engaging with target groups. Engagement with the Bathurst200 Facebook page was significant with a dedicated resource managing conversations. The reach was improved through planned like and sharing of content, competitions and promotions to its 3000 followers.

**Public Relations** – Magazine features were achieved in the Daily Telegraph Best Weekends, Out and About with Kids, Caravanning Australia, YTravel Blog, 2UE Radio Travel Segment, Central West Lifestyle Magazine, Blue Mountains Life, Channel 7 Sport and Ben’s Kitchen on Network 10.

**Z-Card:** 15,000 Z Cards promoting the suite of events and activities were mail boxed to every Bathurst household.

**Retail presence** – A B200 Pop Up shop was opened in the Bathurst CBD for souvenirs sales and tourism resource.

**Ratepayers News:** 14,000 resident newsletters distributed quarterly in Bathurst. Every publication in 2015 had a focus B200 events and call to action for the online events calendar.

**Advertising** – Television spots (advertising and editorial) were negotiated during the coverage of the Bathurst $1million budget for Council-initiated B200 events in 2015.

An integrated print, radio and television campaign in the Feature Period of Celebrations, April 27 – May 17 was implemented.

A 70 page commemorative feature was produced with the local daily newspaper, print run, 10,000.

**Local – postcard campaign**

Research indicated that 42% of visitors to Bathurst were visiting friends and family. A free "Visit Bathurst in 2015" postcard was developed to have locals invite their friends and families to visit. More than 1,000 cards distributed.

**Outdoor signage**

Temporary footpath decals promoted the Illuminate Bathurst celebrations. City entry points and main streets were decorated with Bathurst200 livery (flags and banners) across 75 sites. Specific outdoor corflute signage was placed at 20 sites across the city and B200 branded signage featured at all Council events.

5. **Describe delivery of the event and its results**

**Proclamation Week ran from Sunday 3 May – Saturday 9 May**

**Sunday 3 May: Opening Ceremony the Peoplescape – A People in Time Project**

200 outdoor artworks filled the iconic Bathurst Court House lawn in May as ‘Bathurst People in Time: a Peoplescape’ was staged. This community art project celebrated the contributions of Bathurst people from all walks of life over the past 200 years as painted by members of the community on 200 life-size person-shaped figures. 3,500 people attended the opening ceremony and it received significant media coverage.

**Monday 4 May – Reflections**

A community curated exhibition of 200 years of women’s fashion attended by more than 3,000 people in a week.

**Tuesday 5 May – 200 x 200 Exhibition – Bathurst Regional Art Gallery**

A specially curated exhibition at the Bathurst Regional Gallery of 200 works significant to the region from its
extensive collection. These exhibits, never previously shown together, attracted significant visitation throughout Proclamation Week and national media coverage.

**Wednesday 6 May - Mount Panorama Pit Tour**

Bathurst’s most famous icon was included in the Proclamation Week activities with a Pit Complex Tour and history provided by the circuit manager.

**Thursday 7 May - Proclamation Day – Reinstating Macquarie’s Flag Staff**

A signature event commemorating the time and place Governor Macquarie proclaimed Bathurst a settlement, with Macquarie’s Flag Staff reinstated as a permanent monument at the river. This civic ceremony re-telling the settlement story to include the perspective of all parties who were there on that day in 1815, was attended by more than 4,000 people and officiated by The Hon David Hurley, Governor of NSW. It included a Wiradyuri welcome, colonial re-enactment, flag raising and combined school’s choir.

**Thursday 7 May Wiradyuri Possum Skin Cloak Presentation**

The Bathurst Wiradyuri community hosted Possum Skin Cloak Healing workshops with 150 men, women and children attending three days of cloak making. The cloak was presented by the Elders to the Mayor on May 7 as a symbol of the new history that Bathurst was making with the Wiradyuri community.

**Thursday 7 May Bathurst School Engagement**

A comprehensive B200 education kit was prepared against Dept. of Education guidelines and provided to schools in January 2015. Every school across the public and independent sectors engaged enthusiastically with the Bicentenary. Every school student was presented with a commemorative B200 medallion at school ceremonies. For the first time, a combined school’s choir was formed and performed at the Flag Staff. School leaders from every school attended with live streaming through the Dept. of Education portal to schools in the district (and across the country).

**Thursday 7 May - Announcement of Bathurst’s Living Legends**

200 community-nominated individuals were announced as Bathurst’s Living Legends and an avenue of trees was planted in their honour.

**Thursday 7 May – Bathurst Macquarie Heritage Medal**

The inaugural Bathurst Macquarie Heritage Medal is a BRC funded nationally recognised annual prize, awarding $25,000 to an individual who demonstrates a significant contribution to the protection or promotion of Australia’s built, social, cultural or environmental heritage outside their day to day role. The sold-out awards dinner attracted nominees from across Australia and international dignitaries the Earl and Countess Bathurst.

**Friday 8 May – The Crossing – A play**

The story of Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson crossing the rugged Blue Mountains in an exciting new historical theatre production attended by 600 people at two shows.

**Friday 8 May – Sister City Ceremony & Earl Bathurst Reception**

International dignitaries the Earl and Countess Bathurst and a delegation from Bathurst’s Sister City Ohkuma were special guests during Proclamation Week. The Mayor of Ohkuma planted a new tree species for the city’s Japanese garden symbolising the 25 year cultural connection between the two communities.

**Saturday 9 May Bathurst Colonial Fair - A Colonial Fair run by the Bathurst and District Historical Society focused on colonial heritage with actors and recreations of a colonial settlement including, convict housing, heritage games and activities.**

**Saturday 9 May - Illuminate Bathurst – A 200th birthday community celebration**

The community celebration in the evening on Saturday 9 May 2015 saw more than 10,000 people gather in the Town Square. Illuminate Bathurst was a multi-site Vivid style digital story telling centered around the city’s historic iconic buildings and laneways; the Bathurst Court House and War Memorial Carillon. The Illumination continued for a 10 day period with the key feature a seven minute piece on the Courthouse facade and silent disco. Two additional illumination festivals were held in 2015 – the Bicentenary Winter Festival in July and Bathurst 1000 V8 Festival in October. Community participation included a Lantern Procession of more than 300 lanterns created in community art workshops in the months preceding the celebrations.

Local food and wine providores showcased their produce at a feature event that saw overwhelming support and sales. The success of this event has seen it become the cornerstone of an ongoing winter tourism campaign.
including an outdoor ice skating rink.

6. Outline the innovation and legacy elements

Innovation: Re-telling the story of the city’s history was a key aim demonstrated through events and communication, e.g. Illuminate Bathurst’s digital storytelling, online events program, social media marketing. New database and e-newsletter systems were introduced via a Cloud-based digital program capturing event registrations, distributing information and integrating existing digital platforms to market events. Council used Facebook Events for the first time 2,500 people ‘attending’ the Illuminate Bathurst event. Instagram was also used for the first time in event promotion to attract significant traffic and ‘loving’ of images and a mechanism to capture creative imagery of the event and generate excitement and engagement with the city’s history. The suite of Bicentenary Celebration events showed innovation in the planning, implementation and evaluation. Council’s Location Analytics server was used to estimate event attendance where ‘wi-fi’ connectivity was present.

Legacy: Significant improvements in relations with the Wiradyuri community have been evidenced as a result of the Bicentenary Events including the development and signing of Council’s first Reconciliation Action Plan. The practices trialed for the 2015 events have provided the template for consultation, planning, implementation and evaluation for the Council events management team. Initiatives including the Bathurst Macquarie Heritage Medal will be awarded annually to acknowledge the contribution of an individual to the protection, enhancement or promotion of Australia’s heritage.

The successful reinvention of the May 7 Proclamation Day activities that re-engaged the Bathurst community in a broad section of activities is set to continue. This includes the Wiradyuri, Bathurst and District Historical Society and Department of Education activities into a new Bathurst Heritage Week program which continues to grow.

The Illumination Festival with local food and wine vendors is now part of the city’s annual 2016 event calendar. The Bathurst Living Legends project will continue annually with the planting of new trees in Legends avenue.

7. Outline the sustainability and accessibility elements if appropriate

- B200 events were guided by BRC’s sustainability and accessibility policies. A specific goal in the B200 strategy was “To ensure all areas of the B200 celebrations are based on the principles of sound sustainable practice including: environmental, financial, administrative and social” Pre planning with individuals and organisations interested in ensuring sustainability and accessibility was undertaken for B200 events. A number of the outcomes of these discussions resulted in the below sustainable and accessible elements.

- Macquarie’s Flag Staff provides access to the river precinct that was previously inaccessible.
- Car parking, reserved viewing areas and toilets at all events provided equitable access.
- 5,000 re-usable stemless tumblers were sold as souvenirs.
- All wine, beer and spirits served at the Illuminate Bathurst Festival were locally grown, blended and bottled.
- Facilities for waste sorting in place at all community events.
- A specially commissioned B200 Lectern was created by local volunteers, made from locally sourced sustainable timber.
- An avenue of 200 trees combining natives and exotics were planted as a Bathurst Living Legends initiative.
- Event livery was produced and re-used at more than 80 events.
- The 300 paper lanterns made for the Illumination Procession have been used at subsequent events.
- The 200 people cut-outs for the Peoplescape were returned to the creators and displayed in businesses and community locations around Bathurst.

8. Describe evaluation methods and results

Tourism data gathered April – Oct 2015 saw 290% increase in overnight visitation in Bathurst (Destination NSW). Online visitation and engagement of the B200 Web, Facebook and Instagram accounts was monitored by in-program statistics functions, Google Analytics and Hootsuite. With 39,900 visitors logged to the website. Online surveys of stall holders and attendees using Survey Monkey and qualitative feedback was gained via the Bathurst 200 Celebrations Committee with good results. Feedback received helped to shape following events. Council’s wi-fi Location Analytics server provided indicative attendance numbers to events in the absence of ticket sales, via a ‘count’ of smart phone devices in various locations – 6,000 logged for Illuminate Bathurst Night Festival May 7. Across the 12 months of 2015 an estimated 80,000 people attended the B200 events.